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LOCAL 1103

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Annual Retiree Luncheon - Fun, Food and Friends

*Ken Claussen and
Anne Roughley
make sure everyone
is eligible for
a door prize.*



The 1103 Life Members Club luncheon was once again celebrated at "The Reef" restaurant in Peekskill on December 11th where banquet manager **Dianne Martin** and her staff once again helped insure that everyone not only had a great meal but also that everything went smoothly and without any hitches. A well attended group of retirees and their guests enjoyed the afternoon and shared a lot of laughs with each other. We were especially delighted to have Mrs. Florence Wonsor and Mrs. Diane Borella join us for the afternoon.

LMC President Pam Harrison could not attend due to a serious illness in the family, so Club **Vice President Jeanette Spoor** stepped up and hosted the event. She officially opened the festivi-

ties by singing "God Bless America" to remember our servicemen and women serving in the Armed Forces. **Bob McDonald** of Sister CWA Local 1298 in Connecticut drove from Waterbury to address us on the need for federal legislation to protect America's senior citizens. There are currently a couple bills before Congress, but we have to be careful of what legislation we support. Some might sound good, but until we read all the small print and understand all of the potential ramifications that might adversely affect us, we have to be careful before we throw our support one way or another. Bob is taking his fight for retiree justice to the newspapers in Connecticut via a series of articles he has written

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Health Care is Prime Issue at CT AFL-CIO Convention

It came as no surprise that when the Connecticut State AFL-CIO celebrated its golden anniversary and held its biennial convention in New Haven, the emphasis on the ever-growing concern over health care reform was foremost on the agenda. One of the most significant resolutions presented to the convened delegates that was unanimously approved, was the kick-off of a renewed campaign to win health care reform that protects hard-won union benefits while extending health care coverage to all Americans. In 2007, the State AFL-CIO and its affiliates had already made universal health care its top legislative priority and this resolution was a re-doubling of those efforts.

We in CWA, the Connecticut AFL-CIO and the American labor movement in general have all seen our benefits attacked at the bargaining table. While we have our union fighting for us, the vast majority of our neighbors and state residents aren't as lucky and have either nothing to fall back on or are paying such tremendous rates for coverage, that it is truly a crime. That is why the AFL-CIO mounted a concerted effort to pass a health bill last year with countless hours of testimony given and days of lobbying invested in that fight. Because the bill was filibustered in the State Finance Committee, it failed to go anywhere and died its death last May. The Senate Chair of the Finance, Revenue



Steward Matt Bensey, Business Agent Joe Mayhew, Chief Steward Liz Rodriguez and Business Agent Ron Mangeri flank Connecticut's Secretary of State Susan Bysiewicz.

& Bonding Committee is **Eileen Daley** and the House Chair is **Cameron Staples**. Write them at the State Capitol, Hartford, CT 06106 and ask them why they let the fiasco of a filibuster prevail over Connecticut's citizenry and then forward a copy to Chris Cutter at the Union Hall. At the convention, the State AFL-CIO pledged to lead the fight and has started training 1,000 political activists to take our battle and our message for economic justice to the workplace, the community and even to our union halls in an effort to educate and mobilize more than just activists to win universal, quality health care for every American.

In keeping with the issue of health care, another topic that we discussed was making the 2008 elections a mandate on health care reform and to elect a President and Congress that pledged

to that end. The State AFL-CIO and every individual union present promised to support only those candidates that supported our goals. As of this writing there are a myriad of Republican and Democratic candidates courting America to be our next President. When you vote, remember who supports us and then pull the lever. Put you family, your job and everything we have gained at the bargaining table first before you pull the lever and vote party line only.

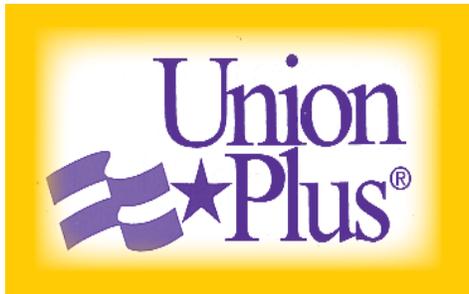
This was a very enjoyable and mentally invigorating conference and on behalf of **Steward Matt Bensey** and myself, I want to thank our Local for allowing us attend.

Elizabeth Rodriguez
Chief Steward
*Fairfield Police & Fire
Dispatchers*

AFL-CIO Set's Up "Save My Home" Hotline to Assist Union Workers Caught in Sub-Prime Crunch

Offering free information and confidential advice, 24-7, the new Union Plus "Save My Home" hotline has been set up to answer calls from troubled homeowners beset by higher mortgage payments as their adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) are "reset." Victims of the so-called "subprime credit crunch" include thousands of union families lured into expensive home mortgages that offer attractive initial interest payments – typically for the first three years of their loan – after which rates jump significantly. Many consumers have found their monthly ARM payments increased by \$500 or more when a loan is reset. Few of the victims of this realize that the fine print on their loans imposed costly charges if they sought to refinance to avoid the higher costs. The picture for many middle and low-income homeowners

has been complicated by the simultaneous drop in house prices that occurred when the housing bubble burst about a year ago – meaning that even if homeowner could refinance, the value of their house wouldn't cover what they owe.



Acting to ease the pain on working families caught in the "perfect storm" of the subprime crunch and the collapse of house prices, the AFL-CIO and Union Plus have set up a hot line to provide counseling and information to help families avoid foreclosure. The hotline is staffed by professionals from Money

Management International, a non-profit HUD certified housing counseling agency. The program also offers face-to-face counseling with 100 offices in 22 states.

To respond to the plight of many union member, the AFL-CIO commissioned Peter Hard Research Associates to conduct a survey that found that 62% of homeowners with ARMs believe that escalating mortgage rates are hurting them and their communities and that 48% said that they have had to cut back on everyday spending for groceries, clothing and gasoline when their payments increased. When announcing the Union Plus program, AFL-CIO President John Sweeny said, "The trapdoor between the American Dream and the American Nightmare is the ARM Adjustment."

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SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Watch for the Local 1103 Scholarship Application Form in next month's Eagle - -
8 Scholarships totaling \$10,000 will be drawn at the June General Membership Meeting

Annual Retiree Luncheon - continued from front cover

about protecting retirement benefits and upholding the **ERISA** laws. **Elliot Galant**, President of CWA Local 1104's Retired Members Club, brought us up to date on the plight our retirees in the many telecom companies now out there. One surprising example he cited was about what our Lucent (now Alcatel) Brothers and Sisters are dealing with. Alcatel, a French-based company, is in lock-step with many other corporations around the country and is charging their employees for their prescriptions and medical care while their French counterparts pay nothing because they have national healthcare. Talk about disparate treatment.

Before Jeanette introduced **Bob McCracken** to speak, she thanked him for his, and the



Retired 1103 President Bob McCracken and LMC Vice President Jeanette Spoor share a laugh at LMC Luncheon.



Remember when many Verizon men and women worked for the old New York Telephone Company? They Do!

Local's overwhelming and continued support of the 1103 Life Members Club and told everyone how the Local supports and helps the LMC to attend the annual Verizon Stockholders meetings, the CWA conventions, always keeping the doors of the Union Hall open for the LMC to hold meetings and everything else from using the postage machine, the copy machine and the coffee machine. Mac praised the LMC for their vigorous fighting on behalf of 1103, and all CWA retirees, and concluded by saying that our club "is one of the most active and respected retirees clubs in all of CWA." To thank Mac for everything, the Club presented him with a gift and a gift certificate.

After we held a 50-50 drawing and gave away a dozen door prizes, incoming Local **President Joseph Barca Jr.** wrapped up the afternoon by committing the Local's continued support to the LMC and thanked us "for all the great efforts the 1103 Life Members Club does on behalf of ALL CWA men and women, both active and retired." If you missed the Christmas Luncheon this year, plan to attend next year. Everyone has a good time and it's always nice to see old friends.

ANNE ROUGHLEY

1103 RMC Assistant to the Pres.

LETTERS

TO THE LOCAL



COMMUNICATIONS WORKERS OF AMERICA - LOCAL 1103

(AFFILIATED WITH A.F.L.-C.I.O.-C.L.C.)

345 WESTCHESTER AVENUE • PORT CHESTER, NY 10573



Dear Mark,

As an honorary Member of Local 1103, I am an avid reader of "The Eagle." Yup! From cover to cover.

I was deeply touched reading about the speech you gave at the Cornell Leadership School. I cried! Not a day goes by that I do not re-live memories of Gerry. Mark, it is almost unbelievable that Gerry is still remembered. By telling his story, and honoring him, I am humbled.

Your eloquent words fill my heart with love and gratitude.

Thank you.

Lovingly,
/s/AUDREY HORGAN

PERIODICAL

If It's Thursday . . .

THEN YOU MUST BE WEARING RED

IF NOT...



Only 7 months until strike-time. Are you saving up yet?

IT'S TIME FOR
A WAKE UP CALL!



Bargaining a Contract is Never Over.
It is Always an Ongoing Process Between Agreements.
Show Your Solidarity Every THURSDAY!