

# Long Island Chapter

Labor and Employment Relations Association

Newsletter

## SHAPING THE WORKPLACE OF THE *FUTURE*



bug

September 2010

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### PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

Over the past two decades, there has been a continuing decline in union membership in the U.S., particularly in the private sector. In addition, there has been an increase in the unpleasant discourse in the political sector.



While it would be difficult to establish a scientific correlation between these two events, they both reflect the changes occurring in our society. One of our members, Dr. John Coverdale of NYSUT, requested that we publish his views on these matters and I decided to substitute his remarks for my column in this issue. We would like to hear from our members in reaction to these views and we will publish other perspectives in future issues.

#### My View by Dr. John Coverdale, NYSUT

On Friday, May 7th, 2010, I attended LERA's Annual Spring Conference at the deSeversky Center. As usual, the annual event drew an energetic and diverse crowd, interesting speakers/presentations, and good conversation. The first panel discussed *Public Sector Bargaining on Long Island during a Period of Austerity*. The panelists, Jerry Laricchuita (President of CSEA Local 830) and Jason Limson (Deputy Director of Labor Relations, Nassau County) provided a relevant, spirited discussion, which was moderated by none other than our highly esteemed colleague, Martin S. Scheinman, who deftly handled critical questions and comments from the audience, filled with practitioners from both public and private sector unions, labor and management advocates, as well as educators, arbitrators, and perhaps most importantly, students.

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### Upcoming Chapter Meetings Please Add These To Your Calendar

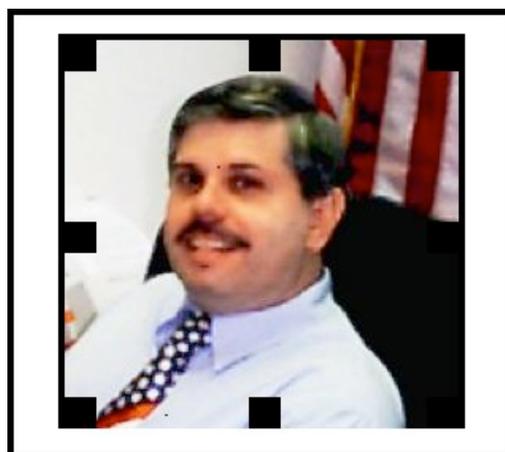
Wed, Sept. 15, 2010,  
Black Forest Brew Haus  
Farmingdale (See below)

Wed., Dec. 7, 2010,  
Nassau County Bar Assoc.-Mineola

Wed., Mar 9, 2011,  
Black Forest Brew Haus  
Farmingdale

Fri., May 6, 2011, Annual  
Spring Conference-TBD

Wed, Sept. 15, 2010,  
Presenter: Irv Miljoner, District Coordinator  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Black Forest Brew Haus  
Farmingdale, New York





**Panel Discussion:** Public sector bargaining on Long Island during a period of austerity.  
**Moderator:** Marty Scheinman, Arbitrator, standing  
**Panelists:** Jerry Laricchuita, Pres. CSEA Local 830, left  
Jason Limson, Dep. Dir. of Labor Relations, Nassau County, right



Above: A short break out on the facade of the deSeversky

Below: Keynote Speaker, Robert Master, Legislative and Political Director, CWA District 1.

Below: Chapter secretary Elizabeth Pearsall and other attendees at the Spring Conference.



..... LILERA

# SPRING CONFERENCE



Side of the elegant  
Center.



Above: President Beverly E. Harrison, Thomas Lilly, Sr., Ellen Schuler-Mauk and Thomas Lilly, Jr., at presentation of the McGregor Award at the Spring Conference.

**Panel Discussion:** Regional Directors report on the NLRB at 75

**Moderator:** Richard J. Roth, Arbitrator, right

**Panelists:** Al Blyer, Region 29 (Brooklyn) left

Celeste Mattina, Region 2 (New York) center

J. Michael Lightner, Region 22 (Newark) left of Richard Roth



From my seat in the back corner of the room, I listened intently to the presentations, as well as the questions and comments from the audience, many of who expressed concerns about the swirl of difficult issues facing public sector bargaining. As powerful as this discussion was, there was arguably something even more powerful in the room, at least from my vantage point. I saw far more than just a room filled with practioners of varied backgrounds. I saw the potential for a grand coalition, one that is somewhat well positioned to step forward during these difficult times and long afterward. A coalition whose time has come to organize itself internally, and present our collective selves to the public.

We all know first hand that support for unionism, particularly in the public sector, and those who are employed in it, has dwindled significantly. Although not to the same degree, this wrath, which ranges from mild to extreme, and is often mean spirited, also extends to private sector unions, and at times even to arbitrators/neutrals.

As a result, the critical question before us now, which we must all fully contemplate, is; how do we conduct ourselves in an environment that seeks to marginalize us? We cannot match, nor can we outpace the huge wave of negative public sentiment we face, and some of us think it is somewhat pointless to even try. At this juncture, none of our typically reactive, often one sided, and at times *ad hominen* counter arguments, no matter how loudly presented, will do much to quiet or change the mindset of our opposition.

However, I also firmly believe that despite the opposition, or perhaps because of it, we desperately need to fully measure ourselves, assess our collective strengths, and create a balanced, effective and consistent message,

targeted to everyone not immediately categorized as an extremist. The goal is conversational leverage. It is highly unlikely that we will gain control of the conversation, but we can increase the leverage we have within its context.

Think about it. From a representational viewpoint we are many, and nearly all of us do things to benefit people other than those we represent. We need to gather this information and use it to help tell our story. I suspect that our individual efforts toward community involvement, once organized, would be overwhelming if presented in its totality. We need to begin, on a region-wide basis, to track and publicize the many scholarships, food drives, charitable donations, and other methods of support we provide multitudes of people, communities, and organizations. Let us continue these efforts individually, but also report them collectively, and not just when we need support for something that is important to us. The effort should be done continually, consistently, and with a great sense of purpose.

There are other things that can be done as well, including the measurement and monitoring of the positive impact unionized and union affiliated people have on the regional economy. The truth, as difficult as it may be, is that we need to change our message, its delivery, and ultimate presentation to the public. Today, more than any time in recent history, we must present ourselves as unified citizens who are deeply aware of the positive impact we have had in this region, and look for new ways to gently and diplomatically re-introduce ourselves to the public.

I can hear the new commercials and radio spots now. I can envision the positive press releases and media coverage...can you? If so, then let us begin.

<p><b>The Long Island LERA Newsletter</b> is a quarterly publication of the Long Island Chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association.</p> <table><tr><td>President</td><td>Beverly E. Harrison</td></tr><tr><td>President Elect</td><td>Ernesto Mattace, Jr.</td></tr><tr><td>1st Vice President</td><td>Amanda Barker</td></tr><tr><td>2nd Vice President</td><td>Thomas B. Wassel</td></tr><tr><td>Secretary</td><td>Elizabeth M. Pearsall</td></tr><tr><td>Treasurer</td><td>Eugene S. Ginsberg</td></tr><tr><td>Newsletter Editor</td><td>Gerald H. Grayson</td></tr><tr><td>Associate Editor</td><td>Beverly E. Harrison</td></tr></table> <p>Notices of address change should be sent to Membership Chairman, Richard Roth at &lt;richarbit@aol.com&gt;. Inquiries about this publication, as well as submissions, etc. should be sent to Jerry Grayson at &lt;jerryarb@optonline.net&gt;.</p>	President	Beverly E. Harrison	President Elect	Ernesto Mattace, Jr.	1st Vice President	Amanda Barker	2nd Vice President	Thomas B. Wassel	Secretary	Elizabeth M. Pearsall	Treasurer	Eugene S. Ginsberg	Newsletter Editor	Gerald H. Grayson	Associate Editor	Beverly E. Harrison	<p><b>LI LERA</b> 43 Northcote Drive Melville, NY 11747</p>
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