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UNIFORMED EMT'S, PARAMEDICS & FIRE INSPECTORS—F.D.N.Y.
LOCAL 2507, DC-37, AFSCME AFL-CIO
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UEP Bulletin

THE ECONOMY AND US

By PATRICK J. BAHNKEN, *President*

Every day the newspapers and television media are filled with stories about the nations economy. For more than a year, we have watched as banks failed, foreclosures skyrocketed and millions of workers joined the ranks of the unemployed.

Today, it is hard to look beyond our immediate circle of family and friends and not find someone who has been severely impacted by this crisis and now after nearly eighteen months of bad news, we ourselves are starting to feel the impact.

While other city agencies have endured lay offs, hiring freezes and reduced headcounts via attrition, we have remained virtually unscathed. This will no longer be the case.

In his recent budget proposal, the Mayor calls for a reduction of thirty BLS tours, a hiring freeze and the possible elimination of non-field assignments.

Although none of these cuts are nor should they ever be acceptable to this or any Union, these are not the greatest threats out there. In Albany, the City is seeking to establish a new pension tier. If adopted, this new tier would require greater contributions from members, eliminate overtime earnings from future pension calculations and eliminate current pension enhancements such as disability pensions and line of duty widows benefits. Each of which would have to be re legislated for future hires thus setting our legislative successes back ten years.

Additionally, the City is seeking to have us pay as much as ten percent of our medical benefit costs. In some cases, this could exceed fifteen hundred dollars a year out of your pocket. While I fully agree with the sentiment that way too much effort is put into making this job difficult on a daily basis, these greater monsters are what keep me awake at night.

Another significant monster that I feel is about to emerge from the closet is the impact of this economy on the EMS system. As I write this article, we are being faced with the closure of two hospitals in Queens. The loss of hospital beds in such a small geographic area combined with the closure of a similarly located hospital last

fall will virtually eliminate any surge capacity for neighboring hospitals.

History has also demonstrated that a deep and prolonged recession results in a tremendous surge in EMS call volume. As this recession progresses, people who have lost their health benefits will no longer receive preventive medical care. Additionally, people begin to skip doses or pill split in hopes of stretching out their prescriptions. We will also see rises in violence both societal and domestic as people struggle to cope with the fallout of this crisis.

I have and will continue to raise these concerns to the Mayor, City Council and the Fire Department.

While many younger members are probably weary of listening to us "dinosaurs" talk about the gory days of the late 1980's, I hold a legitimate fear based on historical evidence that those bad days are about to come around again. As call volumes surge and hospital beds are limited, ambulances will be forced to drive greater distances to already overcrowded emergency rooms where they will wait for extended periods for an available stretcher.

The net result will be fewer available ambulances doing greater numbers of calls with an ever-increasing response time. While I truly hope I am wrong and that this does not come to pass, the storm continues to brew on our horizon.

We are successfully fighting back against the monsters in Albany. Most of our elected officials understand that it was the banks and hedge fund managers through naked avarice and poor business practice who got us into this mess. Despite the rantings of some editorialists, the Unions did not cause this mess and while we all have to pitch in, we are not going to absorb the pain while those responsible get bonuses paid for by your tax dollars.

In closing, this is without a doubt, the worst financial crisis to hit this country since the great depression. The coming

(Continued on page 2)



DON'T JAM YOURSELF UP!

BY ISRAEL MIRANDA, *Vice President*

Brothers and Sisters, this year has started off with many issues needing to be addressed. The core problem is how management continues to micro-manage with no clear direction, leaders are people who have commanding authority or influence. There is a true lack of administrating this authority within the EMS command. Management continues to lead by intimidation, instead of motivation and education. The Department finds it much easier to write C.D.'s or prefer charges, than discuss or correct the issue or misunderstanding with the employee. Bit's continues to follow units and videotape employees' actions on a day to day basis. The drug-testing unit continues to attempt the drug testing of two members a day. You add this to the stress related to serving the public and responding to approximately 1.2 million assignments a year. We would all agree that our stress levels are of significant magnitude. If not for our professionalism, dedication and love for what we do, I don't think any of us would hesitate moving on.

Provisional employees must be extra careful with this type of management. Knowing that these employees have limited contractual rights in reference to disciplinary issue, will try to use this to their advantage. We as senior members of Local 2507 must educate our young members. We must help them understand their responsibilities and the rules of the system we work in. Provisional employees also need to understand that their off-duty conduct

could lead to separation from the Department. With a criminal arrest you put yourself at risk with the Fire Department and Department of Health. The department has been very unforgiving with criminal convictions of provisional employees within the last couple of years. Of course it would depend on the severity of conviction and the provisional employees personnel record. But with no expectation of an administrative hearing or arbitration, you should assume the worst. Your best weapon is to education yourself. Be aware that you are always entitled to union representation as a provisional employee.



As management continues to employ their tactics to diminish your morale, motivation, dedication and professionalism, we should always remind ourselves of who we are and why we do this job. We will not be divided, we will stand strong.

In Solidarity

Israel Miranda
Vice President

President's Message

(Continued from page 1)

years will pose significant challenges and we will meet them. The Welsh poet Dylan Thomas wrote "Do not go gently into that good night" and we have no intention of doing so! We will fight for every job, every tour, and every benefit and not give one inch freely!

As we face the continued onslaught of these times, we will only make it to the other side if we stick together. As was said by one of our founding fathers, "Either we hang together or we hang separately".

In Solidarity

Patrick J. Bahnken

Newsworthy events can be called in or e-mailed to the following news media:

News Desk

Channel 2: 1-800-242-6397

Channel 4: 1-212-664-2731

Channel 5: 1-212-452-3808

Channel 7: 1-212-456-3173

Channel 9: newsdesk@wwortv.com

Channel 11: 1-212-210-2411

The New York Post: 1-212-930-8500

The New York Daily News: 1-212-210-NEWS

The New York Times: news-tips@nytimes.com

MEET THE PEOPLE



Members from station 54, Brendon Mulroy, Hopeton Hendricks, Cosmo Jackson, Kenneth Silas, Brian Jennings, William Warr.



Members from station 47, Rachel Victor, Priscilla Millam, Renzo Martinez, Alice Iomino, Joe Vasquez, Ed Radovic, Andrew Rosenthal.



EMT WENDELL O'BRIEN February 16, 1966 – December 22, 2008

Gone too soon, but not forgotten.
Always keep him in our hearts
and our prayers.

RIDERS 4 LIFE

BY JOE CONZO, *Secretary-Treasurer*

This is a new and exciting Motorcycle Club, but hoping to be one of the largest. We are a club for members of the FDNY EMS, EMT and Paramedics and their families, who wish to promote the enjoyment of owning and riding motorcycles. Membership is open to ALL FDNY and EMS personnel, who have access to a motorcycle and holds a valid motorcycle drivers license.

The club was formed for its members because we love to ride and WE BELIEVE IN A STRONG BROTHERHOOD. It does not matter what kind of Bike you ride. Members of other clubs are invited to ride with us. Each member, while wearing Riders

4 Life colors, should display and maintain a conduct of courtesy and respect towards fellow members and others outside of this club. We will not judge based on race, sex, religion, political beliefs, or choice in bikes.

We look forward to having you as a member of our "family." We are actively recruiting.

Melo Rodriguez-President @ 917-476-9075

Louis Gonzalez-Vice President @ 646-338-4242.

Peace and Blessings!

Joe Conzo

Sect/Tres UEP

Batt. 18

“FIRST 100 DAYS OF A WORKING PEOPLE’S AGENDA OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY”



BY MUATA GREENE

I must first say that as an African American EMS worker for the past 24 years, who experienced racism first hand while in the military in the south in 1968. This was a water shed moment to see a man of African descent rise to become the President of the United States. I do feel this was a major blow to the face of racism, but as a progressive trade unionist I must look at this Presidency through working class eyes.

As we all know the crisis in the capital has plunged the U.S. into a deep recession which started way back in the mid 1970’s when the living standard of the average worker declined, while productivity has increased workers pay has decreased. This has meant an assault on the public sector. Workers have been under attack as a result of the problematic economy. The ability of workers to join a union has worsened with each year. In the U.S. the top 1% controls more than 35% of the wealth.

The new administration must look at doing the following in

order to help working people.

1. Re-establish the home owners loan corporation to stabilize uncertain mortgage markets
2. Dedicate \$210 billion to create construction and environmental jobs
3. Reclaim money that has been disproportionately funneled to corporations and the wealthy
4. Launch a domestic version of the Marshall Plan
5. Establish regional public agencies to oversee the reconstruction of the Gulf coast

The above is a short list of a Working People’s agenda.

Reference: “A Legislative Agenda for the First 100 Days” by Bill Fletcher Jr.-New Labor Forum fall 2008

Please check out my writing on the new social network for union people called UnionBook.com

I'd like to give a big shout out to The Haz Mat Unit for coming out to all the Battalions and giving us some hands on refresher training. While we know all too often we don't to use a lot of the additional training as Haz Tac Units, its refreshing to have the instructors come out and do some scenarios. Thanks to Liam, Jeff and the crew of 18H2.

—Joe Conzo

WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

BY JACK SCHAEFER, *Grievance Coordinator*

In 1975 a Supreme Court decision gave unionized employees the right to have a union delegate present during a meeting with management when the employee believes the meeting might lead to disciplinary action. This case, known as the Weingarten Decision, applies when a supervisor is questioning a member to obtain information that could be used as grounds for disciplinary action. When the member believes such a meeting may lead to disciplinary action the member has the right to request union representation. The rules stemming from the Weingarten Decision are as follows:

1. The employee must request representation before or during

the meeting.

2. After the member makes the request, the supervisor has 3 options:

- a) Grant the request and the delegates’ arrival.
- b) Deny the request and cancel the meeting.
- c) Give the member the option of ending the meeting or continuing without a delegate.

3. If the supervisor denies the members request and continues to ask questions, the member has the right to refuse to answer.

REMEMBER: Management is not obliged to inform members of their Weingarten Rights. Members must ask for their Weingarten Rights

DE-STRESS

BY JEFF SAMERSON, *Executive Board Member*

You are not the only one that's feeling the pressure, we are all stressed out. First of all, we choose an extremely stressful career as EMT's and Paramedics.

No matter how bad your day is going, you are expected to put on a happy face and a professional attitude, and after all of that is over, your expected to be normal at home and pay your bills on time, with our low income. No wonder why your about to explode.

Well it might seem impossible, but you need to plan a vacation. I realize I just said, you can't pay your bills, but you must budget and de-stress yourself.

Stress causes major health problems, weight gain, eczema, anxiety and other health issues. You're probably angry with patients and your co-workers. Your special someone is always calming you down. Divorce in E.M.S. is on the rise. Marriages and relationships are failing because of a stressful lifestyle.

Psychologists state that steady workouts in the gym relieve stress, but let's face it, there aren't enough hours in a day for you to make your way to a gym. Especially with mandates, KVO's and childcare.

So plan a vacation. Look forward to going away to that beautiful beach on a cruise. Just imagine how you will feel when you are counting down those days. Your partners at work are probably counting down the days that you go away also.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT UNIT COMMITTEE

BY RENAE O'CARROLL, *Executive Board Member*

After years of trying Local 2507 has finally gained the right to be on the MEU committee. The MEU evaluates equipment from DCAS approved vendors that our members will be using in the field, plus any health and safety issues pertaining to our members. Afterwards forwarding their recommendations to the FDNY for final approval. MEU was formally known as the health and safety unit. Dr. Isaacs chairs the committee. I was asked to attend these meetings by the local and have been doing so since April 2008. In the past some of the members may recall reading my reports prepared for the GM meetings. I have decided that in order to reach a broader spectrum of our members, regarding the MEU information, to base my newsletter articles on updates from the meetings. The newsletter will recap the most pertinent points of the MEU meetings but there will be more details presented at the monthly GM meetings. I will briefly touch base on what the committee is currently reviewing.

The MEU Committee is currently working on the following equipment:

- 1.) Final analysis on the stair chairs that were field tested months ago.
- 2.) New Cardiac Monitors (the current ones with the Capnography are the old ones that were updated),

- 3.) Stronger more versatile drug bags for medics,
- 4.) The needleless system along with a vendor that can package the current drugs we use making them compatible with the needleless system,
- 5.) Hypothermia devices,
- 6.) Smaller suction devices

I will also inform the members if there are any items in the field that haven't gone through MEU for review. For example, HEMOSTATIC AGENT DRESSINGS. The dressing is EMS command order number 2009-2005. I, along with local 3621, who also has a seat on the committee questioned the utilization of the dressings without prior MEU review. Members were also not given a drill or an instructional DVD to review the usage of these dressing. According to the order they are to be on Rescue Units, LSUs and the MERVs. The order also states that it will be authorized through a class order for usage at MCI incidents. My question was, who authorized them for the member's use? There weren't any suitable answers given. I informed the president and vice president of your union as I am obligated to do so and we are currently seeking answers. The feeling is that if something goes wrong while using these dressings our members can be held culpable in some forum.

In closing I would like the members to know if there are any questions pertaining to any MEU issues I can be reached via the union office or pager.

Visit us online at
www.afscme2507.org

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