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UNIFORMED EMT'S AND PARAMEDICS OF THE FDNY  
LOCAL 2507, DC37, AFSCME AFL-CIO  
718-371-0310

# UEP Bulletin

## MEDIATION

By Patrick J. Bahnken

As you receive this edition of the newsletter, you will already be aware of the fact that the Union has been ordered to continue mediation for at least an additional month. This order came from the Board of Collective Bargaining and although we doubt the City will make any meaningful proposals, we must abide by the order.

The reason I doubt that the City will make a meaningful proposal is based upon their last offer following the joint mediation session on March 29th.

Following a long day of meetings with the mediator assigned to our case, the City's Office of Labor Relations waited until the last minute to transmit an offer that amounted to little more than fertilizer.

In their latest offer, the City proposed a four year contract totaling 7.5 percent with a longevity totaling sixteen hundred dollars over twenty years. In exchange for this meager offering, we would be expected to stretch out the number of years it would take a member to earn annual leave. We would also be required to cut refresher courses in half, lower the starting salary, give up the current 15 year longevity of eight hundred dollars and agree to a positive pay plan that would address the City's FLSA problems but appears to cut our wages even further.

In essence, the City is asking us to make concessions that other Unions made in exchange for a four-year agreement worth 17%. The difference here is that the City is offering little more than 9% in compensation for these concessions.

A glaring example of the problems we



are facing is the recently executed contract by the EMS Superior Officers Association. The EMS Chiefs traded in two annual leave days and a floating holiday for a four-year agreement worth 8.25%. We are being asked to give up a lot more than that for little more in consideration.

Perhaps the most insulting aspect of the City's offer is that they are charging us a half percent because we have not yet reached an agreement. Imagine that, we have to sue the Office of Labor Relations to have them ordered to the bargaining table and now they want to charge *us* for the delay!

While I always hold out hope that a negotiated settlement can be reached, I must honestly say that unless the Office of Labor Relations is prepared to make a more realistic proposal, I see no alternative to binding arbitration.

The next joint mediation session is scheduled for April 21st.

**In Solidarity**

**Patrick J. Bahnken**  
*President*

Please join the newly formed FDNY EMS Pipe and Drums. We are looking for members and will give free pipe or drum lessons. We are currently involved in a tee shirt fund raiser to buy equipment for the band. Any questions regarding lessons or t-shirts call Pipe Major Don Riley at 570-872-3041 or Business Manager John Manning at 917-589-0047 or visit the web site [www.fdnym-spipesanddrums.com](http://www.fdnym-spipesanddrums.com). Thank you.

# SLIPPERY SLOPE OF FINANCIAL INSECURITY



By Donald Faeth

**M**oney makes money, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.' Truth be told, there is a lot of accuracy in this statement. Many banks hit you with service fees if you don't maintain certain 'minimum' balances. Credit card companies hit you if you go over your borrowing limit or are a day late on your minimum payment. Then, to add insult to injury, they jack up your interest rate. Higher interest yields are given to higher deposits and 0% financing is usually only offered to 'well qualified' buyers. When your income doesn't exceed your expenses, you may find yourself on a financial slippery slope, where your debt starts compounding monthly. Given the fact that everything has gone up in cost, from gas to milk, but your inadequate salary has remained the same over the past four years, many of our members are finding themselves sliding out of control.

To find a solution, you must first identify contributing factors to the problem. First, it is important to sit down and list all sources of monthly income and expenses. Add the two separate columns up, than calculate the difference between them. If you are in the positive, fantastic, you have disposable income, but still be careful. If you are in the negative, there is a very good chance that your financial problems are getting worse every month. What can you do? Well, the easy solution is to hit the winning numbers in lotto, but that isn't being very realistic. Reality is, there is no easy fix. Staying for overtime or picking up secondary employment would be the next practical solution, but depending on your personal circumstances, might not be practical (single parent, child care issues, etc.) Sometimes, the cost of childcare services cancels out additional monies earned for other employment or overtime. When these or other prohibitive circumstances apply, you really need to scrutinize your expenses. Ask yourself, do I really need 160 channels of cable (\$80/month, \$960/yr)? Is this a good time for me to finally stop smoking (\$5.50 pk/day, \$2,007.50/yr)? Can I brown-bag my lunch, or if that involves too much work, bring in my own beverage (take a look at what Micky-D's charges for a soda)? How many unnecessary items do you purchase when you go food shopping (yodels, twinkies, etc.)? Does your car really need high octane? Do you have to pay a toll coming into work and have the ability to transfer to a station where you wouldn't (\$4.50/\$9day x 245wkdy=\$2,205)? Do you return containers that you paid a deposit on? Believe it or not, it all adds up!

Some people may be too far down the slope to just cut corners. There are debt consolidation services available to help in these situations. Things you can immediately do for yourself, should be done sooner than later. If you have large credit card debt on a high interest card, transfer the balance to one that charges a lower interest rate. Low interest loans to consolidate debt are another option, but remember, a pension loan decreases your take-home salary and a second mortgage places a lien on your property. If you are going to use these options, make sure you have a realistic plan to pay the loans back. Are you paying interest on loans while you are putting a high percentage of your salary into your 457 or other retirement plan? Think

about that for a second.

The emotional stress that mounting debt incurs can be enormous. You need to take care of yourself. Stress relief through exercise or hobbies is productive. Fighting with family members and coworkers is not. Also, please do not ignore personality changes in those you work with. Let a delegate know or address the situation yourself if you have that type of relationship with the person. The personal services unit (PSU) of DC 37 (212) 815-1550 and CSU (212) 570-1693 are just two of many services available to assist in this type of situation. There is no shame in seeking assistance when certain burdens become too great.

A closing thought I feel I need to mention here. I don't understand how the City can ignore the high attrition rate of this service or how they can make insulting offers to us at the table with a straight face. We have taken the stand that you deserve significantly more than the DC37 pattern and will not settle for anything less. Unfortunately, doing the right thing is often the more difficult path. We know that our people are suffering financially and so does the City. They hope to use this fact to pressure the union into submission and encourage our members to provide their labor for free. Now, more than ever, we need to stand strong, avoid playing into their hand, and fight back. They want our members to provide their labor for free by working in the system under another employer. Members who engage in this activity weaken our position at the bargaining table. How do you fight back, simple, no more freebies. If you are kept one minute past your scheduled tour, put in for overtime. Medics should avail themselves to the three hours O.T. every month they are entitled to for C.M.E. Any time the system sends you to CSU, CCU, BITS, EEO, etc., you are entitled to a minimum of four hours O.T. You are not to sweep facilities, mop floors, or empty garbage cans. This is in-title work of Local 420's institutional aids (IA). If you are unable to acquire a patients insurance information or social security number, make sure you document the reason in your UAL.

I love this profession and believe strongly in the importance of the work we do, but we also have to take care of our families. This City apparently has no interest in providing you with the resources, respect, and compensation to do this job. There exists more than one element working against us. We will continue to fight for what you deserve, but if we fail, you need to provide a safety net to prevent further financial damage. Just remember, something that helps you today, but hurts you tomorrow, might not be worth getting involved with.

As always, stay safe and united!

**In Solidarity**

**Donald Faeth**  
**Vice President**

# TESTIMONY OF ISRAEL MIRANDA BEFORE THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL FIRE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE ON APRIL 4, 2006

By Israel Miranda

Good Afternoon Honorable Chair and distinguished members of the Committee on Fire and Criminal Justice Services. My name is Israel Miranda and I am the Health and Safety Coordinator of the Uniformed EMT's and Paramedics of the New York City Fire Department, Local 2507. I would like to say what a pleasure and honor it is to testify in front of your committee today and I would also like to thank you for the work you do day-to-day to serve the citizens of New York.

We are the largest Emergency Medical Service system in the world. Representing over 2,500 members. We answer more than 1.2 million calls a year and transport more than 2 million patients to the hospital each year.

Much of the equipment and ambulances are antiquated or in poor condition and not ergonomically friendly to the employee. They are driven seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day on the tough streets of New York City. The age and mileage of these ambulances leave very little comfort to the patients and rescuers on them.

For example, ambulance stretchers and stair chairs are patient carrying devices that are responsible for most back injuries on this job. Our current stretchers is a two-rescuer lift in and out of ambulance vehicles, which cause additional shoulder and extremity injuries. The FDNY began purchasing a more ergonomic stretcher, which required minimal lifting and bending but did not continue this purchase to accommodate ambulances citywide. The stair chair is a patient-carrying device ideally used to carry sick or injured patients down the stairs in the seated position to the ambulance. It is physically demanding to carry someone down six flights of stairs on numerous occasion during a workday, especially when you are on that second consecutive shift. Many back injuries, slips and falls can be avoided if the FDNY would look at new technology. They should research a better ergonomic stair chair, which will reduce injuries, lost time and the cost of worker's compensation cases.

Haz-Tac ambulances are vehicles with trained personnel in Hazardous Material Response and containment. They utilize Personal Protective Equipment specifically for hazardous materials incidents. They are required to carry this equipment in addition to the equipment of a basic life support unit. This in itself is a problem because due to the inability to secure all equipment due to the lack of compartment space and design of the vehicle. Specialized breathing apparatus and compressed air cylinders that cannot be secured may become a projectile and cause extensive injuries to the rescuer or their patients. Much of the personal protective suits are squeezed into compartments, which may damage and reduce its integrity. We have also experienced the department's inability to provide adequate sizes of these personal protective suits and boots.

Needle sticks are the leading cause of injury and illness relat-

ed to bloodborne pathogens on a national level. We at the FDNY still utilize inadequate devices called the Moody Tube (a hard cardboard container) to secure used hypodermics utilized in patient care scenarios in spite of the new technology that is available.

Body Armor – Not only is our job physically tasking, it is also dangerous since we respond to

calls which are violent or where weapons have been used. It was some comfort to know that FDNY in conjunction with the city supplied our members with Personal Body Armor. As of January 1, 2006, Reliance Armor Systems, Inc., which was the company who made our bullet resistant vest, has gone out of business. All new employees hired since this date have been placed in harms way because they lack this body armor due to a new vendor not being selected.

Protective clothing for rescuers include safety coat, pants, boots and gloves. The FDNY was told where to seek grant money from Homeland Security for this purpose. They placed it out to bid and had a group of our members wear each garment and evaluate. After the evaluation they decided to go with the lowest bid, which was a vendor who was picked in third place, by the survey. After some research there was literature accusing this same company of running sweatshops, having garments made in China, which could be why they could under bid their competitors. It was also found to have PVC known as the poison plastic in the foam padding around the knees, which at over 120 degrees gives off gases, which contain carcinogens. The City Council passed legislation bill Int. 544-A: which reduces the purchase of products containing hazardous substances. This includes products such as PVC that lead to the formation of dioxins among other things.

To sum it up the FDNY must supply us with the best possible protective equipment available. To say that funding is an excuse is deplorable. Portions can be deferred to future budgetary periods. Do not fall victim to FDNY smoke and mirrors. Because, at the end the smoke will clear and we will see what's behind the mirrors.

**In Solidarity**

**Israel Miranda**  
*Recording Secretary*  
**Health and Safety Coordinator**



## I REMEMBER

By Jack Schaefer

I remember Communications located on the roof of 377 Broadway, the IRF cards and the two dispatch frequencies; Queens/Brooklyn and Manhattan/Bronx all shared with a bus company. I remember Ms. Montgomery, MET certifications and OB rotations at Bellevue. I remember bread truck ambulances painted blue and gray with round noses. I remember bigger bread truck buses painted red and white with a pole (no seat) for the tech to hang onto. I remember MVOs (\$9500 per year) and all white tech uniforms. I remember stretchers welded into the bus with canvas stretchers with wooden poles. I remember foot operated suction machines and re-usable ambu bags. I remember working the clock.

I remember corpsmen (\$10,000 per year), two tone green uniforms complete with leg stripes, three number radio designations, Gruman buses and their loose rivets. I remember radio mikes that were phone receivers, the voice alarm, and the modat.

I remember the Thomas half ring traction splint, using wooden short back boards with soft c collars and the scoop for spinal immobilization.

I remember being a medic with no state exam and no Mac test. I remember Medic 1 and Medic 2 covering the entire Bronx while 3 medic units covered all of Manhattan and there were no other medic units citywide. I remember the Brooklyn SST unit. I remember 1 watt telemetry radios with the steering unit. I

remember Frank Polifiaco and the "Manhattan Plan." I remember EMT certifications with 4 numbers.

I remember Kevin Brown, Gary Lombardi and Vic Politi as street medics.

I remember gas powered 454 Chevy Silverado buses and transmission fires. I remember EVOC with brakes that locked and the feather wall. I remember the DOT at Queens General. I remember white shirts for medics. I remember the drug wars.

I remember the Life pack 2 (about 60 lbs.), bicarb drips, calcium as a first line drug, the McSwain dart and Isuprel. I remember internal jugular lines and nasal intubation. I remember the first Pitchnick Awards Ceremony.

I remember 10-200's, K-Dee's, McGowan's and Saturday night at Suspenders. I remember the Black Sheep, the Pig roast, the Kent Ave. Pier and the bunker parties.

Despite all that I remember and all the change I have witnessed the most important remembrance is of people. People who, while longer with us, were in their own right the forefathers of our system of pre-hospital care. Their pride in the profession, their integrity of character and personal courage allowed this system, despite all the obstacles, to become the best in the world.

I will never forget Rich Gutworth, Rich Gomez, Dave Leland, Father Frank, Brian Lonto, Mike Schriber, Tom Corsiari, Carlos Lillo, Ricardo Quinn, Barbara Poppo, Mike Catrell, Tom Langone, Marty De Maeo and Tim Keller.

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE



## MEET THE PEOPLE

Photos by Oren Barzilay

To all the members of the EMS command, I will be going around to every EMS station in the coming weeks taking pictures of our members and posting them in our union newsletter. This will be our way to introduce ourself to our brothers and sisters out there, if you have a quick phrase or comment that you would like to add to your picture I will be more than happy to post it.

The first months addition I will introduce the great people of BOT.



Top left to right: Mike Finneran, Joe (aka "Donutz") D'Agosto, Kelly Lonergan, Mary Merced, Jozette Brown, Ron Grubert, Richard Marrone. Bottom left to right: Joe Fortis, Mike Caputo, Ruben Berrios, Claudia Medina.



Left to right standing: Don Hudson, Steve Celestri, Maria Levoce, Vinny Santoiemma, Jessica DeResto, Dave Gill, Karen Mangal, Peter Andryuk, Pat Slavik, James Mondello, Jack Tims, Giberto Aviles JR. Left to right kneeling: Lt. Andres Rodriguez, Rudy Havelka, Leo Vanderpool, Peter Auricchio, Wil Silvestry, Hector Arroyo, Joe Hudak, James Fallar, Chief James P. Martin, Phil Lewis.

## PASSING OF PARAMEDIC DEBORAH REEVE



## UNION CONNECTION

By Lester Musta Greene, Labor Liaison

I would like to take this moment to thank President Bahnken for the opportunity to write for the UEP Bulletin. For those who don't know me, I am a 21 year veteran of EMS. Currently, I am working out of Battalion 39 in East New York, Brooklyn. During my 20 years I have been a union advocate, activist and Executive Board member. I am now the Labor Liaison for UEP of Local 2507; you ask what my job is? Simply put, I help build alliances between our union and other unions in the city, country and the planet, bringing our issues to them and theirs to us. Through my articles I hope to build on union solidarity of EMS workers, and show that unions need each other, in order to build real power. In order to have a clear understanding let's look at what a union is and how it helps workers.

A union is a group of workers who form an organization to win:

- Respect on the job
- Better wages and benefits
- More flexibility for work and family needs
- A counter-balance to the unchecked power of employers
- A voice in improving the quality of their products and/or service

Did you know that union workers earn 28% more than non-union workers and are more likely to receive health care and pension benefits. Union today are involved in the fight to protect medical benefits and safety on the job and fair trade agreements that lift the standard of living for workers all over the world. Next time I will examine the challenge facing unions and labor in the 21st century.

*"If a man tells you he loves America  
yet hates labor He is a liar"*

*—Abraham Lincoln*

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**1-212-210-NEWS**

**The New York Times**

**[news-tips@nytimes.com](mailto:news-tips@nytimes.com)**

## The Disaster Health Services Team at The American Red Cross in Greater New York Needs You!

The American Red Cross is a non-profit organization. The mission of the American Red Cross in Greater New York is to improve the quality of human life; to enhance self-reliance and concern for others; and to help people avoid, prepare for, and cope with emergencies. It does this through services that are governed and directed by volunteers and are consistent with its congressional charter and the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Always on alert, the American Red Cross assists the survivors of over 60,000 disasters annually. Emergencies range from family house fires to the massive devastation wrought by earthquakes, floods and hurricanes.

The American Red Cross in Greater New York who are affected by disasters such as fires, floods, blizzards, transportation accidents and building collapses. The American Red Cross in Greater New York is currently recruiting volunteer Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses to join its disaster health services team to help meet the needs of people who are affected by the local emergencies. As a volunteer nurse with The American Red Cross Disaster Health Services you provide emergency and preventive health services. Red Cross nurses are involved with shelter nursing, health consultation, liaison with local medical authorities, and follow-up with lost medications and medical equipment—as well as providing care for caregivers. Since the early days of the American Red Cross, nurses have played vital roles in coping with health care needs when disaster strikes. Nurse are needed more than ever to volunteer in roles calling for leadership, compassion caring and action.

Volunteers may become active in different ways:

- They may assist on a regularly scheduled basis helping clients affected by smaller disasters.
- They may be available only for infrequent large-scale disasters in our community.
- They may assist with the planning and preparedness activities, committee work and recruitment.

New York City has an abundance of nurses, let's be prepared to take care of our own community. Enroll now with The American Red Cross. Disaster training is provided free of charge. Candidates for Disaster Health Services work within The American Red Cross and must possess a current state license and/or certification (i.e. NP, RN, LPN, MD, PA, EMT, or Paramedic).

For more information contact Selene Ferguson, Health Services Coordinator at:

(212) 875-2018 or [fergusons@arcgny.org](mailto:fergusons@arcgny.org)

# FUNDRAISER FOR EMT RYAN HAYES

Photos by Dwight Scott (UEP Photo press team)



**UNIFORMED EMT's and PARAMEDICS of the FDNY  
LOCAL 2507, DC 37, AFSCME AFL-CIO  
718-371-0310**

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**Uniformed EMT's & Paramedics of Local 2507**

47-09 30th Street  
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Long Island City, NY 11101



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