

Local 1320

THE OPEN LINE

District Council 37, AFSCME, AFL-CIO • Vol. 12, No. 1 Winter 2007

Vice President's Message—

Accomplishments of 2007 and A Special Thanks to the Members

YOU SHOULD always be willing to learn no matter what age you are. So off to a new education I went, starting in mid-January 2007 the newly elected Officers and Executive Board were sworn into office. Lucky for me, I had started working with Joe Napolitano, a man I must say has given 100% to this local over the years. During his turn as Vice President, Joe worked many long and hard hours behind the scenes. Plus he has promised to always be just a phone call away. For this, the Local's entire membership owes Joe many thanks.

Local 1320's 50th Anniversary Dinner was held on May 9, 2007 at Russo's on the Bay.

That night, I must say, was filled with support from all the Plants and Collection Facilities. The dinner was great; the guest speakers all supported this local and its membership for all the work the men and women of 1320 do so well.

In September, the Local was busy gathering information and putting together the study material for the Senior Sewage Treatment Worker (SSTW) prep courses, which were held at the Fire Academy on Wards Island.

In October the Officers, Executive Board members and the Shop Stewards from each location went away for three days and two nights to a working conference at Split Rock Resort in Pennsylvania. During this conference we

all attended classes that included, but were not limited to, Workers' Comp cases and procedures and Retirement, to name a few. In November, we met with the NYC Office of Labor Relations to once again sit at the negotiation table and let our voices be heard. **Trust me, and your elected Board members, when we say our highest priority is to get a fair, livable wage increase to meet today's prices and cost of living.**



TOM CUSTANCE

Our highest priority is to get a fair, livable wage increase to meet today's prices and cost of living.

In addition, I've been able to meet at and tour some of the plants and collection facilities and will be touring the remaining sites in the coming months. I express my thanks to all the

members of the Local and say that the entire Executive Board and Officers appreciate your suggestions and the questions that you ask at our meetings. Everybody in Local 1320 has a voice and will always be heard.

In solidarity,
Tom Custance
Vice President

**LOCAL 1320
NEW YORK CITY SEWAGE TREATMENT &
SENIOR SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKERS**

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Contract Negotiations

GREETINGS, brothers and sisters of Local 1320. I would like to start this first article off by saying that I no longer have to write rouge letters from the beyond. I have been asked to actually write this, so I hope you are all listening up.

Originally, I thought I should write about my first year as an Executive Board member and delegate of Local 1320. In brief, it has been a learning experience and I have been busy observing and taking it all in. There are many times I wish I was just a general member so I could scream and yell at the top of my lungs about all of the issues I disagree with. Even though I may disagree with certain people and issues at times, I do respect their opinions, and I can certainly say we are all working hard together to achieve the best for our local. With that said, I really do not think you want to read an entire article about what I have learned. I really believe you want to read about our contract negotiations.

I certainly understand everyone's anger and frustration dealing with the slow progress and results over the past two years since we started this process. Trust me; there have been plenty of times in the last year where my wife and I have worried about paying our bills. I am not independently wealthy. I am worried just as much as the next person is, and there are plenty of times when I feel like cashing in my chips. It is hard, and I am having a hard time making ends meet, but I believe in what we are trying to accomplish, which is a **reasonable, fair and deserving contract**. We are currently working on two different paths to achieve this, through the Office of Labor Relations and the Comptroller.

One major issue should be addressed: Rumors. If you are not receiving your information from a general membership meeting, chances are you are receiving incorrect information. I would encourage any member with questions about any part of the process we are currently involved in to phone or e-mail the local or attend a general membership meeting before believing and or spreading a rumor that they have heard.

In closing, I hope to see you all at our next meeting. I really mean that. Attendance has been lacking. Show your solidarity.

— Barry DeCoursey
Executive Board Member

Sewage Treatment Plants Can Help Power Our City

DESPITE the recent talk of conserving energy, our beloved city is constantly missing chances to recapture much needed energy. Take our sewage treatment plants for example.

Every day places like Hunts Point and Bowery Bay emit 150 million gallons of water and enough methane gas to power a small city. By placing a turbine in the path of the water, we could take a large step towards creating self-sufficient sewage treatment plants or even have the sewage treatment plants help power the city.

Creating self-sufficient sewage treatment plants would help save much needed energy and money. A few simple additions to the current system could help create a faster city, a faster state, and a faster country.

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REPORT OF INDEPENDENT AUDITOR

To the Executive Board of
Local 1320 of the
American Federation of State, County and
Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

We have audited the accompanying statements of financial position of Local 1320 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO (the Local) as of December 31, 2006 and 2005, and the related statements of activities and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the Local's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audits provide a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Local as of December 31, 2006 and 2005, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Peter DeCarlo CPA, PLLC

September 25, 2007

**Local 1320 of the
American Federation of State, County and
Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO**

**Statements of Activities for the Year ending December 31, 2006 and the
Approved Budget for 2008**

Revenue	
Dues	\$514,617
Interest	<u>14,150</u>
Total revenue	<u>\$528,807</u>
EXPENSES	
Per capita	
District Council 37- net of subsidy	287,781
AFSCME International	94,050
Help Our Own Fund	2,542
Municipal Labor Committee	1,471
Officers, Executive Board and Shop Stewards Stipends	41,792
Conferences and Conventions	16,359
Travel and Auto	27,500
Holiday Party, Toy Drive, Holiday Gifts for Staff	6,253
Participations	6,850
Payroll taxes	5,631
Depreciation	928
Meetings	6,495
Telephone	4,939
Accounting and Bookkeeping	3,000
Postage	2,456
Check-off charges	
1,603	
New York City Central Labor Council	1,200
Employee Recognition	1,730
Gifts and condolences	438
Surety Bond	534
Dues and Subscriptions	350
Retirees Dues	72
Office Supplies and Expenses	545
Total Expenses	<u>514,519</u>
CHANGE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	4,288
Unrestricted net assets	
Beginning of year	425,721
End of Year	<u>\$448,145</u>

Message from the Editor—

The Economic Struggle of the STW's



GEORGE RODRIGUEZ

In solidarity,
George Rodriguez
Editor

A LONG time ago, in a place no further away than a gas station, milk was sold for \$2 a gallon, gas was \$1.50 per gallon, and bread was \$1 per loaf. Five years later, those prices double, and the salaries of the men and women who handle our waste stay the same.

These simple groceries aren't the only things to increase in price. It costs a lot more to buy a house now than it did back in 2002, yet our city won't give its sewage treatment workers (STW's) a raise. In households with one working person, our STW's are in danger of losing homes or are being thrown into debt. Making ends meet is becoming harder and harder, yet the city doesn't seem willing to give aid where needed.

I'd like to think that our fair city has a bigger heart than this, but the evidence of this seems a great deal lacking. New York, I implore you, throw the STW's a bone; the raise they ask for is not inspired by greed, but by necessity. Though they may not save lives like our police or firefighters, this city couldn't run without them. The least we could give them is the means to get by.

Letter to the Editor

A QUARTER of your paycheck to have Thanksgiving at your mother's house...

I want to start by telling you a little about myself. I'm 42 years old and have been a sewage treatment worker for almost 15 years. Before I started with the DEP, I was a Local 8 roofer and before that a Local 2 plumber. As a plumber, I made \$39.90 per hour; that was 20 years ago. You can check the numbers and the year because they are very accurate.

I live in a very modest two-bedroom house in Queens that I purchased five years ago and thank God I did it then because there's no way I would be able to buy the same tiny house today. I do not live above my means, yet I'm finding it very hard to make ends meet. Since I bought my home, I've had two children, and they drink a lot of milk at \$4.50 a gallon — not to mention my mortgage, car payment, gas prices etc. Everything has doubled or tripled in the last seven years except my paycheck.

A lot of you are saying to yourselves, "You should have stayed a plumber." I think you're right. As most of you know, when you work construction the work is not always steady. That's why I started working with the NYC DEP: for steady work and a pension. I thought I made the right choice. I WAS WRONG, VERY WRONG. When I started the job, the *Chief* newspaper printed that I'd be starting at \$17.00 per hour. WRONG AGAIN. When I started working, they cut the starting salary down to \$12.00 per hour. Most people on the outside would never believe this, but it's true.

You know times are tough when almost a quarter of your weekly paycheck goes to having Thanksgiving at your mother's house. Here is what I'm talking about. Filling up the car with gas (\$58), paying the toll to get to Staten Island, where mom lives (\$9), bringing the two dozen bagels for the whole family for breakfast (\$17) and dessert for after the meal (\$30). All this adds up quickly to \$114 for just one day. I didn't even bring the turkey or the sides; imagine how much more it would have added up to be. I just hope that I don't have any birthdays or christenings to go to that month because I'll go broke.

I want things to change this year. No, I *need* things to change this year. All members of Local 1320 must get together on this. I feel all members of DC 37 should be with us also and stick together as a union and make things happen. We are the backbone of this city, and we are being taken advantage of. Nobody knows who we are or what we do. Everyone knows a firefighter, a police officer or a bus driver. We go to work every day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 352 days a year, yet no one knows who we are. We keep the streets and water clean. We keep on doing this even though we haven't had a real raise in seven years.

I'm writing this in the hope that someone that reads this can help us out of this situation, or that it gets enough guys off their butts and to union meetings and make some noise. Only the squeaky wheel gets the grease, and I say we get together and squeak.

— **Joseph Costantino**
Shop Steward, Bowery Bay

Local 1320 Official Meeting Notice

Hold these dates

The following is a tentative list of dates for our General Membership Meetings for 2008. You will get official meeting notices prior to the actual meeting. All meetings are held at 125 Barclay Street, NYC. Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. sharp. Please try to attend as many meetings as possible.

Local 1320

General Membership Meetings for 2008

Tuesday March 11, 2008

Tuesday May 13, 2008

Tuesday September 9, 2008

Wednesday November 12, 2008

**This year's Holiday Party is tentatively scheduled for
December 9, 2008.**

Local 1320 General Membership Meeting Notice

Date: Tuesday, March 11, 2008

Time: 6:30.p.m. Sharp

Place: 125 Barclay Street, NYC

Agenda: Reading of minutes

Financial Report

Officers Report

a) Update on Economic Bargaining

b) Labor Management Issues



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