



Local 1321 News

DISTRICT COUNCIL 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO
 125 Barclay Street New York, NY 10007
 (212) 815-1188 • Spring 2020 Vol. 20, No. 1

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President's Message

United, We are Union



John Hyslop
Local 1321 President

THIS is one of the hardest pieces I have ever written in my life, because I cannot adequately express the profound impact this disease is having on our lives. Our lives are changing - the loss of normalcy, the loss of our community, the loss of our coworkers' bonds, and, the ultimate loss of loved ones who have meant so much to so many. All of this can be overwhelming and difficult to articulate.

As you can see in this newsletter, almost all the articles were written before our pandemic crisis. They seem somewhat quaint, given the difficulty of our current lives. However, they speak volumes to what our union is doing for all of us and demonstrates we are not alone. We are Queens Library Guild, Local 1321, DC 37, AFSCME. Our union, regardless of the immensity of our challenges, will be here for us.

We have the luxury of working from home. However, not all DC 37 and municipal union brothers and sisters are as fortunate. The sanitation workers, sewage treatment workers, building inspectors, hospital workers, social workers, Department of Education workers, 911 and 311 operators, police, fire, EMS workers, and all the other thousands of workers are putting their lives on the line by going to work saving lives and keeping our city running. Let us not forget them.

We also need to think of the millions of workers around the world who are struggling to survive or who have lost their jobs because of this pandemic. These are our neighbors, our customers, our family, our friends, our fellow human beings. They probably do not have a union that will look out for them. And if they are striking so they too can enjoy basic rights and benefits we have enjoyed for decades, everyone

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Rest in Peace Kane

BEFORE he even knew me, Kane opened up his arms to me. He sent me this message on Facebook a week before I even started working at South Hollis, a week before I even got to meet him: I am a computer specialist at the branch so whatever vision you got I got your back. I am happy to have you can't wait for south hollis to be transform into a great place have a great day see you soon.



Kane never had it easy, he had to take care of his health, his sick (late) sick father, his growing family at home. There was a lot on his mind. They say, when you show up to work, you leave your personal issues, like family stuff, at home. What made Kane different is that like it or not, he made you part of his family. I never worked with anyone as warm and loyal and supportive as Kane. I remember one time a customer was getting aggressive with me and coming up real close, and Kane got up from his specialist station and came over and told the customer "If you have a problem, go ahead and take it out on me." The customer left. I was like, "Kane, that was dangerous, you shouldn't have done that." And Kane said, "You're our leader, we need you."

Kane would always go all out – 110%. One time, the Children's Librarian called out sick – so Kane volunteered to read the story time. The kids loved it because he did a puppet show. The English instructor couldn't come in one day. No problem! Kane volunteered to teach the English class. It was a hit, not only was he funny, but he spoke fluent Haitian Creole and was able to get everyone in the class not only learning English, but having fun while doing it.

His computer classes were legendary. Besides basics, like setting up an e-mail, he would show the class how to design a greeting card, how to write up a newsletter, how to do internet research, and he did it in both English and Haitian Creole. And at the end of the course, a computer class graduation ceremony was held, with speeches and certificates and music and hugs. You had to see it to believe it.

When it came to outreach and programming ideas, like anything else, Kane was irreplaceable. He helped organize back to school give-aways for the kids, free turkey give-aways for the community for Thanksgiving, and of course, toy give-aways for Christmas. He was Santa Claus. He wasn't a Santa Clause, he was THE Santa Claus. State Senator Leroy Comrie asked Kane to be Santa for him at his community toy drives – no one else could come close to embody the spirit of Santa better than Kane Noel.

(Continued on page 11)



Bargining a New Contract

ON December 31, 2020, our working conditions contract with the library expires. Therefore, now is the time to start negotiating a new one. As you may recall from your orientation, this contract, found on our website, codifies many of our work rules including:

- annual leave accruals;
- lunch period for blue collar employees;
- jury duty;
- floating holidays;
- operation of the library in the event of extreme temperatures;
- bereavement leave.

Generally speaking, this contract does not cover anything that deals with the finances of our employment, e.g. pay, health insurance, longevity payments, etc. DC 37 and New York City negotiate that contract and it expires May 25, 2021.

The first step in this process is creating our demands. The Bargaining Committee, comprised of some of the Local's Executive Board, is soliciting your demands. If you have any, please submit them to Committee/Executive Board members; email them to local1321@gmail.com; or send them to the Local's office at the Woodside Library. The Committee will discuss the demands; finalize them; and present them to the membership for approval. The Local will then ask the library to negotiate a new contract with the Library's Administration.

This is a long process, and with all bargaining, no side gets everything they want. Throughout this process, the Bargaining Committee is committed to including the membership as best we can. This is your contract and we need your input.

Rest in Peace Kane (continued from page 2)

And anytime we had any major events at South Hollis Library, it was Kane who was the DJ and MC and host, making jokes, playing music, and making everyone feel at home – making everyone feel like part of his family. He was good to everyone, the customers, the staff, and the whole community, to everyone! He touched and left a mark on everyone he met.

Even after I left South Hollis, Kane still continued to help me. He volunteered to teach a Haitian-Creole class at Cambria Heights Library, and he came over as Santa every year. He organized fun get-togethers. I have a photo in my office of the time we went bowling together after work. We also went to play miniature golf. I wish we could have done more together. There were elections coming up for Local 1321, and I said, "Kane, you should run! You'd be a great advocate for our members." Kane, however, despite all his accomplishments was modest, he said, "I don't know if I can do it." I said, "What? There's no question you can!" He was still thinking, and the meeting was taking place, so we couldn't talk anymore. A few minutes later I got a text on my phone from Kane, "Bro plz nominate me for a delegate." And the rest, so they say is history!

I remember from time to time while we were talking Kane telling me that he loves me like a brother. And I was always too shy to let him know that I love him too! I love you, brother, and I hope we can hang out soon! —Kacper Jareck

Informal Meeting with Management

FOR a while now, the Local's Executive Board has been hearing staff complaints about declining morale. We wanted to coalesce the opinions into something we could bring to the Administration. Therefore, at the January 2020 General Membership meeting we discussed the morale issues in preparation for an informal labor-management meeting.

On February 11 we met with the Administration to discuss the issues surrounding our low morale

- very low staffing levels
- salaries
- lack of vision for an evolving library
- “2nd floor” disconnect
- trustees disconnect
- customer issues and disrespect.

In regards to the low staffing, we gave examples of branches opening with no librarians and just two staff; staff being rotated around the system; and poor coverage around the system. The Administration said they will investigate. They also said they are having a difficult time recruiting children's librarians and have thirteen children's librarian vacancies.

For salaries, we proposed that the three library systems work with the unions, and city to increase library workers' salaries. As you may know, salaries are dictated by the city. We are not sure if this can be changed, but all three library systems are having a difficult time with recruitment and retention and we need to work together to solve this problem.

We explained the frontline staff's perception that the “2nd floor” and trustees are disconnected from public service and how that is connected to staff's perception that the library lacks vision. A public library's role is in constant change but the Administration has not communicated nor implemented a holistic approach to change and practices.

For customer issues and disrespect, we again asked for the library to create a system-wide policy and procedure so that every library employee and customer knows what is acceptable and is not acceptable behavior and what to do about it. We asked the library to hold conflict resolution courses to help library workers with customer confrontations. We agreed that LSM has been very helpful with a number of issues.

The Administration was receptive to the issue we raised and we will follow up on them in the near future.

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

of us must honor their strike.

Unions can be taken for granted when work life is secure, because the security we built fosters complacency. When life and work life become precarious, we all fall back to each other in our union. That union strength does not come from one person. It comes from each and every one of you. Together united, we are stronger. United, we are union.

Please take care each and every one of my brothers and sisters.

2020 Census



IT'S 2020 and we have another Census. In 1790 the United States government decided it was important to keep track of the country's population, deciding that every 10 years a census of the country would be conducted. In the decades since, important questions have been added to the census, determining how funding will be distributed, what communities may be in need of, and how many representatives states have in Congress.

For the last census, in 2010, New York state had a dismal 69% participation rate, and Queens County's participation was even worse at 62%! (Brooklyn's participation was even poorer at 58%!). This rate of participation is just terrible and had a huge negative impact on New York. We lost a seat in the House of Representatives. We lost money and resources from the Federal Government that would have gone to programming that helps people in need in our neighborhoods.

As you are probably aware, the results of the census count determines how much of the billions of dollars the Federal government gives each state every year. This money is used to pay for roads, public transportation, public safety, public education, SNAP benefits, Medicaid, and more.

An example of this, using Queens' participation rate:

In 2010 an elementary school had 3,000 children. Only 1,860 children got counted in the 2010 Census, 62% of 3,000. Each year, from 2011 to 2020 the Federal government only gave the school money for only 1,860 children, even though the school has 3,000 students. The school was only funded for HALF its students putting those teachers and children at a great disadvantage.

This is a simplification, but demonstrates how much of an impact the undercount will affect schools. This example can be applied to public housing, roads, libraries, health care, Medicaid, food stamps. Not enough money to spread to all the people in our state.

Every one of us needs to be counted!

People may be afraid to share information about themselves on their census forms. They may worry that they will be endangering themselves or their family by answering certain questions on the form. Remember, census workers are bound to be confidential by oath (with the threat of jail time and a big fine if they break this vow).

Fortunately for New York, we have very active public library systems whose staff have direct contact with millions of people. We can make people feel confident in the confidentiality of the census. We can have a huge and positive impact on the census, doing what we always do, provide excellent and appropriate customer service.

Every library employee, every citizen of this state is impacted and we need to make us count.

Who negotiates our \$0 healthcare?

THE simple answer is, the Municipal Labor Committee (MLC) negotiates with the City with an arbitrator that resolves conflicts between the other two. But what does that mean?

The MLC is comprised of all the municipal unions - police, fire, teachers, DC 37, principals, sergeants, etc. Over four decades ago, during the city's fiscal crisis, the unions and city agreed to negotiate healthcare through the MLC. All public sector unions gained strength because we negotiated as one. And it made the City's negotiations easier because instead of negotiating with dozens of unions separate health insurances, they negotiated with one party. At that time the two parties agreed to create a fund that keeps our insurance premiums at \$0 and would help defray excessive city employees' insurance costs.

This fund was financially stable until now. Healthcare costs, especially hospitalizations, have skyrocketed and actuaries are predicting that this fund will run out of money in the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2021. If this fund goes bankrupt, no one knows what will happen, but predictions are, city workers will have to start contributing to our health insurance.

The MLC and City are not waiting for this to happen and are actively working on solutions to save our healthcare.

A few things that they have done already are:

- created Centers of Excellence at Memorial Sloan Kettering for cancer treatment, and Hospital for Joint Diseases where city employees can receive orthopedic care with no copay and \$0 cost;
- renegotiated the PICA (Psychotropic, Injectable, Chemotherapy & Asthma) program;

The two parties are exploring other solutions to create more savings:

- expanding Centers of Excellence for other procedures and disease treatments;
- issuing RFPs for retirees' Medicare Advantage Care;
- expanding 340B program to purchase speciality prescription drugs.

The MLC is balancing the increased costs of our health insurance without sacrificing the excellent healthcare we receive. Until the Federal Government fixes our country's out-of-control healthcare costs, we will be struggling to create ways to pay for it. Fortunately for us, the MLC has excellent people who are well versed in healthcare economics and are working constantly to fight for us.



Bicycle Trip (continued from page 8)

we all wanted to save a slice for each other! So there were three of us in the room, and it was funny, because one of us was snoring, and Sarah was like, "Stop snoring," and she threw a pillow at that person! One time I went on a cruise with my friends, and one of my friends was snoring SUPER loud, so I just took my blanket and pillow and slept on the deck of the cruise boat. I need to learn to be more assertive with snoring people!

Then it was January 24th, the final day of our bicycle trip! The hotel had free breakfast!!! I LOVE free breakfast because it tastes so much better than breakfast you have to pay for, you know? Okay, this day was the best day! It was like 50 degrees, and we rode on a bicycle path for much of the morning! It was so pretty! You know, nature stuff! The only bad part was that Sarah fell because of the mud of the nature path wasn't stable! But she fixed her bicycle really fast! Then we got to Levittown Library, and it was so cool!!! The manager was waiting outside for us, and he gave us free snacks and drinks!!! I took a nap in the staff kitchen, it was Amazing!!! We were there for over an hour -- I was like, I want to live here! It's really great to have this worker solidarity, and have people you never met before, looking out for you! I also noticed they had AF-SCME posters in their kitchen! But we still had like 25 miles left to Philadelphia, and I was like, "OMG, I'll NEVER make it." But we made it! By myself, I would have been like, "This is not worth it." But having my colleagues there with me, I was like, "I have to do this!!!" Sarah kept stopping for us because we were so slow, she was super patient! One time we almost died, because a bicycle lane just disappeared into a busy highway!!! Then Sarah found this road without any cars that wasn't even on Google Maps! It

was so peaceful, especially after being in the middle of all these cars!!! Then we were in Philadelphia!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! We had successfully completed our ride! We got there too late for a tour of the Free Public Library of Philadelphia, but at least we got there, right?

There was this milestone when we crossed the bridge from NJ to PA, it was like a symbolic bridge that took us from dreaming something to doing something! I had booked a room in Philadelphia for one person, but the three of us all stayed together because we were so close at this time! The conference was great, and I think all of us enjoyed it a lot! We attended the Sustainability Round Table Meeting, and we talked about our bicycle trip! Desmond read a poem about bicycling! It felt so nice to make goals and to meet those goals! Desmond is also working on putting our videos together into an award-winning documentary! Sometimes people would ask me if my legs were sore, and surprisingly, it was my lips that hurt the most -- I got chapped lips but they're better now!

Things often may seem bleak or scary in life sometimes, especially after your cat passes away after she was your best friend for nearly two decades! But being part of a group can give you a lot of energy and much needed support! I'm so grateful to be part of Local 1321! I try to attend meetings every month, because I like to meet my colleagues and friends, and we can be there for each other! I got a lay-off notice twice from the library because of budget cuts, but I'm still here because of Local 1321.

Together we can do so many great things!!! And we're planning to do another bicycle trip to NYLA in November from Poughkeepsie to Saratoga Springs if you want to come! See you!

library! It was two floors and had cool furniture with a second floor with a nice view of the street! I gave the Sustainability Round Table flyer to the manager. As we were leaving, another worker asked to take a picture with us! It felt special to have this solidarity with our fellow library workers! And this was just the first stop!

Then we took a ferry to New Jersey, and a quick train ride to Newark because there really wasn't a good and safe route by bicycle. At Newark, it was the officially pedal time! The three of us were pedalling and pedalling. The weather was really nice! At first it was a bit difficult, and one of the three of us was kind of pedalling really slowly! We were like, "OMG, we just started and we're in deep trouble!" But it turns out this third bicyclist couldn't change his gears because he had a bag over it, so once he took it off, he pedalled much better! We pedalled on the road, and on greenways. The greenways felt much more peaceful and calm than the highways! The highways are noisy, crowded with cars, and they feel scary! Then we arrived at Woodbridge Library! There was a library associate there, and she was so nice, and she gave us a tour of the library! It was really big! They had a lounge area with vending machines and tables with chairs, so we all had our snacks and meals (my mom made me a sandwich which I ate at this time - a shrimp salad sandwich). Desmond was doing stretching exercises! Libraries are really versatile, huh, and good for all sorts of things!

Then our mission was to bike to Princeton, NJ! But it was like really far! But if I can mention something here, we biked on this incredible bike path at night time it was surrounded by water on both sides, and the water was like

a mirror and it reflected the trees and it was dark and really special! It was a fun memory! Thanks goodness Sarah had her bicycle lights and she was really well-prepared. Some places were like pitch dark! I did buy lights for this trip, but I couldn't find them. If you see them, let me know! We biked as far as a little past New Brunswick, and we passed Rutgers College, but then it was like really late, and really cold! It wasn't Sarah's fault, it was us, guys's fault, because we were so slow, and Sarah had to keep waiting for us! So we biked like 6 miles an hour! And there was like 24 miles left, and it was like 9 pm, and it was late, and it was like freezing at this time because the sun had went down already!!!

Sarah was like, "Let's stop at a gas station to warm up." So we went inside a little office space at a gas station, and it was warm and comfy there, and there was a water cooler there with both hot and cold water! I poured myself some hot water and mixed in some cold water to make lukewarm water!!! Then the gas station manager came in, and he was so friendly! He told us how he used to drink a lot and party hard in New York, and moved in with a crazy girlfriend, but now he settled down, working at the gas station, living one block away from the gas station, living with his wife and kid, and he showed us pictures! He said when he was younger, he biked to Princeton in 19 minutes, but that he got hit by a car twice riding to Princeton, so the three of us were like, "Oh, shoot, sounds bad!!!" So we biked back to New Brunswick, and got on the train to Princeton, and then we biked to our hotel in Princeton, and it felt so nice to finally rest!!! Sarah ordered pizza, a meat-lovers pizza and it was so tasty! There even was one slice left the next day because

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Social media is FUN!

THREE years ago, we had an article in our newsletter about how much fun social media is...not for your job. The article documented an incident in which lawyers from the City's Administration for Children's Services and the Legal Aid Society took photographs of their clients and posted these photographs on Facebook making very disparaging and offensive comments about their clients. Someone reported their posts to the City and Legal Aid Society, and then it ended up in the New York Times. Those lawyers faced disciplinary hearings and their careers could be in jeopardy.

There are so many other examples of people disparaging their employer, saying racist and other offensive comments, and acting inappropriate on social media and then getting in trouble. We can argue about your right to free speech and as an union member, if that happens to you, we will take every legal action necessary if you get in trouble. However, we may not win and you could be severely penalized, including losing your job.

As library employees we encounter coworkers and customers from all walks of life and sometimes our encounters are notable. You may have a strong urge to share on your favorite social media platform your thoughts about the encounter. Resist that urge.

Unfortunately, that social media platform that makes sharing these thoughts so easy, confirming, and reaffirming can get you

into trouble.

You post that juicy encounter on social media. Someone following you thinks it's inappropriate and decides to report your post to the library. They also decide to spread it on their social media. Maybe the library administration finds the post offensive. HR will call you into a very uncomfortable investigatory interview to find out about your post and explain that your post reflects poorly on the Queens Library. They will then determine if discipline is warranted and if so the type. That discipline could be termination.

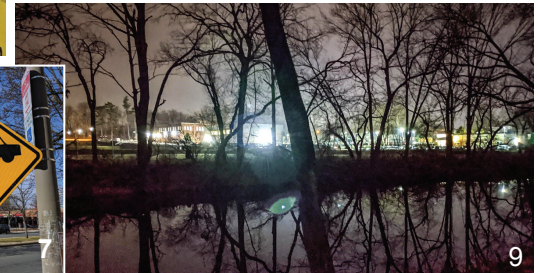
Your union will support you and work towards mitigating the punishment. However, the damage will not be just your job at the library, it could be your reputation and ability to get another job.

Unfortunately, the Union has experience with what is outlined in this article. We are writing this as a warning, be mindful of your social media presence and do not post anything that could reflect poorly on the library.



Bicycle Trip from NY to Philly by mostly Local 1321 members

By Kacper Jarecki



1. Kacper is waving to the camera while somewhere on a Green Path in New Jersey.
2. Woodbridge Public Library NJ, Desmond, trainee, Sarah and Kacper.
3. Steve: the library manager, at Levittown Library, PA.
4. Being cool and posing for the camera.
5. Standing on the bridge that connects NJ and PA!
6. Standing in our hotel in Philadelphia!!! Happy Times!!!
7. A share the road Road Sign in Philadelphia.
8. Sarah at nighttime!
9. Nighttime in Philadelphia

SOMETIMES by myself I get lazy, and all I want to do is stay in bed and dream about my cat (and for one month in 2015, I did just that). However, it's nice to have good friends and colleagues who can motivate you -- like Local 1321, but more on that later, in the conclusion! So it was 100% the case, as when we pedaled by bicycle to Philadelphia from New York!

Actually, I used to ride my bicycle all the time! I used to go to Brooklyn College for my BA, and I would walk there, and it took me over an hour. One of my classmates asked me how come I don't ride a bicycle since it's faster. I was like, "OMG, it's SOOO much faster." She was a really good classmate to give me such a good suggestion! So I used to bike to school on my bicycle! Then I biked to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden where I worked full-time after I graduated. Then

I biked to Medgar Evers College, where I worked part-time while I studied Library Science in Queens College (where I took the train). I went on trips on my bicycle often. The longest one being a really long organized trip to Montauk - 140 miles long! And I did it 3X, even one time in the pouring rain! I remember one time meeting Mike at the Montauk ride, and he couldn't finish the ride, it was so funny! Mike works for Queens Public Library, BTW. Mike, if you're reading this, you know who you are! Don't you think this article is hilarious, so far?

Anyway, so I was at a manager's meeting. It was Lou Finkelman's retirement tour, and the meeting was at East Elmhurst library, which is so pretty!!! I was joking with Sarah, because we both happened to be on the Sustainability Round Table, which is part of ALA. The joke was, wouldn't it be

funny to ride our bicycles to Philadelphia for the ALA-Midwinter Conference? Then we were like, "Let's do it!" I tried to recruit my colleagues and friends, but they were too busy or something, but then I recruited Desmond, a Youth Counselor! He wanted to go too, so it was great to have this kewl group! I brought the trip up at a Sustainability Round Table meeting, and they were so supportive! They gave us \$75 for vests! But even more importantly, they gave us the legitimacy and moral support we needed to make this joke into a reality!!! And we would save like half a ton of carbon emissions, so it was a win-win situation!

Also, because of this upcoming bicycle ride, I had to get serious about my fitness, so I stopped drinking energy drinks! I've been dry from energy drinks since January 18th, 2020. I also worked out at the gym

doing lunges and riding the stationary bicycle before work! My thighs were so sore, but I didn't want to disappoint my future bicycle colleagues!

So fast forward to Thursday, January 23rd, 2020 the day of the trip! The weather forecast was like 40s and sunny, and the next day forecast was forecast even warmer! We were so lucky! I guess my cat is really looking out for me! I'm so lucky to have had such a cute and loving cat who makes the weather nice for me after she's gone. The three of us met at the -- try to guess, I'm waiting, waiting -- ok -- Library!!! We met at the Battery Park Library! It was before 11 am, and there were a ton of parents with their baby strollers, trying to get in for story time at 11am! I asked to speak to the manager, and he gave us a nice tour of the

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