

SENIOR BUZZ

Spring 2016



The Official Publication of the TWU Local 100 Retirees Association • 195 Montague 3rd Floor • Brooklyn NY 11201

1966 STRIKE

50th Anniversary Celebration



RETIREES ASSOCIATION
JOINS FORCES
WITH NYSARA

Parlaying Our Power

103 AND
KICK'N IT

Local 100's Sam Hopkins

www.twulocal100.org/retirees-association



Mike Tutrone

Director's Letter

My fellow retirees,

Social Security is NOT an Entitlement!

As I pointed out in our last newsletter, the battle is ongoing to protect our pensions and benefits. In addition to those concerns, we now have to keep an eye on what the Bozo's in Washington are doing with our



Social Security benefits. For starters, they all (Democrats and Republicans) seem to feel that they can refer to our Social Security benefits as an ENTITLEMENT. That is an absolute misnomer. It is not an entitlement, it is our money, put there over our entire working lives so that we could supplement our pensions when we retired, or needed it due to disability. We fought for and paid for these social insurance programs over several generations and should reject any notion that these programs constitute an unearned gift.

The 2016 election cycle offers the opportunity to challenge the candidates for public office to openly embrace the defense and expansion of the social safety net, and that to make reductions in the social insurance programs would be a fatal mistake to any candidate seeking election.

I urge all retirees to contact all candidates for federal/state and city elected positions to make them aware that we will not tolerate any use of Social Security funds for anything other than benefits for those who paid into the program. If you need help in getting the contact information for your representatives, call us and we will help you locate the information.

Keeping an Eye on the Supreme Court

It seems that every time I sit down to write an article for our newsletter, there is always a boatload of bad news, and this time is no different. Another potential damaging scenario played out in the nation's highest court recently. It is the case coming out of California called *Friedrichs v California Teachers Association*. In a nutshell, it revolves around union dues and agency shop fees. Had the court ruled in favor of *Friedrichs*, it would have meant that all Federal/State and City jobs across the nation would become right-to-work zones and the estimate is that it will reduce union ranks in excess of 20 percent. That would severely impact on union negotiating power and weaken the union's ability to protect already won benefits and pension rights. Thankfully, the Court deadlocked at a 4-4 tie, which means everything stays as is. But, this or a similar case will come before the Court after the next President picks a replacement for the late Justice Antonin Scalia. Stay tuned. This could make things difficult.

We Need Pension COLA to Apply to First \$25,000

Another developing issue is that Governor Cuomo seems bent on pushing the elevation of the minimum wage to \$15, yet when the issue of elevating the COLA calculation from the first \$18,000 of your pension to the first \$25,000 comes up, it always gets pushed aside. Maybe the governor should take a look at the stats coming from the Department of Aging stating that 25% of the population of New York State is now over age 62.

Private Lines Retiree Association Signs Up With Us

OK, time for some good news! The Queens Private Lines Retiree Association has voted to join our ranks and at this writing we have registered in excess of 200 new members. This is good news because the bigger our ranks, the louder our voice.

Prescription Drug Costs Are \$kyrocketing

Local 100 Retirees Protected

Thank goodness for our TWU-negotiated medical benefits. Where would our pensions and finances be we be without it?



The cost of a year's worth of prescription drugs doubled from 2006 to 2013, according to a new report by AARP. The price hikes are hitting senior citizens the hardest because Social Security benefits aren't keeping up.

The average annual cost of prescription drugs widely used by the elderly increased from \$5,571 in 2006 to \$11,341 in 2013, according to the latest study on drug price trends conducted by AARP, a powerful lobbying group for older Americans. That accounts for about three-quarters of average Social Security payments, and 48 percent of the median income of people who receive Medicare benefits, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

AARP says that the price surge stems from price hikes on generic drugs, which are usually more affordable than their brand-name counterparts, as well as shortages that arose from production falling short of demand. In some cases, the research shows, price hikes are a result of big companies buying the rights

to generic drugs and then selling them for increase prices. While the average retail price drug has had its price increasing at a worrying pace of 10 percent a year, about 20 drugs have astoundingly had their prices quadruple since just December. Sixty drugs doubled over the same period.

The people most hurt by price increase are, of course, retirees who are living on a fixed income. Particularly at risk are people who rely on medication to manage their chronic health problems and those who don't have insurance, forcing them to pay for the drugs out of pocket.

Rising prescription drug prices hopefully will be a hot issue in the 2016 presidential race.

Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of Americans support some form of price control on manufacturers, and candidates from both parties have spoken about their ideas for fighting high prices.



Don't Leave Your Money On The Table!



You wouldn't leave a pile of money on the table under any circumstances. Right? Injuries such as on-or-off the job accidents, or even chronic illnesses may entitle you to receive benefits that you or your employer have paid for. You're entitled to them...if you know how to get them!

We have been successfully helping workers, retirees and veterans with disabilities obtain benefits, since 1978. Consultations are free, so you have nothing loose by talking to us to determine if there is a benefit you may have overlooked. Please be sure to call us for advice and assistance with:



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Sam Hopkins

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And Still Kick'n It

Sam Hopkins often ends his day with a joke. "*Wake me up at midnight and we'll go out partying,*" the retired Bus Operator might quip before closing his eyes.

It's unlikely that Hopkins will hit the town at such a late hour. **He's 103 years old.**

Then again, you never know.

Hopkins did make it to the dance floor during his centennial birthday celebration that friends and relatives threw for him three years ago at Sylvia's Restaurant in Harlem.

"He amazes me," Joyce Bethel, Hopkins' niece, said. "He's remarkable."

TWU Local 100 has approximately 18,000 retirees but few have Hopkins' staying power. Retirees Association Director Mike Tutrone estimates there are fewer than a dozen who are 100 years old or older.

Samuel T. Hopkins was born in rural North Carolina on April 10, 1913. His father, Marcus Frank Hopkins, was a carpenter. His mother, Oakrie Virginia Slade, was a seamstress.

The family – including seven boys and one girl – grew up in Jamesville, N.C., a tiny town on the banks of the Roanoke River with a population of less than 400. It was here that Hopkins developed a life-long love of fishing.

"The river was just a block from our house," he said.

Hopkins graduated high school in North Carolina but left the country for the big city and Harlem in the 1930s. "I wanted to make a change," he said. "Jamesville is a small town. Here, they have everything."

Details and memories are elusive to Hopkins. At his age, he can't simply retrieve them like a book from a shelf. They arrive on their own from time to time, according to

Joyce, 73, with whom he shares an apartment on West 147th St. in Harlem. But there are old photographs, discharge papers from the U.S. Army and recollections retold by relatives that help provide the arc of his life.

After arriving in New York, Hopkins first worked as a rivet heater, also known as a rivet "cook," in a ship repairing operation. He met a young woman named Beatrice at a dance hall in Coney Island, Brooklyn, and they married. In just a few years, however, he was shipped out to war.

Hopkins received an honorable discharge in 1946 and was awarded three medals, including the World War II Victory Medal. After returning from the war, Hopkins took up again and became a small businessman. "He loved life and he loved entertaining," Joyce said.

When Hopkins wasn't going out to Harlem's clubs with his wife and friends he'd cook for gatherings at home, she said.

Hopkins changed careers again in 1963 when he joined the New York City Transit Authority, which was created by the state Legislature a decade earlier to manage and operate all of the city-owned bus, trolley and subway routes.

He worked out of the 146th St. Bus Depot at 146th St. and Lenox Ave. Originally a trolley barn, the depot was renamed decades later after Clara McBride Hale, or Mother Hale, another North Carolinian who moved to Harlem. Hale became renowned for her work with children born addicted to drugs. Hopkins operated a bus for 17 years, mostly crosstown routes on 42nd St. and 65th St. in Manhattan. It was a good union job with benefits, including a pension that he still collects today, his niece said. He doesn't have a theory on his longevity. "I have no answer for it but I'm here," he said. His sense of humor and upbeat attitude might be part of the equation, Joyce suggests.

"Nothing ever bothers him," she said. "He's always positive. I tell him he should take care of me with all of my aches and pains."

Photos from left: Sam in his Army Jeep in WWII; in his crosstown bus, and before going off to war.

Top photo: Sam with niece, Joyce in Harlem apartment.



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If you have been diagnosed with either lung cancer, or mesothelioma, please contact Linda McNab, at our law office's 24-hour toll-free number: **1-800-2 DEARIE** (1-800-233-2743) **Ext. 124.**



DIESEL

John Dearie addressing recent Diesel Forum at Union's Brooklyn Headquarters



NEW DIESEL LAWSUIT NOW STARTING FOR RETIRED MEMBERS OF LOCAL 100

*TWU Local 100 Retirees Association, Michael Tutrone - director
Law Office of John C. Dearie*

World Health Organization study concluded
"diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans..."
In short, **diesel exhaust exposure causes cancer!**

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STROKE
STENTS
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BRONCHITIS
ASTHMA

If you, a coworker or friend have been diagnosed within the last three years...

Call the Diesel Hotline at **1-800-2-DEARIE x124**

Linda McNab

(1-800-233-2743 x124)

Local School Bus Companies Are Hiring Retirees

Attention RETIRED TWU LOCAL 100 Members!!

SuperTrans (Yonkers) & Vallo Transportation (Queens) has a unique opportunity to help you fill some of your spare time doing something that comes naturally – getting back behind the wheel of a Bus!

Our goal is to hire seasoned professionals like yourself to assist with the seasonal demands of class trips and sports trips. Here are some details to consider:

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- ❖ Majority of trips happen during peak months – September, October, April and May

**We are also looking for Full Time Diesel Mechanics, Drivers and Escorts!
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*For opportunities in Yonkers- please call Jeff at 914-968-3300.
For opportunities in Queens- please call Basdeo at 718-961-7600.
OR come into either one of our offices to fill out an application!*

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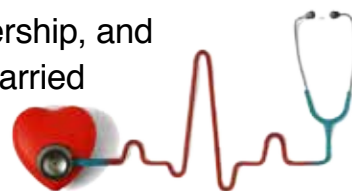
Join the TWU Local 100 Retirees Associations

It Is a Great Way to Stay in Touch, Build Our Power, and Get Great Benefits



For \$50 a year, (and a total of \$85 for the family), membership in the Local 100 Retirees' Association gives you invitations to our membership meetings and special events (like Family Day), picnics, dinners, and our annual vacation at the Villa Roma Resort in Update New York. You'll be invited to our Dinner Dances and holiday parties.

The Hospital and Medical Protection Plan is also a benefit of membership, and provides insurance coverage for your entire family (spouse and unmarried children from 1 month to 19 years old) who reside with you for certain medical costs. It also pays a weekly cash benefit if you are hospitalized or if you have to convalesce after hospitalization. These benefits are provided regardless of medical history.



We have negotiated great dental and vision benefits as well, for members, at a small additional cost. We can buy into these plans because of the clout of TWU Local 100 and its 42,000 active members. On joining we'll send you information about these plans and you can decide whether and when to join.

Here's the application – all you have to do is clip it & mail it in with your check.

Welcome aboard!

TWU RETIREES MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

1. Complete the enrollment form on right.

2. Make check or money order payable to:

TWU-Retirees Association

3. Send to:

TWU-Retirees Association
195 Montague St 3rd Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Membership type (check one)

☐ INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$50 Annually

☐ FAMILY MEMBERSHIP - \$85 Annually

No Refunds

Name (please print) _____

Social Security Number _____

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Defined Benefit Pensions (that's us) Are Under Attack

By Norman Rosenfeld
Pension Consultant

All of you reading this article should consider yourselves very lucky. You are a member of a select group of people who have a defined benefit pension. This type of pension pays you a monthly check for the rest of your life.



The defined benefit is under attack across the country as 457's and 401k's (defined contribution plans) are being offered by companies that once offered a defined benefit (DB) plan.

A defined contribution (DC) plan is a type of retirement plan in which the employer, employee or both make contributions on a regular basis. Individual accounts are set up for participants and benefits are based on the amounts credited to these accounts (through employer contributions and, if applicable, employee contributions) plus any investment earnings on the money in the account. Only employer contributions

to the account are guaranteed, not the future benefits. In defined contribution plans, future benefits fluctuate on the basis of investment earnings.

The Tax Code specifies a defined contribution plan as a "plan which provides for an individual account for each participant and for benefits based solely on the amount contributed to the participant's account, and any income, expenses, gains and losses."

While Defined Contribution plans are sometimes referred to as pensions, they are not. The word "pension" is defined as "a fixed amount, other than wages, paid at regular intervals to a person or to the person's surviving dependents in consideration of past services." In contrast, a Defined Contribution retirement plan is an arrangement where an employer, during the time a person is employed, puts money in a registered retirement account on the employee's behalf. In general, a DC plan provides much less security for the employee, and much less obligation for the employer, than a pension.

As people live longer, the defined benefit plan looks much better than the defined contribution plan.

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Opis 153-km

Vets from 1957-2001 Can Qualify For Higher Social Security Benefits

Veterans who served in the military between January 1957 to December 31, 2001 may qualify for a higher Social Security payment. The program was, unfortunately, discontinued from January 2002 forward.

Be advised, though, the benefit is not automatic. You have to ask for it. When applying for SS, you must bring your DD 214 to the SS office, and say you served and want to know about the additional military service benefit.

If you need an updated DD214, call Military Records at: 314-801-0800.

For more info, you can call the TWU Local 100 Military Veterans desk at: 212-873-6000, ext. 2113.

You can also check the SS website at:
<http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>



TWU Local 100 Retirees!

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Walk In Location Address:
1101 Zerega Ave
Bronx, NY

Can't stop by? Please apply online at www.mvtransit.com under careers or send a resume to johnine.ayrons@mvtransit.com or call the recruiter at 980-417-0206.

Job Requirements:

- Must be at least 21 years of age.
- Already hold a Tri-State area commercial driver's license (CDL A or B - with NO restrictions) and “P” Passenger and “S” School Bus Endorsements (if you want to do school bus).
- Able to pass a DOT Physical, Drug Screen and Background qualifications process.
- Understand, speak and follow written and oral instructions in English.
- Able to work with students or adults of all ages with disabilities.
- Good attendance record in previous work experience and able to work outdoors in all weather.
- Able to work well under pressure and provide excellent customer service.

Pre-employment drug screening and background check are required. We are an equal opportunity employer. MV Transportation, Inc. provides equal employment and affirmative action opportunities to minorities, females, veterans, and disabled individuals, as well as other protected groups.

Amsterdam Depot Retirees Reunite



The Amsterdam Depot is gone but the memories are still fresh in the minds of those who worked there back in the day. A nice crowd of these retirees got together on Sunday, April 24th at the Eastwood Manor in the Bronx for a Breakfast Reunion organized by the Retirees Association. The event had been held in a diner the last couple of years, but a bigger, more private venue was needed. Here's a group shot of the attendees.

We Join Forces with 440,000 Union Retirees Statewide

The TWU Local 100 Retirees Association is now tapping into the political power of 440,000 retired union members statewide in New York and 2.7 million nationwide after affiliating with the New York State Alliance for Retired Americans (NYSARA).

The Board of the Local 100 Retirees Association authorized the per capita affiliation payment of 25 cents per member per year. Association Director Mike Tutrone said: "Seniors need a powerful voice in Albany and in Washington, DC to protect our pensions, Social Security and other benefits against politicians who view these vital benefits as 'entitlements' and who would reduce or eliminate them without serious pushback from us."

Tutrone added: "The labor movement is the most organized, most potent force for active workers in America. We can utilize those same skills and influence as retirees as well. That way we can have a double impact on the lawmakers whether in Washington or in the state houses."

NYSARA President Barry A. Kaufmann, a retired member of the New York State United Teachers, said that his organization would soon be sending a formal welcome to all TWU Retiree Association members either by letter or email to introduce the organization and its goals.

NYSARA is a rapidly growing retiree organization with five

chapters statewide in New York. It is affiliated with the national Alliance for Retired Americans.

NYSARA's website makes it clear to its purpose. "We are not a senior citizens social club and it is not an organization formed to sell you things. It is a way for retired union members and others to make their voices heard on issues important to them."

On a New York statewide level, NYSARA makes its voice heard on issues such as Prescription Drug Coverage, Long Term Care, Nursing Home Care, Assisted Living, Affordable Housing, Affordable Utilities, Elder Care, Predatory Lending, and Health Care.

Nationally, the Alliance has been working on universal health care for all Americans; protecting and expanding Social Security, Medicare & Medicaid; adding a prescription drug benefit to Medicare; opening up job opportunities for people older than 50, among others.

Kaufmann welcomed TWU retirees with open arms. "We look forward to a long term relationship that serves our members, seniors in general and the country."

Kaufmann has also named TWU Association Director Tutrone to the Board of the New York City chapter of NYSARA to insure our issues are known.



New York State
Alliance *for* Retired Americans

Educate. Advocate. Activate.

Register Now for the Retirees Association Annual Summer Trip to

VILLA ROMA

Monday, August 15 to Friday, August 19, 2016

Welcome Back!!! Are you looking for relaxation or fun and excitement? Come and enjoy our Annual Trip to Villa Roma in Callicoon, NY. It has it ALL! Pamper yourself for 5 days/4nights (breakfast, light lunch & dinner included) at the Villa Roma Resort Hotel from August 15 to August 19, 2016. The rates are as follows:

Single Occupancy	Double Occupancy	Triple Occupancy
\$760.00 Per Person	\$630.00 Per Person	\$580.00 Per Person
DEPOSIT: \$380 Per Person	DEPOSIT: \$315 Per Person	DEPOSIT: \$290.00 Per Person

Children Rates: Please call to confirm rates* Under 3 = free
(*children rates now include unlimited use of bumper boats, go-karts, rock climbing, inflatables, paintball and bowling.)

We will require 50% deposit by May 6, 2016 (SORRY NO REFUNDS); and a final payment by July 8, 2016. Payment plans available. Space is limited, so be sure to book early. Thank you.

Please make Check or Money Order payable to:
TWU LOCAL 100 RETIREES' ASSOCIATION
195 Montague Street, 3rd Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11201
Questions? Call: 212.873.6000, Ext 2077

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Cell Phone _____

Accommodations _____

Amount Enclosed _____ # Adults: _____ # Children: _____ Ages: _____

PLEASE INDICATE WHICH LOCATION YOU WISH TO BE PICKED UP AT:

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- ____ Bronx : Fordham Road & Grand Concourse (Emigrant Savings Bank)
- ____ Brooklyn: Remsen & Court Sts. (Court House)
- ____ Queens: Midland Parkway & Hillside Avenue (formerly HIP Center)
- ____ Staten Island: Forest & Decker Avenues (Shopping Plaza near CVS)
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RETIREES CELEBRATE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 1966 TRANSIT STRIKE



OUR GREATEST GENERATION

More than 75 retirees, veterans of the 1966 city-wide transit strike – arguably the most important event in the union’s history – attended Local 100’s annual mass membership meeting late last year marking the 50th anniversary of that incredible event. Retirees came with family members, friends, or just dropped by on their own as special guests of the union. They were hailed as “TWU’s Greatest Generation.” Each strike veteran was presented a commemorative t-shirt, an acrylic trophy with the 50th Anniversary logo printed on it, and a statue of the union’s founder and strike leader, Michael J. Quill. The mass membership meeting featured a 20-minute historical video of the event, as well as posters and banners reprinting front page covers from the New York Daily News for each of the 12 days of the strike.

The event also commemorated the 50th anniversary of the death of union founder Mike Quill, who died of a heart attack just days after the successful conclusion of the strike.



Photos show strikers on the picket line at City Hall in 1966 (top), and from the annual mass membership meeting last December.

Retirees Annual Membership Meeting Draws Record Crowd

More than 350 members of the TWU Local 100 Retirees Association attended the annual membership meeting recently at the union hall in Brooklyn. Director Mike Tutrone chaired the event and lauded it as another milestone in the Association's history.



Please forward your email addresses to retirees@twulocal100.org to be added to our database!

**TWU Local 100 Retirees Association
195 Montague St, 3rd Fl
Brooklyn, NY 11201**