



PUBLISHED BY TWU LOCAL 100 • FALL 2023 • VOL. 14 • NO. 2

# Transport Workers BULLETIN



## Museum to Showcase Transit Workers

# 9/11 Service Recognized

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## Contract Win Brings Raises, New Benefits

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# Member Strong

**RICHARD DAVIS, PRESIDENT**

## A Stronger Union

AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF MY ADMINISTRATION, I promised a total transformation and reorganization of our union, a jump-start of TWU Local 100. The goals: to make us stronger, more responsive, more inclusive, and more effective. It's not an indictment of the past but a vision of a greater future.

The process is ongoing. But during contract negotiations and the balloting period, I hope you could see clear signs of what I meant.

Our Organizing Department and members of the Rapid Response Organizing Committee went to numerous work locations across the bus and subway system. They held a series of one-on-one discussions with members to hear your concerns and priorities going into contract talks. We held grass-roots rallies outside depots, shops, stations, and rail yards. We not only built solidarity, but literally demonstrated our unity to management.



**“I have believed strongly, since I first became involved in the union decades ago, that members should see the elected officers in the field as much as possible. Accessibility and accountability are key.”**

When the tentative deal was reached, my administration launched an unprecedented digital and print communication campaign, giving you the information needed to make informed decisions. (Stay informed by visiting our website – [twulocal100.org](http://twulocal100.org), our Facebook page, X and other social media.)

I personally didn't sleep more than a few hours a night for a month. Joined by Secretary Treasurer John Chiarello, Recording Secretary LaTonya Crisp, and Administrative Vice President Lynwood Whichard, I barnstormed the system. We visited approximately 150 work locations to explain the contract terms and answer questions face-to-face.

This is not smoke-and-mirrors to me. This is not a political show. I have believed strongly, since I first became involved in the union decades ago, that members should see the elected officers in the field as much as possible. Accessibility and accountability are key. This was a cornerstone of my years as Vice President of MaBSTOA. It's a cornerstone of my vision today for all bus and subway departments.

The contract ratification was a milestone and an achievement: 70% of ballots were “YES” votes. But that's not a reason or cause to sit back and rest. Almost immediately, I was back out there shopgating. My dedication, energy, and commitment will not waver. The task at hand is too important, and there is much work to be done. As you will read later in this Bulletin, safety and security are at the very top of my administration's priority list. We are actively pursuing several exciting and promising initiatives.

Together we can build an even better TWU Local 100.

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# Transport Workers

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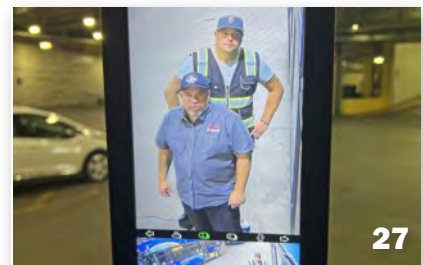


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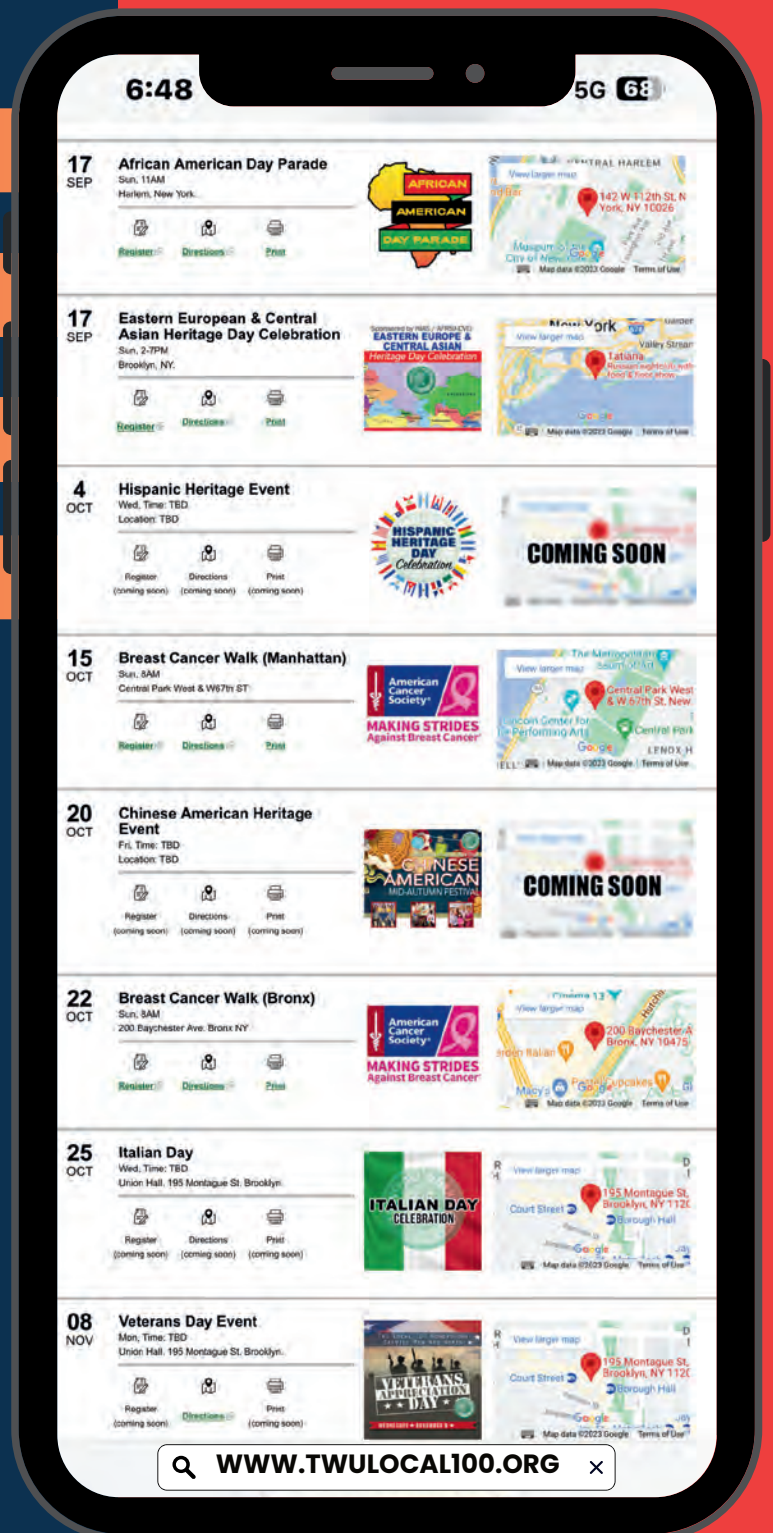
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# Parents Get More Paid Time Off with Newborns

**T**he new contract – featuring expanded maternity and paternity leave – came just in the nick of time for Bus Operator Kemisha Gordon and Elevator/Escalator Helper Nazzim Uddin.

Gordon was in the late stages of pregnancy with her second child when the contract was overwhelmingly ratified by members on July 17. Uddin's wife, meanwhile, was pregnant with their first biological child.

"When I heard the votes were in and the contract was ratified, I was happy," Gordon said. "I was like, 'Look at God! Right on time.'"

Under the new labor agreement with the MTA, mothers now get 12 weeks paid maternity leave – an increase of 10 weeks to care for their newborn. Fathers now get four weeks paid paternity leave, double the two weeks granted by the prior contract.

"It takes a burden off your mind knowing that you're going to get paid," Gordon said. "You can relax. It's a little less stressful. Nobody wants to worry about making ends



**Nazzim Uddin with his wife, Jannatul, and nephew, Alvie. The family will take advantage of expanded paternity leave and a new benefit: therapy for children with autism.**

"Raising a child is not easy. We know how difficult it is. Now, the workload is going to be a lot more.

The extra two weeks definitely helps." – *Nazzim Uddin*



**Bus Operator Kemisha Gordon. Happy to have 12 weeks maternity leave.**

meet financially when you have a screaming newborn and already aren't getting enough sleep."

As of press time, Gordon, a BO out of the Gun Hill Depot, was expecting a girl to be named Brileigh.

Uddin and his wife, Jannatul, are raising a nephew. The boy's mother, Uddin's sister, suffered a heart attack shortly after giving birth. She was in a coma for years before dying in a nursing facility during the pandemic. The boy, Alvie, is now 7 years old.

"Raising a child is not easy," he said. "We know how difficult it is. Now, the workload is going to be a lot more. The extra two weeks definitely helps."

Uddin also was glad to see that the new contract includes medical coverage for Autism Behavior Therapy, which will benefit Alvie.

"It will be good for my nephew for sure," Uddin said. "That's improvement in our contract, absolutely."





# Contract Ratified!

A new contract with the MTA was ratified by a wide margin in July with 68.75% of voters casting “Yes” ballots and 31.25% voting “No.”

The contract includes solid raises of nearly 10% over three years, \$4,000 in Essential Worker Bonus Payments, 12 weeks of maternity leave (an increase of 10 weeks), four weeks of paternity leave (up from 2 weeks), more money to improve dental and vision coverage, and medical coverage for the widows, widowers and children of our COVID-19 victims.

Just as importantly, the package contains no givebacks.

“These were hard-earned victories,” Local 100 President Richard Davis said. “MTA negotiators wanted givebacks and concessions. They wanted to double our healthcare costs. They wanted to eliminate jobs. Not only did we defeat these MTA demands, which would have hurt our members and our members’ families, we gained ground. We secured significant improvements.”

The participation of members, and the solidarity demonstrated in the field, were crucial to securing the labor agreement, which runs from May 16, 2023, through to May 15, 2026, Davis said.

“Local 100 members were definitely heard,” Davis said.

Train Operator David Cooper supported the contract.

“The contract is pretty fair for a lot of reasons,” Cooper said. “Most importantly, we didn’t give anything back. We kept everything we had.”

Cooper said he was pleased to see increased maternity and paternity leave for new parents, an additional MTA allocation of approximately \$2 million for dental and vision improvements, and the Essential Worker payments: \$3,000 this year and \$1,000 next year.

“There were a lot of good things about the contract,” Cooper said. “Some people may feel bitter because America is America, but we’re getting better every day, every year, every contract.”

Bus Operator Asia Lewis called the Essential Worker bonus payments “crucial” in her decision to support the agreement.

“We at the front line, just like the nurses, EMTs, and police,” Lewis said. “We at the front line dealing with passengers. It’s no longer a slap in the face. I think it (the bonus money) says, ‘Well, I appreciate your service and you’re doing a hell of a job.’”





# Insurance Coverage Means the World to COVID Victims' Families

**B**us Maintainer Joseph Fletcher turned to his wife, Veronica, at their home in March 2020, and said, “I have COVID, and I’m going to die.”

He was hospitalized six days later.

He passed away on April 11, just 16 days after his dire prediction.

The painful loss that Veronica and the couple’s three children feel will never go away. But one source of comfort has been continued support from TWU Local 100, Veronica said.

The new contract, for example, requires the MTA to provide healthcare coverage for the length of the agreement to COVID widows, widowers, and children.

“I have such immense gratitude for the union leadership and the members who collectively and collaboratively said, ‘we’re not forgetting you,’ ” Veronica said. “Union leadership fought to put it in the contract, and the membership supported it with ratification. That says that my late husband is not forgotten, all his union brothers and sisters who died have not been forgotten, and the families have not been forgotten.”

Robert Chumpitaz’s father, Brooklyn Bus Operator Miguel Chumpitaz, also worked during the pandemic and died from COVID. Like Fletcher, Miguel was 60 years old. Robert felt “happy and relieved” when he heard there will be medical coverage for his mother and him.

“It’s very important because health should be taken very seriously,” he said. “We can get covered for regular doctor check-ups and any emergencies, such as an unexpected surgery, which can get expensive.”

“Without these benefits, I don’t know what we would do,” he said.

During the pandemic, Local 100 negotiated a stipulated an unprecedented agreement requiring the MTA pay COVID victims’ families \$500,000 each. The stipulation also required the Authority provide health coverage for three years.

But the three-year period ended for some families this spring. The MTA dropped them from their insurance plans. Other families faced the loss of coverage when their three-year period was set to end later in the year.

The new contract, however, takes care of the urgent need.



*Pres. Davis and Rec-Sec Crisp with Veronica Fletcher and daughter*

**“There are so many day-to-day things I have to contend with in my husband’s absence, but this is one thing I don’t have to worry about. I don’t have to worry about maintaining healthcare for myself and my children. It provides such security.”**

It was ratified July 17 in a ratification vote overseen and administered by the American Arbitration Association. The deal runs from May 15, 2023, through May 16, 2026.

“The MTA was not adequately prepared for the pandemic, and in many respects, failed the workers,” Local 100 President Richard Davis said. “In these negotiations we were absolutely determined to secure medical coverage our fallen brothers and sisters’ families. It was a top priority. We weren’t leaving the negotiation table without taking care of them.”

Veronica said the coverage means the world to her as she raises the Fletcher children: Joshua, 17, Zachary, 15, and Madison, 11.

“There are so many day-to-day things I have to contend with in my husband’s absence, but this is one thing I don’t have to worry about,” she said. “I don’t have to worry about maintaining healthcare for myself and my children. It provides such security.”

She added: “This is why my husband took us to every single Family Day. This is why even in his absence we go to every single Family Day. TWU Local 100 is a family.”



# ELEVATE Blasts Off with I

**F**or 20 years, this union has been an innovator in finding new ways to promote educational advancement for the transit workforce. On July 10th, top leadership alongside Training and Upgrading Fund Director Charles Jenkins cut the ribbon on our latest initiative, the ELEVATE program.

ELEVATE – which stands for Entry Level Employee Vocational And Training Enhancement, is open to all Union members working for the TA/OA or MTA Bus, sending a select class of 30 to electrical training at our newly-built, state-of-the-art lab at 195 Montague Street, on the fourth floor of the Union Hall. These transit workers are continuing in their regular jobs, taking training on their time off, which speaks to their commitment to advance themselves.



*TUF Director Jenkins introduces his staff at the Union's training center.*



*CED Vice President Shirley Martin (in blue dress) and Recording Secretary LaTonya Crisp talk to eager members of the new ELEVATE program sharing career insights.*

Once their training concludes in April of 2024, they will sit for the Transit Electrical Helper test, becoming eligible to advance into our trades titles. Classes are held at the Union Hall and are conducted by the Electrical Training Center, which is based in Copiague, Long Island.

ELEVATE is just the latest offering from our Training and Upgrading Fund, originally set up by former Local 100 President Roger Toussaint in the 2002 contract. The already established apprenticeship class schedule continues soon with a class being formed for training at the Apex Technical School in Long Island City. For that class, the TUF program will recruit 20 students from among the

*TUF Director Charles Jenkins addresses members about to enter the ELEVATE program on July 10th. In the front row at the top four union leaders, President Richard Davis, Secretary-Treasurer John V. Chiarello, Recording Secretary LaTonya Crisp, and Administrative VP Lynwood Whichard.*





# New Class of 30



*Ribbon is Cut on New Training Room: President Richard Davis, TUF Director Charles Jenkins, and MTA TUF Trustee Patrick Smith cut the ribbon on our new training room.*

ranks of Traffic Checkers, Cleaners, and Transit Property Protection Agents. The ELEVATE program is offered to all non-trades titles represented by the Union.

“It’s exciting,” Jenkins said about the progress of ELEVATE students since the ribbon cutting. “They’ve been doing very well on tests and quizzes, and have completed OSHA 30. ELEVATE has generated a lot of interest, and we are well underway in developing a waiting list for 2024.”





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# HEY NYCERS:

## Where's my final option letter?

When a NYCERS member retires, they are soon placed on the monthly retirement payroll, but not for the full amount of their pension. At first, the member gets paid at a partial rate. Later, they receive a final option letter. Once the member has chosen a final option, their monthly check is reset accordingly. The member also receives a retro payment covering any underpayment.

Historically, the typical time from retirement to final option letter was four to eight months. It is now 12 months.

What happened? Mainly, the pandemic.

During the pandemic the number of retirements from City and Transit service soared, in some months running double or triple the usual. Retirements are now down from that peak, but the number remains higher than before the pandemic. This has greatly increased the workload for the units at NYCERS that calculate pensions (as well as for the unit at the Office of the Actuary which certifies the NYCERS calculations).

The NYCERS office at 340 Jay Street is fully open for business! In an average month, more than 4,000 NYCERS members are stopping in to do business in person.

Many more are doing their business online using their MyNYCERS account. This is the quickest way to submit paperwork and applications, see your Annual Disclosure Statement, and get answers to frequently asked questions.



The employees in those NYCERS units are senior employees who are knowledgeable about pension rules and plans and highly experienced at the detailed calculations and related work. When the pandemic hit, many of them retired as well. This was the second thing. NYCERS took a double hit: more work and less specialized staff to do it.

NYCERS has been rebuilding the pool of specialized staff, but you can't replace experience overnight. It is going to take time to get the wait time significantly lower. Beyond that, it will take several more years to complete the ongoing process of replacing NYCERS' old computer system with a new one that can better support the work and help bring down the wait time further.

Until then, be prepared for months of partial pension payments when you retire from a NYCERS title.

## Getting your Union updates?

If you're not receiving emails from the union, go to our website at [www.twulocal100.org](http://www.twulocal100.org) and insert your email address in the "sign up for our mailing list" field in the right-hand column. That's your key to getting essential information about upcoming events and need-to-know contract updates.





(l-r) TWU Local 100 Secretary-Treasurer John V. Chiarello, Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine, former Local 100 President Tony Utano, President Richard Davis, 9/11 Memorial and Museum CEO Beth Hillman, CED VP Shirley Martin, TAS VP JP Patafio, NYCT President Richard Davey, and Executive Board Member Mario Galvet, who MC'd the event.

# At 9/11 Memorial and Museum, President Davis Hails Path to Recognition for Our Responders

There were tears, and some smiles, at the National September 11 Memorial Museum on August 21 as Local 100 for the first time held its annual medal ceremony at Ground Zero. More than 125 transit workers and family members came to the “civic temple” to see eight workers being honored for their rescue-and-recovery work at Ground Zero. All eight became ill from their service, and two passed away.

Unfortunately, Joycelyn Lee accepted a medal on behalf of her deceased husband, Work Train Operator Eddie Lee. “Unfortunately, we lost him in 2016, but when I got the call he was going to be honored, my heart was like he was alive again,” Joycelyn Lee said. Lee, who moved out of state, said family and friends back home were equally happy Eddie, and his union brothers



President Davis with 9/11 Memorial & Museum CEO Beth Hillman.

and sisters, were getting the recognition they so rightfully deserve. “They’re already asking, ‘When are you coming back [with the Union’s medal for service],’” Jocelyn Lee said. “It’s like an Olympic medal.”

Local 100 President Richard Davis and 9/11 Memorial & Museum CEO Beth Hillman announced an agreement in which the museum will educate visitors about the enormous role transit workers played at Ground Zero, particularly in the first 48-72 hours. Local 100 members evacuated scores of people from Lower Manhattan, searched for victims in the rubble, illuminated the attack site, operated heavy equipment to clear debris, and carried out many more critical tasks. The museum will play for visitors a documentary about transit workers’ efforts on “the pile,” and will include



photos, artifacts, and oral testimonies in its exhibits, Davis and Hillman said.

Along with the documentary screening, the Museum will mount a TWU Local 100 responder's hard hat in their historical exhibit along with a cover photo from the New York Times that ran on September 13, 2001, showing a transit worker in the foreground assisting in the rescue effort. In Foundation Hall, near the huge beam that dominates the Museum space, glass cases will document a transit workers' story as well as the health effects of the toxic air and dust at the site on responders, including transit workers.

Medal recipient Hector Soto fought back tears as he remembered co-worker Lee and said he appreciated that transit workers were finally being included in the museum.

"It's nice to be recognized," he said. "Thank God, the union made it happen."

Museum staff agreed to meet with Local 100 to discuss raising public awareness about transit workers' 9/11 service after the union launched a media campaign demanding recognition in the museum. The campaign garnered widespread media coverage, including articles in the New York Daily News and the NY Post. Whereas prior museum administrations were uncooperative, the current leadership was receptive to the union's mission.

"Transit workers are the unsung heroes of the rescue-and-



recovery story but that is changing now," Davis said during the ceremony on the 21st. "Tonight, we honor these eight medal recipients, and the thousands of other transit workers who played such critical roles in the aftermath of 9/11. Their service and sacrifice will not be forgotten."

News media covering the event included NY1, Fox 5, WPIX, and CBS News.



**Roland Gelling**



**Carlos Johnson**



**Joycelyn Lee, widow of T/O Edward Lee**



**Francis Perillo**



**John Piniero**



**Vincent Rizza, son of T/O Vincent Rizza**



**Hector Soto**

**Eight union members received medals for having illnesses, compensated by the federal government, directly tied to their service at Ground Zero. They are: Hydraulic Maintainer Roland Gelling, Train Operator Carlos Johnson, Train Operator Edward Lee (posthumous), Track Worker Francis Perillo, Train Operator John Piniero, Vincent Rizza (posthumous), Train Operator Hector Soto, and Train Operator Robert Zavala (not pictured, he was too ill to attend).**





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# Helping Kids Find Their Way Forward

**Local 100 members participate in high school career day.**

**W**hile college is often touted as a required route to a good job and a good future, it is often extremely expensive – and college isn’t appealing to everyone, for a variety of reasons. Many high schoolers need immediate employment after graduation.

Three Local 100 members stepped up and helped Erasmus High School Students who are figuring out their paths in life, participating in a “Career Transition Fair” held at the Brooklyn school in May. The Local 100 members – Bus Operator Re’gan Weal, Train Operator Brian Davis, and Ventilation/Drainage Maintainer Alfonso Simmons – answered questions posed by students who were curious about landing transit jobs. The Local 100 group talked about their job responsibilities, the pay, and the benefits, like excellent healthcare and pensions, which are rare or inferior in the private sector. They also provided literature about MTA employment and internship opportunities.

Elina Tretyak, a Speech Language Therapist at Erasmus, asked the union to participate. Her father, Aleksey Tretyak, is a Car Inspector.

“We were thrilled to have a Train Operator, Bus Operator and a Maintainer,” Elina said. “We received wonderful feedback from many students. They truly enjoyed learning more about the largest public transportation system in North America, and hearing from Local 100 members about their roles and responsibilities in their current positions.”

Davis, Weal, and Simmons found the experience rewarding.

“Talking to the kids made me feel useful in their planning for their future,” Davis, an RTO rep., said. “We introduced



*T/O Brian Davis explains his job.*

options for those who didn’t realize transit was one. Also, for those who did, we provided that path. I believe they did benefit.”

Interacting with the teen-agers was “a joy,” Weal said.

“I really enjoyed talking to the kids,” Weal said. “They seemed very eager to jump-start their lives and careers. It was a joy to be able to give them the tools and information they need to possibly set their future on the right track.”

A lot of the students were interested in becoming Train Operators or Bus Operators, Simmons, a MOW Section Chair, said.

“I definitely think the interested kids benefited because a lot of times kids want to do things in life and don’t really know how to go about it,” he said. “Talking to us, and networking, allowed them to get a sense of what the job entails.



*Re’gan Weal with a student.*



*Maintainer Alfonso Simmons readies an answer.*



# Family Day Debuts at

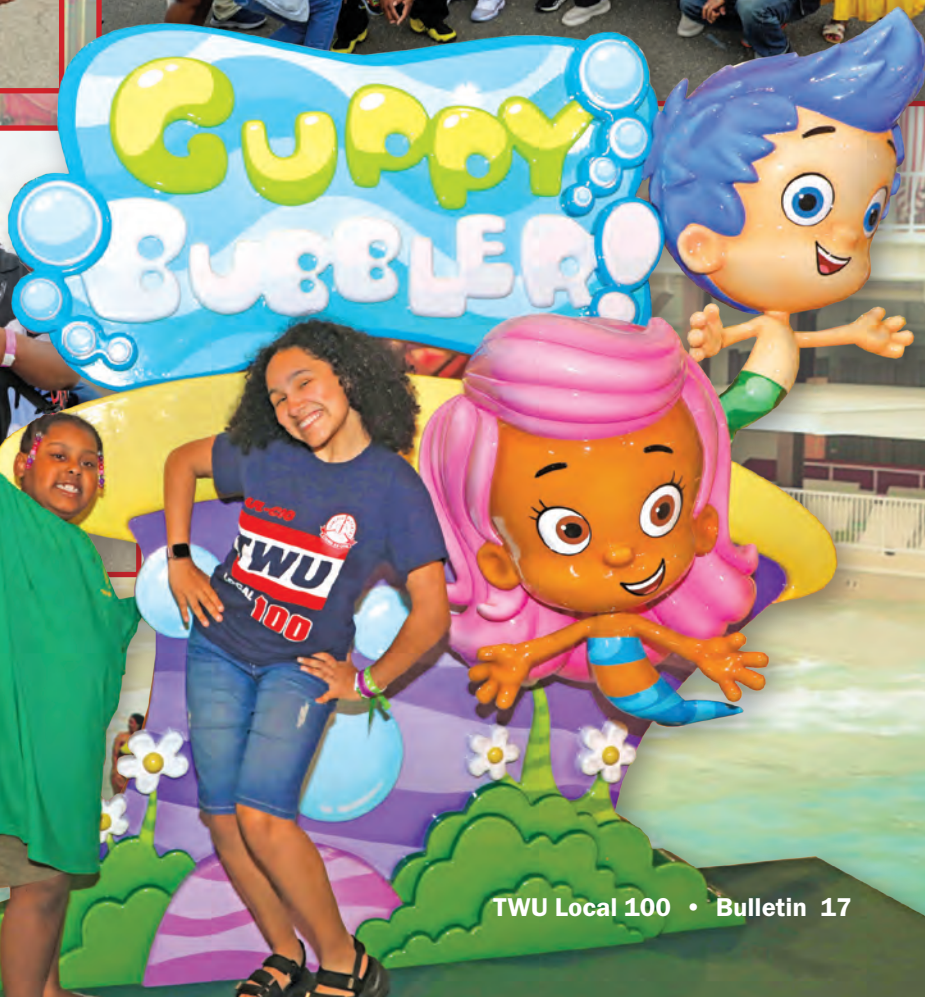
**L**ocal 100's popular Family Day took place this year at American Dream in Rutherford, NJ with thousands of union members experiencing a day of fun and feasting. The June 3 event was our first at the new venue, where members could enjoy the American Dream's water park and other big-time

attractions. President Richard Davis welcomed transit workers and their families from our outdoor stage, along with Secretary-Treasurer John Chiarello and other top officers. Our Departments hosted tailgate parties with grills and raffle give-aways were held. Just snap the QR to see all the photos!





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# SAVING LIVES, SAVING JOBS, SAVING FAMILIES

**A**fter years of alcohol abuse, Alanna (not her real name) was in jeopardy of losing not only her job – but potentially her life too.

On weeknights, she was downing a bottle or two of wine after her Station Agent shift. Her weekends were even more booze-filled, and she called out sick on Mondays with troubling frequency. She was even hospitalized on occasion for kidney failure.

“It was a horrible, horrible time,” she said.

But her life turned around on June 10, 2019. That’s when she went to the Union Assistance Program office and asked for help. After an assessment interview, UAP Clinical Director Terence Thornton and staff arranged for Alanna to be admitted to a 28-day inpatient program. She’s been sober ever since.

“UAP, Mr. Thornton, the union reps, they saved my life, literally,” Alanna said.

TWU Local 100 President Sonny Hall established the Union Assistance Program in 1988 after securing funding through contract negotiations with NYC Transit. The initial mission was helping members get confidential treatment for drug and alcohol problems – before they tested positive and were subjected to discipline, including firing.

The program has expanded greatly in scope over the years to help members and dependents confront a wide range of substance abuse, mental health, and family issues, including: domestic violence, gambling addiction, workplace stress, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. In fact, more than 30% of cases don’t involve drugs or alcohol abuse.


In addition to members voluntarily seeking help, UAP orchestrates and manages treatment for transit workers who are referred by one of the Medical Assessment Centers or Labor Relations.

Alanna traces her problems with alcohol back to her pre-transit job on Wall Street.

“We had a lot of pressure, a lot of stress and responsibility, and a lot of liquid lunches,” she said.



*Admin VP Lynwood Whichard with UAP Director Thornton and members of his team.*



## NEED HELP?

**Contact or visit the  
Union Assistance Program.**

**519 Eighth Avenue – 7th Floor New  
York, NY 10018-6506  
(212) 736-3579 fax (212) 736-5291**

**Walk-ins are welcome, but it's  
recommended that you call in  
advance and make an appointment.**

Her drinking intensified when she was laid off, and went through a divorce, in the same year. She bounced between a series of odd jobs before being hired as a Station Agent.

“It was a Godsend to me,” she said. “God was giving me a second chance with a great job. But I was ruining it with my drinking. I needed help.”

After the 28 days at rehabilitation facility, Alanna returned to work. She also met weekly, and then monthly, with UAP counselors for more than a year, and participated in aftercare and mutual-aid programs. She will soon reach two milestones: four years sober, five years on the job.

“I could have lost it all,” she said. “I’m forever grateful.”





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- **Terminal Illness Benefit** - allows the withdrawal of **75%** of death benefits for terminal illness for a maximum of **\$100,000**.<sup>3</sup>
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- **Critical Care Benefit** - allows the withdrawal of **25%** of death benefits upon diagnosis of life-threatening cancer, heart attack, stroke, renal failure, or major organ transplant for a maximum of **\$100,000**.<sup>3</sup>
- **Automatic Increase Option** - allows future increases in death benefits for five years without evidence of insurability.<sup>3</sup>
- **Layoff Protection Option** - pays for coverage for six months, after a 60 day waiting period.<sup>3</sup>
- **Convenient Premiums** - affordable, convenient, systematic, payroll deduction.

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1. Based on current IRS regulations.  
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Work Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Dept: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Accredited Two or Four Year College: \_\_\_\_\_

Course of Study (Major): \_\_\_\_\_

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Student must be accepted or attending an accredited college. Scholarship applications are due by May 31, 2024.

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PO BOX 512, MATAWAN, NJ 07747



# Local 100 Actively Addressing the C

**T**WU Local 100 is moving forward in the fight against assaults and harassment with an unprecedented series of initiatives.

President Richard Davis, Secretary-Treasurer John Chiarello, and TWU International President John Samuelson are taking full advantage of new powers granted unions in the bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. The bill requires transit agencies to draft annual Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans - with union leaders - and risk loss of federal funding if they don't follow through.

Employee Safety Committees, formed by President Davis, also are meeting with high-level management representatives, to identify and advance ways to reduce assaults.

Combined with actions by Local 100's Committee on Political Education (COPE) – educating and supporting pro-transit elected officials and candidates – tangible results are emerging.

“There's never been so much union activity in this area,” Local 100 President Davis. “This is a complex problem. It won't be solved overnight. But the union is engaged and moving forward like never before.”

Some of the developments:

- Gov. Kathy Hochul, whom Local 100 endorsed, provided the MTA with millions of dollars to hire 100 more MTA Eagle



**Local 100 President Richard Davis, Secretary-Treasurer John Chiarello, and TWU International President John Samuelson met with NYC Transit executives in July to advance strategies and techniques to protect transit workers from assaults. Federal law now requires Public Transportation Agency Safety Plans be crafted with union representatives.**

Team inspectors. These Security Department inspectors target fare evaders and serve as a uniformed presence that deter assaults on Bus Operators. The teams are targeting geographic hubs, like downtown Brooklyn, where there are many bus routes and high rates of fare evasion. Assaults are more frequent on routes where fare evasion is particularly rampant.

- For the first time in decades, the NYPD Transit Bureau will have a “dedicated” unit of NYPD officers focusing on buses. The contingent was expected to begin assisting Eagle





# e Complex Problem of Assaults



*A Bus Operator window with louvers to protect the Operator from riders outside is being tested on a bus operating out of the Manhattanville Bus Depot.*

Teams in late August or early September. Local 100 has rallied and urged City Hall to put cops on buses for several years now.

“This definitely is a step in the right direction,” John Chiarello, Local 100’s Safety Director and Secretary-Treasurer, said. “We hope it’s just the start of bigger things to come.”

- Management is updating and improving de-escalation training for subway and bus workers. Training will be held annually and include more workers.

- No-Standing zones have been marked on subway platforms where the Conductor cabs come to a halt in the 125th St./Lex Ave. station in Harlem. A pilot program is testing to see if the markings encourage riders to stand back from the Conductor’s window. The possibility of physical barriers, further establishing the no-standing zones, are being discussed.

- In the safety plan drafted to comply with the Infrastructure Bill requirements, the MTA commits to provide subway workers “with access to secure spaces when feasible” to avoid and prevent assaults.

- With many Bus Operator assaults and harassment coming from riders outside the Operator’s window, protective louvers are being tested in a bus pilot program. The louvers allow air to flow in but provide a barrier to anyone trying to reach or throw something at the Operator.

- In the federally mandated plan, the MTA also commits



to deploying buses with Operator cockpits as soon as possible. A mock-up of a bus with a cockpit enclosure is on the property and will soon be unveiled to union representatives for inspection and review.

“Assaults and harassment are connected to problems that don’t have easy solutions,” Davis said. “As you know, all of society’s problems walk onto our buses and into our stations and trains every day. They include riders who are severely mentally ill and criminals who rotate in and out of jail. But we are fully committed and engaged in trying to make our workplace safer.”



# What's It Like to Be a Train Operator

*In a freewheeling conversation, Train Operator Aaron Morrison tells it like it is*

*This spring, RTO Division Vice Chair for Train Operators Aaron Morrison was asked to attend an actor's workshop at the Theater for a New City in Manhattan's East Village. It turned out to be an opportunity for actors to satisfy their curiosity about our work. Here's an edited version of Brother Morrison's talk, which can be seen on the Union's youtube channel.*

**Q: What about when there's heavy rainfall blocking the tracks? Do you have any experiences like that? Is there a protocol?**

**A:** Yes. There is something called the SOP, Standard Operating Procedure, when there are unforeseen emergencies, as transit likes to say. You have to be calm, cool, and collected because if all you guys are on the train you're going to look for whom? So even if you're nervous and scared, you have to direct people off that train because the evacuation could be for a fire, could be for a derailment. We had a derailment on the L train last night where eight passengers had to be evacuated. Thank God that no injuries were reported.

On any given day, I could be faced with anything. Assaults, EDPs, if somebody feels like they're having a bad day, they

spit at you. They curse at you. They blame me for the train being late. But there's positive things as well. So I don't like to dwell on the negative. There are people who say, thank you for getting me to my stop. Thank you for being such a smooth train operator. Thank you for coming to work today.

**Q: Do you ever feel like you could get replaced by AI?**

**A:** Yes. It's coming. They just haven't figured out how to do it yet. They've actually already have done it — It's called CBTC. CBTC is an acronym for Communications Based Train Control. That means that the train drives itself.

**Q: What does it take to be underground working such long hours? The idea of being in a tunnel all day. I ride a bicycle and I'm outdoors all the time. So I don't know if I could do what you do.**

**A:** It just takes an extreme amount of discipline and not being claustrophobic. If you're afraid of tight spaces, that's not going to be the job for you. But there are lines that do go outside where you can drop the window and get air.

Once you do all the lines, you're gonna fall in love with

**"The most entertaining thing for me is when I'm operating a train and there's a platform full of people. And I'm coming in fast, and they're all backing up because they're anticipating your arrival."**



*Train Operator Aaron Morrison and actor Michael Brown at the Theater for the New City*



# Operator?

one of them. I think that me riding the A as a kid, I pretty much knew all the stops before I came into transit. There's just something about the line that I like. There's a stretch where there's an inlet on the water, and depending on the time of day, you can see the sunrise, you can see the boats, you can see the fishing. It is just so serene to me. That's why I pick it.

**Q: Are you allowed at all to customize your cab? Can you put a picture of your family, fuzzy dice?**

**A:** The only thing you can do is clean your cab. No music, no electronic devices, no pictures of your daughter. You can have a bottle of water in there. That's pretty much about it.

**Q: A philosophical ethical question for you. Your feelings about homeless people on the trains and, to some extent, homeless people sometimes making the trains their home.**

**A:** Because I work midnight I see all types of individuals. I pretty much leave them alone unless I'm required to get them off at the start of the train and things of that nature. I leave them alone because that's their home for the night for the week or whatever. If they ask me for help, I give it to them. If they ask me for water, I go into the office, I will give it to them. But I pretty much leave them alone, because they're going through enough, right? I'm blessed that when I clear my shift I can go home to my family. They don't have anybody to go home to. As a cop told me one day, it's not against the law to stink. If you're respectful to them, they're respectful to you, and if the stench is unbearable then you just ask them to move a car down and they move. In my 12 years with New York City Transit, I've never had an issue.

**Q: Is there one homeless person that you've seen on a regular basis?**

**A:** On the J train, yes. He told me his name and — forgive me if I forgot it — but I used to see him every night. As a matter of fact, he saved two individuals who were surfing on my train. He came up to me. And he told me, 'Aaron, there's two guys that are climbing up in between the trains. It looks like they're trying to surf.' I stopped the train at Marcy Avenue and I gave them some choice words that I won't repeat. But he pretty much saved two lives. So they owe him, because he came to me and he let me know. I was a Conductor at the time. And he still rides the J right now. But he doesn't want any help. He just rides the train and leaves everybody alone. That's pretty much it.



**Q: What is the most entertaining thing on your job?**

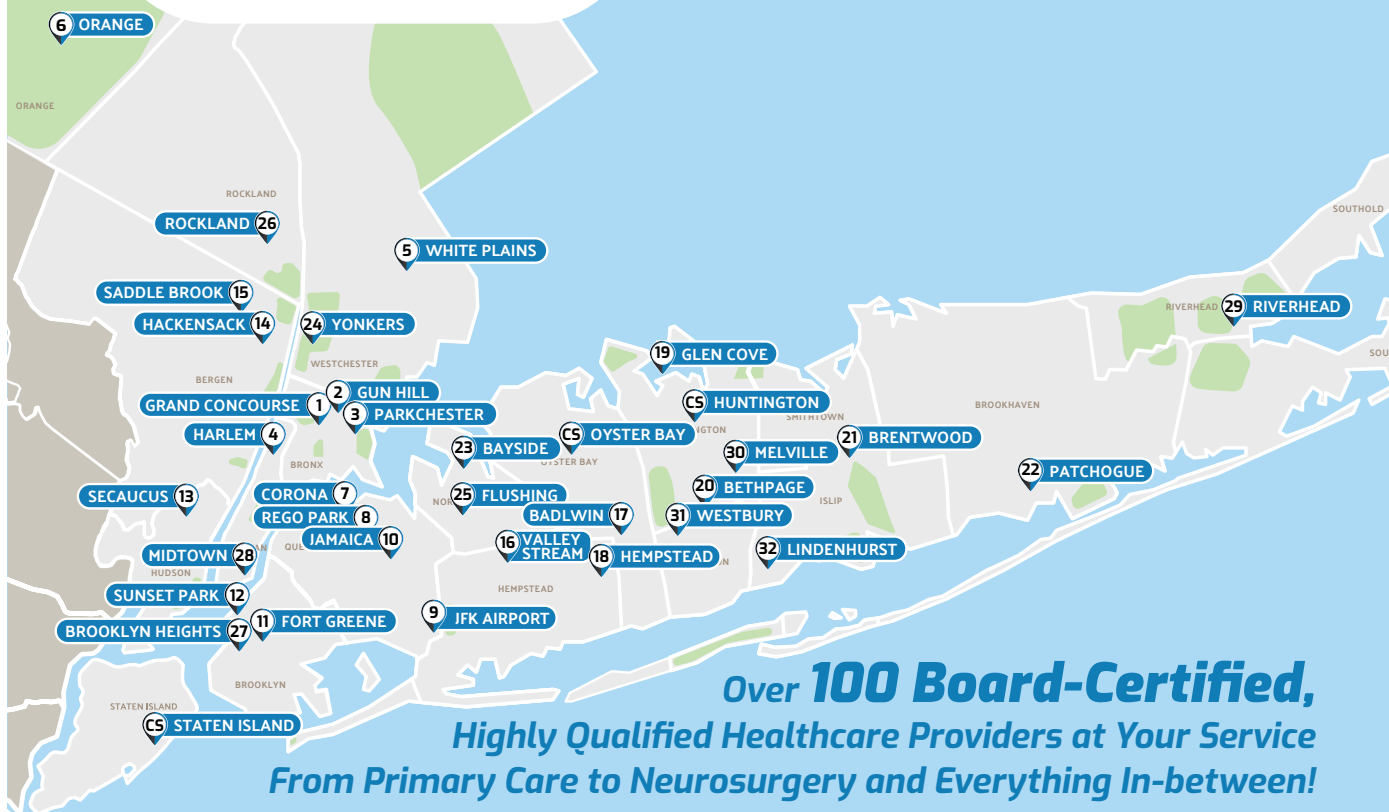
**A:** The most entertaining thing for me is when I'm operating a train and there's a platform full of people. And I'm coming in fast, and they're all backing up because they're anticipating your arrival. They're thinking, "I hope he's gonna get me on my way — he looks fast." "I'm late — and I hope there's no delays." And then, when I get them there, and they tap on my window, and they say, "good job — thank you so much," and they go running up the stairs.

The least favorite is when we're assaulted. When somebody is just so angry. Maybe not something that you did, maybe just life — and they take it out on us. I think that's totally unfair. If you guys look at the news you know, Train Operators and Conductors, they're getting stabbed or getting hit with BB guns and people just think we're targets. We're just men and women that want to go home to our families. We have a sister, a Train Operator, who was punched in the head by an investment banker at Stillwell, and she's back and forth in court. He needs to get the full seven years, because he assaulted one of my co-workers.





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# D-Cams Coming to Bus Fleet



What the Union has championed for decades – an enclosed cab that improves safety for Bus Operators – is coming to fruition, with that feature now going into design plans for new rolling stock ordered by New York City Transit. The new buses will come with digital mirrors, which are now being trialed on a few select buses in our existing fleet. The new cameras allow an Operator to see a wide-angle picture of the whole side of the bus.

“Digital camera mirrors are now being mounted on the driver’s side inside and on the inside of the entrance door,” says TA Surface Division Vice Chair Gary Rosario. “These replace side-view mirrors, and also give Operators a better view as they drive. As everyone knows, side mirrors have been a frequent cause of accidents. These mirror cameras have a lower profile and we believe accidents will decrease.”

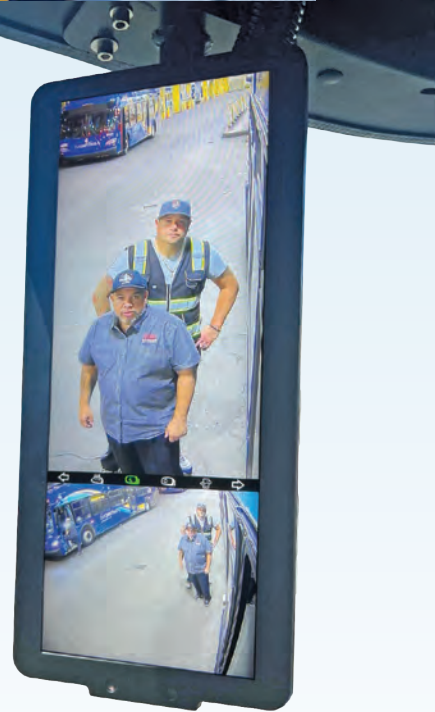
Yet there are unanswered questions about the large-scale adoption of this new technology. “Technology is always advancing, and we have to advance with it,” Rosario adds. “A main concern of the Operators I have talked to is bad weather: will they stand up? The mirror has a heating element to dispel snow and frost, and they also have built-in software to eliminate glare – but will it work as promised?”

MaBSTOA Division Chair Sean Battaglia notes other issues of concern: “There is a delay on the camera to the mirror – even

though it’s measured in microseconds,” he says. “And the way we’re taught to lean into our mirrors is no longer an option. That changes the driving experience.”

“Some people who are testing them like them,” Battaglia says, “but we feel there’s not enough training being provided to Operators. Management has to provide more vehicle time before they put these digital-equipped buses into customer service.”

The enclosed cab cockpit design, equipped with louvered windows so that an operator never has to be exposed to possible assault, is a major step forward for Operator safety. That increased safety has to come with more safeguards for pedestrians and customers boarding the bus, which is why the Union believes the digital cameras need careful review. What the public may believe is a minor change to bus operation is actually not so simple or easy to accomplish.





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## About to Retire? Get Started by Becoming a Member of the Association Now!

For \$50 a year, (and a total of \$85 for family), membership in the Local 100 Retirees' Association gives you invitations to our membership meetings and all kinds of special events and social gatherings.

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2. Make check or money order payable to:  
TWU Local 100 Retirees Association
3. Send to:  
TWU Local 100 Retirees Association  
195 Montague st, 3rd Fl.  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

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## 97-Year-Old Sam Johnson's Birthday Wish

# Behind the Wheel one More Time

BY JAMES GANNON

**Retired Bus Operator Sam Johnson celebrated his 97th birthday with four generations of family by his side. That in itself was a beautiful thing. But for Sam, the site of the celebration made it ever more meaningful because he was sitting behind the wheel of a bus at his old depot at 129th Street and Amsterdam Avenue in Harlem.**

The joyous event was made possible by a cooperative effort of the TWU Local 100 Retirees Association, Local 100 President Richard Davis and MABSTOA management.

"I feel like a king," said Sam as he sat behind the wheel of a modern MABSTOA bus at the now decommissioned Amsterdam Depot. "I just always loved to drive. Nothing bothered me – not snow, not rain, not traffic – nothing."

Sam's daughter-in-law, Eartha Johnson, who organized the event on the family's side, initially reached

out to the Retirees Association back in February to see if Sam's wish to get behind the wheel one more time would even be possible.

"Sam often talks about his wonderful memories driving his bus in New York City," Eartha wrote in her initial email to the Association. "He shared his wish with me that he would like to sit behind the wheel of a bus again."

The Association was more than happy to oblige.

The event came together on May 2, 2023, two days before Sam's birthday. Nearly 100 people showed up, including family members, Local 100 President Richard Davis, Vice President Donald Yates, Retirees Association Director James Manzella, Association Manager Barry Roberts and the MTA's Senior Vice President of Buses, Frank Annicaro.

Family members from as far away as California traveled to New York for the event. Several great, great grandchildren were there as well.

People started showing up for the event at 10:00 a.m. amidst light

showers. But by the time Sam's son, Stanley, and daughter-in-law Eartha, drove up the sun was out. The crowd began cheering as Sam exited the car and walked with a little assistance to board his bus.

As he settled in behind the wheel, with a huge smile on his face, he said with a laugh, "I wish I could take it for a spin around the block, but they won't let me."

Eartha added with a smile, "We were all thinking that if he got back out on the road the NYPD would have to be called to reel him back in."

Sam was born on May 4, 1926. He served in the U.S. Navy toward the end of World War II. His son, Stanley, is also a Navy veteran.

He got a job as a mail sorter with the U.S. Postal Service after the War, but said Sam, "I hated it. Everything was indoors."

He applied to work as a Bus Operator. And then on May 19, 1964 he received a letter from MABSTOA

***Sam Johnson, left, with buddies outside Amsterdam Depot in circa 1980 photo.***



***Daughter-in-law, Eartha, holds umbrella for Sam with son Stanley in background.***







telling him to report to work on Monday, May 25th, 1964 if he wanted the job

"It was one of the happiest days of my life," said Sam.

He was assigned to Amsterdam Depot, and he picked there for the rest of his career. "I never wanted to go anywhere else," he said.

Sam always picked the M104 line. "I knew all the regular passengers and they knew me. I loved meeting different people every day. It was a really busy line, and I loved to drive the bus."

And he was really good at it. When Sam's event was posted to Facebook, scores of former co-workers posted congratulations. One said, "He was the only Operator I knew who could park a bus between two cars."

He participated in MTA Bus Rodeos, received Safe Driver awards and even commendations from his passengers.

Sam walked the picket line outside Amsterdam Depot during the 1966 and 1980 citywide transit strikes.

He retired from the job in 1985 and has been sustained by his union pension for nearly 38 years. "The union has been good to me," he said. "I wouldn't have been able to retire for this long if it wasn't for the union."

When asked what his birthday celebration meant to him, he said, "It

was the highlight of my life, feeling what it was like to be back at work, and to be surrounded by so many family members."

Was there anything he didn't like about the job, he was asked. "Yes, I hated taxis."

Was he ever in an accident? "Yes," he said with a chuckle. "I hit a cab."



**Sam Johnson with, from the left, Local 100 President Richard Davis, RA Director James Manzella, RA Coordinator Shalena Lindsey, Ex. Bd. member Terrance Harmon and RA Manager Barry Roberts. Top photos, from left: Sam with Great, Great Grandchildren; with Grandson Malachi and Great Grandson Malachi, Jr. (from California); and Sam's son Stanley (with Navy cap).**





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***WORKERS' COMPENSATION – SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY – PERSONAL INJURY***

# BECK NOTICE TO PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES REPRESENTED BY TWU LOCAL 100

The purpose of this Notice is to advise all Local 100 members employed under a private sector collective bargaining agreement requiring the payment of dues or fees as a condition of employment, of: 1) their right to join the union or to become an agency fee payer; 2) their right as an agency fee payer to object to the payment of only that portion of membership dues that is related to nonrepresentational expenses of the Union; and 3) the procedures that must be followed to file an objection and receive detailed financial information regarding only that portion of dues determined by the Union to be related to representational and nonrepresentational expenses.

This notice does not apply to public sector employees.

Under federal law you have the right to join the Union as a full-fledged member or to become an agency fee payer of the bargaining unit. Agency fee payers are not members of the union and therefore are not afforded the many benefits associated with union membership. For example, agency fee payers may not attend union meetings; participate in the ratification of collective bargaining agreements; vote in the election of union officers (or be candidates in such elections) or be eligible for other benefits available only to members and their families such as discount programs with various vendors and educational scholarships.

However, agency fee payers do receive the benefits of the union's representation as it relates to the terms and conditions of their employment. As such, the law provides that agency fee payers must pay a fee in an amount at least equal to the union's representational services to fulfill their obligations under a union security provision of a collective bargaining agreement. Such services include the union's activities related to collective bargaining, contract administration

and grievance-arbitration. Individuals who elect not to join the union and to become an agency fee payer have the right to object to paying for union activities not germane to the union's duties as the bargaining representative and to pay only the pro-rata portion of membership dues associated with representational expenses. Objections must be in writing and include the objector's name, address, social security number, job title, work location and the period for which an objection is being filed. Written objections must be mailed to Local 100 and postmarked within 30 days of the publication of this newsletter and addressed to Local 100's Secretary-Treasurer, John Chiarello, 195 Montague Street 9th Floor Brooklyn, New York 11201. Upon receipt of a timely objection, agency fee payers will be provided with additional information related to the calculation of the financial core fee.

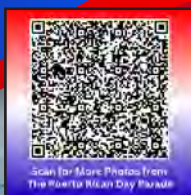
## NOTICE REGARDING ELIGIBILITY FOR UNION OFFICE

Pursuant to TWU Constitution Articles XIII and XV, members are ineligible for nomination or election to any office unless they shall have been in continuous good standing in their Local Union for a period of twelve months immediately preceding nomination. Continuous good standing includes payment of past dues obligations and no persons in bad standing shall be restored to good standing until they have met all their financial obligations to the Union.



# Union Power at the Puerto Rican Parade

Local 100 members turned out in union t-shirts celebrating the Puerto Rican heritage of so many transit workers on June 11th. A wonderful time was had by all, assisted by great music from our own Gary Rosario's band. Great food was offered to all, with President Davis taking a turn on the congas.

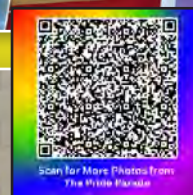






# Pride: A Day in the Sun

The New York City Pride parade kicked off on June 25<sup>th</sup> with our TWU Local 100 contingent enjoying the sun and fun. The union stands for all members and their right to be respected for who they are.







# Dominican Day on 6th Avenue

TWU Local 100, led by President Davis, proudly stepped up onto 6th Avenue in Manhattan on Sunday, August 13th. Union members marched, danced, and enjoyed great Dominican food. President Davis made the rounds, greeting politicians including our close ally Congressman Adriano Espaillat, who recently championed the cause of our restricted duty personnel manning the elevators in upper Manhattan. He also met with Dominican President Luis Abinader.





# Bangladeshi Day

A growing part of the transit workforce are our Brothers and Sisters from Bangladesh, who gather for a festival every year – in 2023 on August 23 at FDR Park in Yorktown Heights. It's a chance to celebrate the careers in transit which the Union has made possible.





# Yes, Your Work-related injuries are worth more than pennies on the dollar!



Transit Authority Risk Management operates like any other insurance company - they are not looking to pay out money to injured workers if they can avoid it. That's why you should consult a professional who knows the ropes and will aggressively pursue the benefits you know you're entitled to, as well as benefits you may not even be aware of. The TA has attorneys on their side. Shouldn't you? The following examples may be helpful.

After breaking his wrist on the job, Rick, a bus mechanic, lost eight weeks of work. He was compensated for the eight weeks, and shortly thereafter was told by the Workers' Compensation Board that there would be **"no further action"** on his case. The TA informed him the case was closed. If Rick had not consulted our attorneys, he may never have learned that he was entitled to an additional 53 weeks of compensation for permanent damage to his arm, over and above the money he had already received while recuperating.

Lucinda, a subway cleaner, broke her leg in 5 places after slipping on a wet staircase. She was out of work for fourteen months, and unable to do any type of work at all. Fifteen months after the incident, she returned to light duty work. Everyone she spoke to said she'd never get Social Security Disability if she wasn't permanently and totally disabled. Fortunately, in working on her compensation case, we informed her she was getting incorrect information. We guided her through the application for a disability award. Ultimately, she and her family were found eligible for a Total Family Social Security Disability Benefit Package of \$36,000, for the period of time she was out of work due to her disability, (called a **"closed period,"**) even though she had been paid full salary for part of the time (including Workers' Compensation), and even though she had, by that point, returned to work!

**Both Lucinda and Rick thought their injuries should entitle them to more than just pennies on the dollar.**

**We thought so too! And, we guided them through the processes required to maximize the monetary benefits to which they were entitled. If you're hurt or develop a job-related illness.**

**Injured? Disabled? Call us. Let's make sure you get more than just pennies for your injury.**

**The call is free. Our advice could be priceless.**



**1.800.416.5454**  
**Si, Hablamos Español!**

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# Help is on the Way

**Don't let addiction define your life and jeopardize your livelihood.**

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