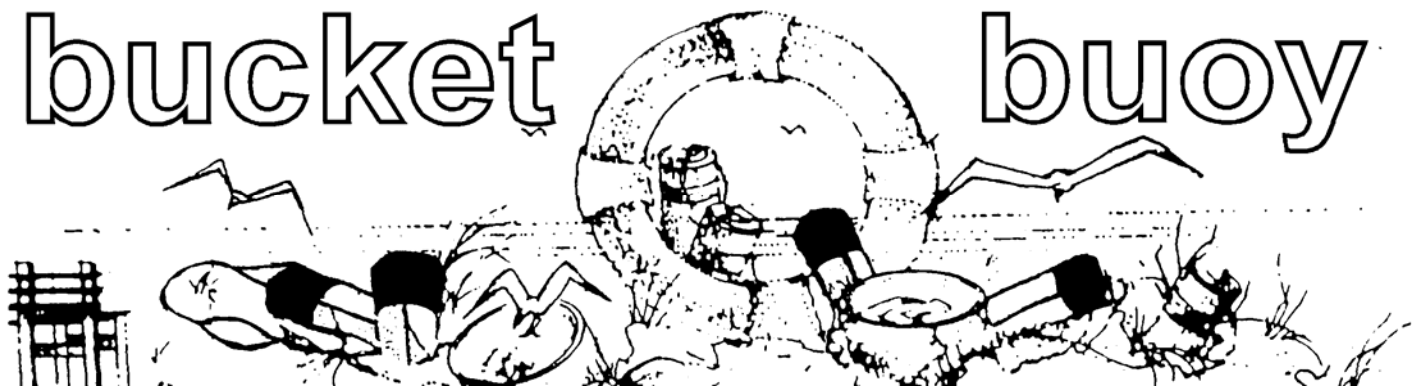


bucket buoy



Dear Fellow Lifeguards:

August 20, 2006

Last Tuesday night, we had the first General Membership Meeting in over three years. About 95 lifeguards showed up for what was basically an informational session led by Union President Bob Lenti. Bob brought the Corps up-to-date on what was happening with the decertification, NYSCOPBA and other issues and where we plan to go in the future: Until it is decided where PERB is going to place us, we are up in the air about that future. However, as long as the Jones Beach Lifeguard Corps holds together we will be able to pretty much dictate on which road that future lies.

After the conclusion of the updates, a question and answer period began. Many of the questions concerned our non-existent raise and where it is. Bob explained that even though NYSCOPBA got a raise for their Corrections Officers, so far the Law Enforcement section was excluded from that raise (*Surprise, Surprise! My editorial comment*). It should be noted that we will eventually get a raise and it will be retroactive but the amount is still up in the air - although I certainly feel it will be at least equal to what the Correction Officers got. (About 11%).

Other questions dealt with the issue of whether it is a good move to be at odds with the State over issues of mistreatment of individual members. It was explained that this Union always has desired a harmonious working relationship with the State, however, it **must** act to protect its members, even if that means bringing up things that may anger the State.

There were also questions about the *Bucket and Buoy* and its editorials. Bob explained that editorials are supposed to be opinion and that the *Bucket and Buoy* carries conflicting opinions as long as someone is willing to put pen to paper.

Other questions also concerned when we will have elections again and the status of members of our Board not currently working. It was explained that until the PERB matter is complete, we can't have elections but regardless, they are not scheduled until next year at the earliest.

After the written questions, a freestyle discussion ensued wherein lifeguards were given the microphone to express their opinions and solutions. The end result was a promise by the Executive Board that they will try to do more to enhance communication with the beaches in these trying times.

Note: Just an update on the continuation of the foolishness. This week a Lieutenant from RM was disciplined by being knocked by the Park Manager for two days (against his Captain's recommendation.) This was his punishment for allowing a weekender to work at his beach (when there was a lifeguard shortage that created a safety issue) and for trying to protect the rights of a young lifeguard who was being unfairly and, what some might say illegally, interrogated by a Park Policeman. (Coincidentally, as pointed out last week, the facts are that both the lifeguard who worked and the one being interrogated were Jewish.)

In this day and age, with what I have seen as to the behavior of the administration, this does not surprise me. What does surprise me however, is the alleged fact that the lifeguard lieutenant was told by the Park Manager that if he went to a step one hearing, (where the Park Manager would be the impartial hearing officer under Parks' contested rules) she would punish him more than the two days. In other words, the impartial hearing officer has determined guilt before the hearing! Sounds fair to me.

One other question, where was NYSCOPBA during all this as a dues paying member is getting knocked? Certainly not anywhere around to do the job we pay them hundreds of thousands of dollars to do.

Final Note: This week saw the running of our annual Races as well as the annual Race Party. There is no question that the refusal of the State to allow us to serve Beer changed the tenor of the party but other than that the Races were great. We will recap them all next week with the results and more pictures.

Once again a tremendous thanks to those that made the Races possible. First of all Lee Hahn and Pete Scala for their incredible job on the work crew, Bob Adler for stepping up to run things and Jimmy Fig for handling the party again. Thanks to them and all that helped. PS Congrats to the Champs, Fld. 6!



The smiling women before the 100 free at the Races

OUR ALBANY TRIP

On Friday, Bob Lenti and I went up to Albany for a meeting with NYSCOPBA. The purpose was to discuss their withdrawing any opposition to the ALJ's decisions and consenting to allow us to move to Council 82. To say that the reception was chilly is an understatement. We met with the president and one of their attorneys and explained in very simple terms that we will fight tooth and nail any attempt on their part to change the decertification decision. We explained that while we thought NYSCOPBA was an excellent union for correction officers, it has never been a benefit to lifeguards. We explained how the actions of Keith Zulko had thrown our local group into disarray for no apparent reason. Given the irrational defensive posture that NYSCOPBA took, it was apparent that, while not admitting it, they understood how we had been treated. The end result is that they agreed to bring our proposal to the full board to see what can be worked out.

From NYSCOPBA, we then went to the office of NYS Parks where we met with Kate McKee and Brian Lee. Kate is the director of human resources, and Brian is one of her deputies. While the reception there was warmer than NYSCOPBA's, it was still far into the icy side. Kate made it clear that she would not discuss lifeguard concerns with us because we are supposedly represented by NYSOPBA. I explained to her that she knows very well that there is virtually no communication between NYSCOPBA and Parks regarding lifeguards. I also explained to her that the concept of not communicating with their largest employee group makes no sense whatsoever and is clearly perceived by lifeguards as a ploy to try to neutralize the bargaining power of the Corps. It was also explained to her that from a human resources point of view, that philosophy is completely counterproductive. Furthermore, it was pointed out that NYS recognizes us as an "employee organization" and that even though we are not yet the designated bargaining unit, there is no prohibition against State Parks discussing concerns with us.

Somehow, the discrimination issues came up and Kate advocated that although anti-Semitism can exist anywhere, she resented the fact that there had been an inference that State Parks is in any way prejudicial. We explained to her that even though it may be completely true that State Parks may not do anything that can be pointed out as overtly prejudicial, when one ignores evidence of biasness among their managers; they are as guilty as if they committed the acts themselves. We also pointed out that turning a blind eye to a wrong does not mean that it does not exist, and until Parks can address those problems, they stand the risk of being perceived as prejudicial.

From there, we went to the office of PERB which extended us the warmest greeting of the three. We had a pleasant conversation with what we feel were caring people. Although no particulars of our situation could be discussed, we left there feeling

that we would get a fair shake from that organization.

On the ride home, I further found one more of Bob Lenti's true talents in that he was able to successfully find the slowest road, the slowest lane of traffic, and the slowest toll booth without even trying. The ride home took about six hours and, with Bob's talent, he was able to achieve the creation of traffic on roads that have never seen a traffic jam in all their years of existence. I believe this is an ability created from working years at the Mall. Crowds just form when Bob is around.



Bob brings in his unique style to make the Races a success

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor: - The recent Bucket and Buoy editorial alleging that the State Park Administration in collusion with the Police Department has "overtly" engaged in systemic anti-Semitic discrimination was as sadly comical as it was incoherent. The rambling scenario was devoid of any factual supporting empirical evidence or just plain common sense to float such a radical and unfounded conclusion. In fact, it reads like a Pink Panther episode with its vague facts and over reaching, bumbling conspiracy overtones.

Purportedly, these editorials advance the Brotherhood by addressing perceived patterns and prejudicial behavior but, in truth, such irresponsible reporting diminishes it. I am certain the views expressed in these editorials are not shared by the vast majority of lifeguards who truly understand the importance of the public's perception of their collective judgment and good will. This is far too valuable of a commodity to be so frivolously expended in pursuit of personal agendas. - Bob Burkley, Captain Robert Moses 4/5

Dear Bob: - First of all congratulations on achieving your fifty years of service. (For those of you who don't know, this is Bob's fiftieth year of Lifeguard service.) Very few have reached this landmark and you should be lauded for it.

In response to your letter I am sorry that you found the recent editorials "comical" and "incoherent". Speaking for myself, I find it hard to find humor in the idea of persecuting someone for their religious beliefs or color, however, I have learned that what each person finds funny is unique and the fact that you may find this situation "comical" is your individual privilege.

As to your finding of the editorials as "incoherent", perhaps I can explain the issue in simpler terms: Fact: The vast majority of lifeguards in our Corps are not Jewish. Fact: The vast majority of all threatened disciplines and denials of rights this year have been to lifeguards who are Jewish. Fact: 18 lifeguards failed to disclose prior convictions on their applications. Fact: Only one of these 18 lifeguards was arrested for this. Fact: That lifeguard was African-American. Fact: The rest were not. Fact: A Lifeguard was denied Medical leave this year. Fact: Since the first year of Medical leave no other lifeguard has been denied this leave. Fact: That lifeguard was Jewish. The facts go on and on.

Bob, even if you choose to shut your eyes to these obvious and undeniable facts, the facts themselves do not pass the "smell" test. That is what the editorials are about.

Finally, with regards to your charge that "by addressing perceived patterns and prejudicial behavior" we are "diminishing the brotherhood," I think it is important that you remember that the primary purpose of a union is to protect its members. That protection should be extended to every one of its members no matter what race, color, or creed. While it may be true that sometimes in pursuit of justice for its members, our actions may not endear us to the public; I have to remind you, Bob, that this union's job is to protect its members, not win popularity contests.

With all that said I do want to thank you for writing and expressing your opinion. - Roy Lester

Dear Editor: Roy Lester and Bob Lenti met with Kate McKee of Parks in Albany on August 18, 2006. Ms. McKee is a high ranking official of Parks. Roy and Bob discussed various issues with her, including the alleged anti-Semitism being experienced by some Jewish lifeguards from the LISPRC administration. Ms McKee's response to them regarding this matter was while Parks is not anti-Semitic "THERE IS ANTI-SEMITISM EVERYWHERE." As a Jewish man I find this comment by Ms. McKee to be inappropriate and insensitive to the issue. Civil rights legislation was made into law because attitudes of biasness were found to be too prevalent in our society and totally unacceptable in government agencies. When a N.Y.S. Parks administrator believes that anti-Semitism is inevitable it is not surprising that we find evidence of the appearance of anti-Semitism in the LISPRC administration. - Jay Lieberfarb

Dear Editor: It is shocking that 7 out of 13 Captains were missing from the General Membership meeting! Outside of Hansen [travel distance] where was ALLEN, BOHMAN, CASELLI, HAMMILL, NORMAN, PETERS, AND WOODS? Plus, more than half of the Lieutenants were missing. The talk is that we need to show support of the union, let's start at the top. Are the missing toooooo old for the responsibility that comes with the position? - Jim Dirico



The Wildwood Crew with the wild woods in the background

THE COMICS

After a few too many, the bartender cuts off a customer. The drunk slinks off his stool and stumbles out the door.

A minute later, he stumbles back in through a side door and slurs, "Bartender, pour me a drink."

"Joe!" yells the bartender, "I just eighty-sixed you!"

Joe again staggers out the front door, only to re-enter moments later through the side door.

"Bartender, pour me a drink."

"Get outta here!"

Again out the front door and back in the side door.

"Bartender..."

"Joe!"

"Hey," says Joe indignantly, "how many bars do you work at?"

* * * * *
When cheese gets its picture taken, what does it say?

* * * * *
I went to a restaurant that serves "breakfast at anytime." So I ordered French Toast during the Renaissance.

* * * * *
I think Ford names trucks by how many times you cuss when you fill them up: F-150, F-250 ...



The Hecksher Team makes a great showing at the races