

QUEENS LIBRARY GUILD LOCAL 1321 NEWS

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO,
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Queens Library Guild Local 1321

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President's Message—

Every One of Us Is Queens Library



John Hyslop
President

IN 1968, Queens Library staff was fed up with how they were being treated. They were angry with the arbitrary work rules. They were angry with the poor pay. They were angry with the abusive discipline. They were angry with the poor benefits. They were angry.

A few valiant staff members decided to take a stand and organize. They worked with AFSCME and DC 37 to organize their co-workers, and in 1969 they formed the Queens Library Guild, Local 1321. They laid the groundwork for what happened 45 years later.

In 2014, our library faced challenges that seemed insurmountable: accusations of financial mismanagement, distrust from our public, lawsuits, NYC Dept. of Investigation and FBI investigations, contracting out of our jobs, no raises since 2010, very low morale, massive short staffing, a disappointing budget and a deadline for recall of the 44 brothers and sisters of Local 1321 who were laid off in 2010.

(Continued page 11)



L. 1321 FOUGHT LAYOFFS and contracting out with demonstrations, on-line petition and political action. ABOVE: Members at protest in Oct. 2013.

Recall of Laid Off Members

AS we all know, in September 2010 the Queens Library Administration laid off 44 of our brothers and sisters blaming the FY 2011 budget cut and the membership for not agreeing to permanent and damaging cost-saving benefit cuts. These 44 were placed on a four-year recall list that expired September 2014.

We know that these layoffs were totally unnecessary.

- Brooklyn Public Library and New York Public Library laid off no one.
- Two months later Mayor Bloomberg cut the library's budget \$2.4 million and the administration laid off no one.
- From 2009-2013, the administration gave themselves over \$520,000 in raises.
- From 2011-2013, the administration spent over \$2 million hiring non-union staff.

The most recent examples of our administration's egregious waste of our money came this year, when we learned that our President/CEO Thomas Galante

spent over \$140,000 renovating his own office and the library trustees were going to vote to remove him and pay him over \$800,000 for two years until he reaches 55.

In June 2014, the city passed an FY 2015 budget that gave Queens Library \$2.4 million more than last year. This increase—combined with the administration's ability to afford excessive raises, salaries, non-union hires and the looming expiration of the recall list—forced the union to act. We demanded that the administration recall all the staff from the recall list. The administration argued a bit, but in the end they understood the value of bringing these people back.

HR and the union collaborated and contacted everyone on the recall list. As of this writing, the final number of who is returning is not known. Everyone is extremely happy to have the staff return. This is great for the library system and will improve our customer service. We must thank the administration for bringing these people back!

Community Coordinators

IN the spring of 2014, the administration advertised two brand new positions for Teen Center Site Coordinators as non-union. The local questioned HR about why these were non-union, especially because the library is using city funds to pay these new staff, and their benefits and the job description match the Community Coordinator job description, a title included in the union. After much back and forth, the administration agreed that these new positions will be included in the union.

The administration's positive move is great for our library system. As the library's mission expands and moves into other fields, the administration and union should collaborate so that our great library continues to thrive and serve our public.

*New positions
will be included
in the union*

President's Message *continued from page 1...*

Fortunately for our library, we have a union. After years of building relationships with our city and state politicians we garnered support to oppose contracting out and support safer libraries. We fostered relationships with library trustees to ensure they have a more complete understanding of the library they govern. We fostered relationships with the Borough President to work together on improving our library.

We worked diligently to create legislation that would create library transparency and foster more trust with our funders. We finally achieved an

economic contract that pays us a raise. We created a new working conditions contract. Finally and most importantly, we ensured that our library brought back the 44 employees that were laid off in 2010.

Each and every union member—everyone of us—makes our union strong. Our active participation, engagement and support have made a difference. We are Queens Library. We are the union.

*In solidarity,
John Hyslop
President*

UPK and the Library *continued from page 5...*

Local 1321 supports Universal Pre-Kindergarten and believes the Queens Library may be a perfect fit. Our communities trust us to do an excellent job. If UPK takes hold, this will be one of the biggest changes to the services Queens Library provides since the Adult Learner Programs. However, the methods by which UPK is being implemented are questionable at best.

The staff were never consulted or brought into the process. They had no

opportunity to discuss how to fit UPK into their workflow. Even now, they are being told, "Here it is, work it out." Begrudgingly, they will because we are professionals. This could be a premier program with the union and administration benefitting. Will administration invest in the program by communicating with our staff and providing meaningful support? Or will it become another low priority to slough off on an already overburdened work-force? Stay tuned.

Members in the News *continued from page 8...*

Bay Terrace Library's Eve Hammer is featured in Queens Chronicle, August 7, 2014 http://www.qchron.com/editions/north/improvements-set-for-bay-terrace-branch/article_bf2087ad-f018-561a-bf2c-5b6f9da0ac7c.html

Bibi Khan, Customer Service Representative, as well as the whole Forest Hills staff was featured in The Forum, September 2, 2014 <http://theforumnewsgroup.com/2014/09/02/forest-hills-native-celebrates-104-years-of-library-love/>

The Far Rockaway Library was featured in The Wave, September 5th, 2014 http://www.rockawave.com/news/2014-09-05/Community/Library_Bash_At_Bayswater_Park.html

Check Your Pay Stub!

If you're reading this newsletter, you already know how hard your union representatives are fighting for you. You know how much they have accomplished: negotiating a new contract with retroactive pay increases and getting laid-off members back on the job. Our representatives make a difference and they are elected by you, the members. Make sure you are eligible to vote and to run for office. How? Check your pay stub! (See below.)

Description	Hours	Current Y-T-D	Description	Current
Salary		**** **	W/H-Federal	**** **
Total Compensation		**** **	W/H New York	**** **
MELS		**** **	TX-EE Medicare	**** **
Total Taxable Benefit		**** **	TX-EE Social Security	**** **
Taxable-Federal		**** **	QBPL Union Dues	**** **
Taxable-Soc. Security		**** **	Total Deductions	**** **
Taxable-Medicare		**** **	Total Net Pay	**** **

If your pay stub says "QBPL Agency Fees" instead of "QBPL Union Dues," you won't be able to participate fully in your own union. If you either never signed or never sent in your union card, your status will default to agency shop fee payer. You won't be able to vote or run for union office. The good news is it is now easier than ever to rectify this error. You can find and print out the form at: http://www.dc37.net/news/PEP/2_2014/images/Coupon_Union_Dues.pdf

Mail it back to DC 37 at:
District Council 37
 AFSCME, AFL-CIO
 125 Barclay Street
 New York, NY 10007

Security Update: South Hollis, Ridgewood and Central Library's Teen Center

At the director's talks this past winter, we heard that the administration's efforts to improve security at South Hollis were a glowing success. This could not be further from the truth. Soon after, South Hollis staff contacted the union to report that nothing had been done to help them with their constant security issues. To force the administration to provide a safe and secure work environment, the South Hollis staff has since filed three grievances related to security.

Coordinating with HR, the union set up a meeting to allow the South Hollis staff to speak directly with the administration and to hold a labor-management meeting with representatives from South Hollis, Central's Teen Center and Ridgewood, the three locations that have reported serious safety issues.

The South Hollis staff gave poignant testimony about how difficult their work lives have been over the past years. Every day they suffer constant harassment, verbal and physical abuse, gang violence, drug dealing and intimidation. The only service they are able to offer in the afternoon is to try to control the mayhem.

At the Labor-Management meeting, these serious safety issues at the South Hollis, Central's Teen Center and Ridgewood were discussed.

The administration brought in an NYPD officer for June and told the staff they would reassess the situation come the fall. The administration did not share

the criteria they would use to assess the situation with the staff or with their union representatives. However, we remain vigilant. They also did not provide security at Ridgewood. The union will follow up with Ridgewood.

After years of emails, incident reports and phone calls to CLS, security, the NYPD and the union, staff at South Hollis had to meet with the administration for them to understand the seriousness of



the situation.

We are deeply disturbed by this. As one staff member asked, "Is the administration waiting for someone to get seriously hurt before they act? By then it will be too late."

To allow Queens Library staff to provide the best services our customers deserve, our administration needs to comprehend and respond appropriately to all telephone calls, emails and reports and provide us with a safe, secure and nurturing environment. For the sake of a better library, the administration must have a security presence in problem branches.

New Library Legislation

THIS past spring, New York State legislators changed New York State law that governs Queens Library. The new legislation reforms the Queens Library Board of Trustees and adds more transparency to the library's operations. Borough President Melinda Katz worked with Assembly member Jefferion Aubry and State Senators Tony Avella and Michael Gianaris to draft the legislation.

The following are the changes:

- The Trustees' terms were changed from five to three years.
- Ex-officio trustees are allowed to appoint their representatives to serve in her or his place.
- The Trustee must live or have a business in Queens.
- The Mayor and Borough President must inform the Trustees who they are appointing.
- The Mayor and Borough President can remove Trustees.
- Queens Borough Public Library shall be subject to Article 6 of the Public Officers Law, a.k.a. Freedom of Information Law.
- The Trustees shall hold annual public budget hearings that report on all public and private revenue sources.
- The Executive Director and key library personnel must file disclosure statements if their salaries are paid with public money.
- The Trustees will limit and approve outside employment by the Executive Director and key library personnel.
- The Trustees will adopt by-laws for hiring key library personnel

and policies for their compensation.

- The Trustees will create an Audit Committee.
- The Trustees will eliminate the current Administrative Committee and create the Executive Committee.
- The Trustees will establish a Labor Committee to oversee labor issues and contracting out of services.
- The Trustees will create by-laws that deal with conflicts of interest for key library personnel.

The legislators felt it necessary to change the law because of the recent actions taken by Director Thomas Galante and the Trustees, including the irresponsible use of funds, contracting out and refusal to allow access to the library's financial records. These actions not only forced the legislators to act, but caused such distrust that the New York City Council and the mayor refused to increase the library's budget by millions of dollars this year. The library lost the resources to hire adequate staff to provide six-day service, buy materials our customers need and finance new programs.

This legislation is a step in the right direction. We do have concerns about politicians being more involved with library operations, but some of the actions taken by our Trustees have proven that they lost the ability to supervise our library director. Hopefully, with this new oversight and transparency, our customers and elected officials will begin to trust our library's finances and we can get the resources we need to continue to provide excellent library services.

Economic Contract RATIFIED!

A SEVEN-YEAR (2010-2017) economic agreement, negotiated by DC 37 for its members, was ratified by a 96% vote. The contract gives covered employees a 10.41% wage hike, plus a ratification bonus of \$1,000 for full-time employees, and prorated for part-time employees with no givebacks. Health and welfare benefits are maintained at no cost to members.

For more information on the contract and other news, visit the DC 37 website at: www.dc37.net



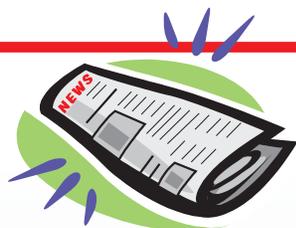
Local 1321 Celebrates Labor Day Parade. Shown, from left, are Sueli Zaquem, Thomas Wynn, Dorrett Hextall, Kacper Jarecki and Deborah Wynn.

Upcoming DC 37 Events

Oct. 25 - Political Action Conference. District Council 37's Political Action Department will hold its 39th Legislative Conference on Saturday, October 25 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at union headquarters, 125 Barclay St. in lower Manhattan. For details, call (212) 815-1550.

Oct. 29 - Budget, Credit and Student Debt Workshop - Having trouble managing your money? Attend DC 37's Municipal Employees Legal Services workshop on budget, credit and Student Loan Debt management, Wednesday, October 29 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at union headquarters, 125 Barclay St. in lower Manhattan. Fill out and return the coupon available at union headquarters and in the September issue of PEP. For details, call (212) 815-1818.

Members in the News



Flushing Community Library's Leslie Huynh is featured in Open City Mag, Apr 20, 2014 <http://opencitymag.com/a-happy-hour-for-queens-teens/>

Richmond Hill Community Library staff and friends group held a successful fundraiser with Key Food. NY1, Apr 29, 2014 <http://queens.ny1.com/content/news/207804/queens-library-gets-help-through-local-supermarket>

Steinway Community Library's Laurel Hicklin hosted Council Member Costa Constantinides, US Congress Member Joe Crowley's Library Day Celebration! Queens Gazette, Apr 30, 2014 http://www.qgazette.com/news/2014-04-30/Front_Page/Library_Day_Celebrated.html

Long Island City Community Library's Tienya Smith comments on a teen's efforts to improve her library. Times Newsweekly, July 3, 2014 http://www.timesnewsweekly.com/news/2014-07-03/Local_News/Woodside_Teens_Eco_Friendly_Way_To_Support_Local_L.html

Corona Community Library's Vilma Daza interviewed for a story on serving our diverse Queens community. "Want to see the World, Try a Library in Queens, WESM 91.3 July 30, 2014 http://wesm913.org/post/want-see-world-try-library-queens?utm_referrer=http%3A//m.wesm913.org/%3Futm_referrer%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.google.co.uk%252F%23mobile/55098

Central Library Metadata Services' Mohinder Kaur Purewhal and her husband celebrated the many accomplishments of their son, Sharanjit Singh Purewal. He graduated from Aviation High School, ranked third in the entire class. He received a Gold Medal for Perfect Attendance (in four years, never late, never absent), City Councilman Citation Award from Jimmy Van Brammer, Certificate of Merit from State Assemblywoman Catherine Nolan and numerous other awards. He is also working at Sunnyside Library. They appear in 23-29 2014, 10 = Sadelok 23-29, July 2014, page 10. <http://www.readwhere.com/read/309368/Sadelok-/Sadelok-23-July#page/10/2>

Ms Kwangjoo Joe, also of Metadata Services, was profiled in the Korea Times. Ms Joe has been working with Ms. Jane Kim in several library card drives. Their work has many more people in the Korean community taking advantage of Queens Library services. 2014: 869012 = The Korea Times: 2014-08-14 <http://www.koreatimes.com/article/869012>

Forest Hills Community Library staff showing their love for one of their favorite customers. "Forest Hills Native Celebrates 104 Years of Library Love" The Forum Newsgroup, Sep 2, 2014 <http://theforumnews.com/2014/09/02/forest-hills-native-celebrates-104-years-of-library-love/>

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Universal Pre-Kindergarten and the Library

By John Hyslop, President

WHEN Mayor de Blasio was running for office, he committed to providing Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) to New York City. Now in office, his administration asked the library to provide space for UPK. Local 1321 is proud to support our mayor's efforts, because we believe that this benefits our community and us. However, we are totally disheartened by how UPK is being implemented at the Queens Library. The following is a summary of what has transpired.

Soon after he was elected, Mayor de Blasio's office contacted the three library systems about providing UPK in branches. Queens Library applied to host UPK in seven branches. By the end of the application process, all but one site, Woodhaven, was accepted.

The union and Woodhaven staff found this out in June, six months after the administration began the application process. There were rumors. There were city agency visits to branches. Therefore, in April, our DC 37 negotiator began making requests for a labor-management meeting to discuss this.

We finally had our labor-management meeting in June, at which the administration told us that a contract for UPK was not signed and discussions on this were premature. However, we were told that library branch staff would have nothing to do with UPK and that three people

would be hired to run it.

I met with the Woodhaven staff a week after the labor-management meeting to inform them of our labor-management meeting. They informed me that the VP for Public Service stopped by the day before our labor-management meeting to drop off applications for UPK at Woodhaven and that the NYC's website stated Woodhaven was a UPK location.

Not understanding why the administration stated that it was premature to have discussion on UPK, since obviously they were preparing Woodhaven to host it, the union called another meeting for

the Woodhaven staff to meet with the administration to discuss details about the implementation.

At this meeting the staff insisted they were supportive of UPK. They understand the value and need. However, they are deeply concerned about the impact UPK will have on their normal library work and all the programs they offer. At this meeting we were told that the programming room would be lost to UPK and that the branch would never be able to use it. All the programs will be held in a smaller room or on the main floor. This disrupts programs that serve hundreds of customers of all ages. Additionally, we were told that the Custodian would be cleaning up after UPK. This contradicts the administration's earlier claim that no branch staff would be involved with UPK.

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Library Schedule Problems Persist

WHAT is the impact of our current schedule? Whether you are a parent taking care of children, or a student who needs to print a homework assignment before class, this schedule has had a negative impact on both the public and our staff members. The administration's rationale behind this change, we were told, was to better serve the public.

Yet a huge segment of our patrons are not being served.

- Senior citizens and stay-at-home parents, who usually visit their local libraries in the mornings, don't do so as readily anymore.
- Many people who commute from work cannot make the 7:00 p.m. closing time.
- Scheduling class visits has been a challenge because we open when students are having lunch. Therefore the number of class visits has been reduced.
- Attendance at young children's morning programs has been affected. We cannot start at 11:00 a.m. because it takes a while for parents to get their children from the front door to the program space. Parents complain that they cannot attend with their children because it conflicts with their daily schedule.

For the staff, our lives have been totally disrupted.

- We cannot attend community meetings because we get home so late.
- We cannot eat dinner with our family because we get home so late.
- We cannot spend much time with our children because they will be in



bed soon after we get home.

- The odd times require us to pay more for daycare.
- Attending after-school meetings and programs is extremely challenging.
- We cannot have another job.
- We cannot go to school before or after work.
- This has put a lot of strain and stress on our family members.
- We are more tired because of the late nights and the need to wake up early.
- This list goes on. This schedule is destructive to our morale.

The issue of service hours and the ambivalence displayed by administration toward concerns from both customers and staff is misguided to say the least. Based on current statistics, circulation figures have gone down substantially throughout the library system. Therefore the question remains, "Who are we really serving with this new schedule?" The answer, unknown, exemplifies the current culture at Queens Library—a disconnect of our library director and his administration from the people who have to work this service schedule and the public who have to use it. It is high time that Queens Library returns to a public service schedule that respects its dedicated staff and meets the needs of ALL its customers.

Scholarships for Members and their Children

CONTINUE your education or help your children or grandchildren! District Council 37 offers a number of scholarships for members and their children.

The DC 37 Education Committee offers scholarships for children and grandchildren of DC 37 members in good standing and retirees who are members of the DC 37 Retirees Association. Application packets can be requested online or by calling the Education Department at (212) 341-4999. Applications will be available October 6, 2014 – February 20, 2015. Requirements and awards vary. Check them out at: <http://www.dc37.net/benefits/education/deptclasses/scholarships.html>

For most scholarships the deadline for submission of 2015 scholarship application is March 6, 2015. However, for the Lillian Roberts Scholarship for Continuing Educa-



tion, the deadline for submission of an application is October 31, 2014. This scholarship is for DISTRICT COUNCIL 37 MEMBERS ONLY: Established in the name of Ms. Lillian Roberts, Executive Director of District Council 37 in 2013, the scholarship is funded by contributions from Local 924, Kyle Simmons, President. The Lillian Roberts Scholarship for Continuing Education will support the educational endeavors of DC 37 members. One scholarship, selected by lottery, in the amount of \$2,000 will be awarded annually.

Library customers still wait for more convenient hours.

