Goodwin, Lanigan Re-Elected

News from the OPEIU Convention:

Michael Goodwin was re-elected President of OPEIU by acclamation at the Union’s 26th Convention in June. Goodwin was nominated by Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, who himself was elected as an OPEIU Vice President, without opposition.

In addition, Mary Mahoney was re-elected Secretary-Treasurer, also by acclamation. This will be Goodwin’s seventh term as President of OPEIU. Mahoney has served as the Union’s Secretary-Treasurer since January of 2010, and Lanigan was re-elected as an OPEIU Region II Vice President for the seventh time.

Following the election of the OPEIU administration, there were congratulatory comments and words of appreciation from the delegates. It was clear from the enthusiastic reception that Goodwin and the other members of the OPEIU administration received, that there is strong and widespread approval and support for them. OPEIU has a strong track record of productive coordination with its local unions, organizing new members and encouraging political participation by the general membership, and all of this was evidenced at this year’s convention.

Delegates were welcomed to the event by numerous speakers, including Neil Abercrombie, the Governor of Hawaii, who was flanked by members of the Hawaii Nurses Association/OPEIU Local 50.

OMCE Members Battle for Wage Increase.......................... Page 5
Local 153 Endorses Christine Quinn for Mayor............. Page 6
Members at Segal Ratify New Contract........................ Page 7
Monsignor Farrell Faculty Finally Get to the Bargaining Table Page 8
Borough of Roseland Employees Join Local 153............ Page 9
Happy 100th Birthday, Charles Ponti Sr.!..................... Page 10
Summary Annual Report............................................. Page 11

Continued on page 3
A Vision for Membership Benefits

OPEIU was the first union to provide substantial membership benefits paid directly out of the union treasury. Of course, many unions have historically provided some membership benefits, but OPEIU initiated the idea of providing numerous benefits as a loyalty membership award and also as a means to attract new members. The need to organize and grow the union is important if we wish to be part of a labor movement with increased power at the bargaining table and a stronger influence on how our government functions.

Over thirty years ago, Local 153 initiated the concept of the union providing membership benefits, at no additional cost to members, which are in addition to the benefits negotiated through collective bargaining. We started out small with a death benefit, and increased benefits year after year to the point where today members receive a towing/service call benefit, identity theft protection, death benefit and accidental death and dismemberment (AD&D) benefit, a payment of $300 to members out of work due to a disability of six weeks or more, dental discounts and access to dental networks, vision care, discounted furniture and household furnishings, and auto insurance discounts following an accident prevention and defensive driving class. Wow!

The Local 153 program led to consideration of providing membership benefits nationally and the OPEIU Executive Board endorsed the idea by recommending the PerksCard as a national benefit at the 2007 Convention, the towing/service call benefit at the 2010 Convention and the new $2,000 death benefit and $2,000 AD&D benefit at the 2013 Convention bringing the total benefit to $6,000 for each, replacing the PerksCard as of September 30, 2013. Local 153 can decide to continue the PerksCard program for members if they so wish.

The AFL-CIO, through its Union Privilege Program (“Union Plus”) provides access to a MasterCard through Capital One bank and referrals to vendors who offer discounts to union members. These benefits are very beneficial to union members, and OPEIU highly recommends that members take advantage of these great savings.

OPEIU’s vision is to provide numerous membership benefits using its collective membership power to reduce costs. Experience has taught us that many vendors are able to provide a product on a group basis at a cost as low as 10 cents on a dollar. That’s effective use of membership power!

In addition to providing members with great benefits at an affordable cost to the union, the membership benefit program also provides a useful tool in attracting new members into the union particularly in right-to-work states and voluntary membership groups. Did you know that there are more than 2 million employees covered by collective bargaining agreements in right-to-work states who have not yet seen the wisdom of joining the union? Part of this is because of philosophy, but I believe the major reason is because the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) requires that all negotiated terms and conditions of employment apply to all employees in a bargaining unit, whether or not they are members of the union. Unfortunately, too many employees take advantage of this loophole to avoid paying dues.

OPEIU believes that if the union can offer substantial membership benefits to members in a collective bargaining unit as a membership benefit, that this will attract the non-members to consider joining. In fact, a great example of this is in Las Vegas, Nevada, where the unions represented 5,000 taxi drivers in ten companies, but only had 831 members paying dues. After the introduction of a comprehensive membership benefit program, the 831 membership level grew exponentially to more than 3,000 — clear proof that the membership benefit program works!

The union’s greatest expectation is that more and more of the 2 million members in right-to-work states and voluntary membership groups recognize the advantages of membership benefits outside of the collective bargaining relationship, which can only be accessed by joining the union. What this would do is to add bargaining power to the unions representing employees in right-to-work states, thereby improving their wages, hours and working conditions to a greater extent. It makes sense for OPEIU and all the unions to provide and/or increase membership benefits to the point where not joining the union is not a good option.

OPEIU’s vision is to continuously provide and increase membership benefits so that all of us can be stronger at the bargaining table!
Goodwin, Lanigan Re-Elected

Abercrombie spoke about the importance of supporting OPEIU and unions in general. Other speakers included AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who said it is up to union members to make things better in the workplace and in America itself; Randy Tucker Jr., President of the New York Branch of the NAACP, who spoke about the strong ties between unions and the civil rights movement; and Leslie Tolf, President of Union Privilege, who reviewed the numerous benefits and services offered to union members and their families through the program, all of which can be found in the benefits booklet on Local 153’s website. Delegates also enjoyed very humorous presentations by Sirius/XM Radio host Stephanie Miller and Saturday Night Live star Colin Quinn.

Remarks made by 100-year-old Local 153 member Charles Ponti Sr. and a surprise singing of “Happy Birthday” to him by the 400 delegates were additional highlights of the convention. It should also be noted that Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan received a special award at the convention for his superb work representing OPEIU in Article XX and Article XXI cases before an AFL-CIO
"I know that with your participation and support we will be able to meet any challenges head on and return in 2016 as an even bigger and stronger union," Goodwin added. "As long as we have a voice, anything is possible."

"I'm pleased to report the state of our Union is well, strong, and something you should be proud of," Goodwin told the delegates.

The enthusiastic response of the delegates was a clear indication that they took Goodwin's message to heart. A major theme of OPEIU's 2013 convention was "Work Connects Us All." And this is exactly what the convention did for the OPEIU delegates that attended: it connected them all!

Members of OPEIU's 2013 convention were Lynn Brooks, Kathy Cohen and Caroline Muszynski of the former Local 212, which is now merged into Local 153.

Charles Ponti Sr. receiving congratulations on his 100th birthday from Juan Alvarez, OPEIU President Michael Goodwin and OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney.

Local 212 Members Vote to Merge with Local 153!

Members of OPEIU Local 212 recently voted overwhelmingly to merge with Local 153, adding almost 500 members to Local 153.

Events leading up to the merger began last December, when the President of Local 212, located in Buffalo, New York, contacted Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan to discuss the possibilities of doing so. Shortly after the phone call, Lanigan traveled to Buffalo and met with the Local 212 Executive Board. The Board voted to proceed with the merger discussions.

Following that meeting, Lanigan traveled to Buffalo approximately once every two weeks to make merger presentations and assist in representation of Local 212 members, who work for nine different employers, including Blue Cross of Western New York. After the presentations, a mail ballot vote was conducted. The ballots were counted on March 21, 2013. The outcome of the vote was 308 votes in favor of merging with Local 153 and 6 votes against the merger. The result is one of the biggest mergers in recent OPEIU history.

Among the observers at the convention were Lynn Brooks, Kathy Cohen and Caroline Muszynski of the former Local 212, which is now merged into Local 153.

Members of the Executive Board of the former Local 212 are seen here with Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan following the overwhelming vote of members to merge.
OMCE Members Battle for Wage Increase

More than 8,000 Management/Confidential employees of New York State, 1,500 of which are members of the Organization of New York Management Confidential Employees (OMCE) have gone without a wage increase for more than four years, but they have engaged in a creative and determined battle to correct that situation. OMCE, which is affiliated with Local 153, is in a unique situation due to an obscure state law. A 1972 amendment to the New York State Taylor Law bans collective bargaining for state workers who are deemed by civil service law to be management/confidential (M/C) employees. Because of this, these management employees have received their pay increases in the past through legislation and/or executive order.

Unfortunately, these governmental steps have not occurred since 2009, leaving M/C employees in their fifth year without an increase. This has led to the ironic situation where many managers earn less than the workers they supervise!

That’s not the only predicament caused by this situation. Another problem is that many state workers are now turning down promotions for management positions because they would actually be taking a pay cut!

To rectify this situation, OMCE, under the direction of Executive Director Joe Sano and President Barbara Zaron, has waged an effective legislative campaign that has included outreach to state lawmakers, contacts with the media and even public demonstrations. As part of this campaign OMCE staged a rally in Albany’s legislative office building on June 12 that drew the attention of the New York Daily News and other media outlets.

Specifically, the campaign was designed to bring about enactment of the M/C Salary Commission Act, a bill to establish a procedure similar to the one used by the recently enacted Judicial Salary Commission to restore proper salary relationships, equal pay for equal work and workplace fairness.

The June 12 rally drew quite a turnout of OMCE members. It also drew state legislators, including the sponsors of the legislation, Assemblyman Herman Denny Farrell, Chair of the Assembly Ways & Means Committee, and Senator John DeFrancisco, Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, both of whom spoke in strong support of the proposal.

The campaign worked! Both the State Senate and the Assembly passed the appropriate legislation and, as we went to press, it was waiting in the latter legislative body to be sent to the Governor’s office.

OMCE employees obviously hope that Governor Cuomo will sign the bill into law, creating a commission that would recommend salary levels every four years. The suggested salary structure would take effect immediately, unless voted down by the State Legislature or vetoed by the Governor.

“We are continuing to work hard in the legislative process,” Sano said. “We plan to lobby Governor Cuomo to sign the bill and we expect that his office will receive thousands of letters from our members urging him to do so.”

Sano also expressed appreciation to Local 153 Business Manager Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan.

“Our affiliation with Local 153 has paid dividends in the past,” Sano said. “We appreciate all the help Michael Goodwin, Richard Lanigan and the Union’s staff has provided in this fight for fairness for M/Cs.”

OMCE members filling up the area of the legislative office building called “the well” on June 12.

These signs say it all for OMCE members on June 12.
Local 153 Endorses Christine Quinn for Mayor

In a crowded field of candidates for Mayor of New York City, one of them stands out to Local 153. That candidate is New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, and she has received the Union’s endorsement. Ms. Quinn has been endorsed by a number of other private sector unions in the city, including Local 32 BJ, SEIU, Local 6, UNITE HERE, and the New York Hotel Trades Council.

Ms. Quinn is a familiar face in New York City government. She began her career in public service as a community organizer and she has always maintained strong ties with organized labor and various advocacy organizations. This is not surprising, considering that all four of her grandparents were immigrants to New York and both her parents were union members. Her father was a union electrician and a shop steward in his union. In fact, Ms. Quinn is fond of telling union members that when she is elected in November they will be able to say the Mayor of New York is the daughter of a union shop steward.

Throughout her career in public life, Christine Quinn has been a staunch supporter of the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively. She is also an advocate for small businesses, recognizing that these smaller companies are responsible for more than half the jobs in the city. Ms. Quinn also supports development, but only if such projects contain guarantees of good-paying jobs and the right of employees to join unions.

Over the years Christine Quinn has been an outspoken proponent of affordable housing and education. Her creative CUNY scholarship program would provide a college and graduate school education to many students who might not otherwise be able to obtain a degree.

“There are several strong candidates for mayor, including some true friends of union members,” Business Manager Michael Goodwin said.

“With her firm commitment to working families, her extensive experience in city government and a track record of great success in getting things done, we believe that City Council Speaker Christine Quinn stands out as the best choice for New Yorkers.”

The Local 153 Executive Board endorsed Christine Quinn at its July 30th meeting.

Next General Membership Meeting: Tuesday, September 24

Local 153 general membership meetings are one of the best ways for members to learn important information about benefits and services for them and their families, and to have questions answered by union officers and staff. Here at the membership meeting held in May, Local 153 members Sonam Samkhang and Angelika Kogler meet with Business Manager Michael Goodwin. The next Local 153 general membership meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 24, at 6:00 p.m. at Gertrude Lane Auditorium, 305 West 44th Street, mezzanine level. All Local 153 members are welcome to attend.
Members at Segal Ratify New Contract

When the time came for negotiations for a new contract, workers at the benefits and compensation firm, Segal, instructed their bargaining committee to obtain a contract keeping health care costs affordable and benefits intact.

It was a tall order. But the bargaining committee was up to the task. Contract talks between Local 153 and Segal representatives were grinding and difficult, and they lasted an unprecedented six months. But the committee ultimately delivered in a major way for the bargaining unit. In the end, the committee came away from the bargaining table with a tentative agreement that included minimal increases to employees’ out-of-pocket costs, even though the employer had sought increases of close to 1000 percent! The contract was ratified overwhelmingly.

Chief Shop Steward and Executive Board member Phil Holmgren led a bargaining committee that was focused and well-researched, and this won several additional contract enhancements including wage increases, bonuses and increased compensation for working inter-departmentally.

“This bargaining committee really rose to the occasion,” said Local 153 Business Representative Nick Galipeau. “There were long hours over a long period of time, but in the end they got it done!”

Galipeau added one other note. He asked Local 153 News to convey a special note of gratitude to bargaining committee member Keisha Gerald for providing an endless supply of Girl Scout cookies during long caucuses. We are happy to do so, and we congratulate the bargaining committee and our members at Segal on a fine new contract.

Wesleyan Physical Plant Workers Secure Health Stability in New 3-Year Deal

Healthcare, healthcare, healthcare! Many union and non-union workers are pressured to trade wage increases to mitigate the effects of rising healthcare costs. Fortunately for union members this issue is negotiable. At Wesleyan University, physical plant members hammered out a comprehensive settlement that stabilizes and controls the rate of increasing healthcare costs and provides eight percent base wage increases over three years.

Chief Shop Steward Peter McGurgan led a bargaining committee that exercised unique negotiating strategies. These tactics helped Local 153 to run the pace of bargaining and maintain control of the discussions. In his final negotiations before retiring after a long and successful career at Wesleyan University, Steward Sean Malone said, “This is one of the best contracts we’ve ever had, hands down!”
Monsignor Farrell Faculty Finally Get to the Bargaining Table

The Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT) has had a major victory at Monsignor Farrell High School. The campaign began in 2009, when Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Lanigan filed a petition before the New York State Employment Relations Board to conduct an election on behalf of the faculty employed at the Staten Island School.

The faculty at Farrell had been represented by Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) under a contract that had expired in 2007. LIUNA filed unfair labor practice charges against the school and the Archdiocese of New York, and the State Employment Relations Board delayed action on the FCT petition for an election. In August of 2011, the State Employment Relations Board was merged into the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB), following which PERB did not act on the FCT’s petition.

Finally, in November of 2011, a conference was conducted before PERB concerning the status of the election petition. A short time later, in February of 2012, LIUNA filed charges against OPEIU under Article XX of the AFL-CIO constitution. Secretary-Treasurer Lanigan represented OPEIU at the hearing which was conducted in March, 2012. The AFL-CIO Article XX Umpire ruled in favor of OPEIU in May, 2012.

After the Article XX decision, LIUNA objected to the petition filed on behalf of the faculty stating that it was untimely. After briefs on this issue were submitted, PERB ruled in favor of Local 153, stating that the faculty members at Farrell were entitled to an election to choose their representative.

PERB conducted the election by mail ballot. The outcome was in favor of Local 153. On June 4, 2013, PERB certified the results of the election and Local 153 is now the union for the teachers at Monsignor Farrell.

The teachers have been meeting to work on their proposals for the first contract and will be negotiating with Local 153 as their union during the summer.

This campaign at Monsignor Farrell was unique because it required Secretary-Treasurer Lanigan to use his organizing skills, his lobbying skills, his Article XX skills, his skills before PERB and his negotiating skills — quite a task!

Local 153 Has Twin Scholarship Winners!

There is double good news in the Barr family of upstate New York. Twin daughters Brittaney and Felicia Barr were selected as 2013 winners of the Lavina Michl Wright Scholarship.

Brittaney and Felicia are the daughters of OMCE/OPEIU Local 153 member Marilyn Barr, who is employed by the New York State Office of Mental Health at the St. Lawrence Psychiatric Center. The scholarship announcement was made by Local 153 Business Manager Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan. The students received grants of $2500 each from the Lavina Michl Wright Scholarship Fund.

The twin sisters will be attending Potsdam State College this fall. Congratulations to Brittaney, Felicia, and the Barr family!
FCT’s Eileen Sweeney Retires

After 30 years of total dedication to Catholic school students and teachers, Federation of Catholic Teachers Vice President Eileen Sweeney has retired.

Ms. Sweeney began her career as a teacher at St. Mary’s, where she spent 11 years, before spending one year at St. Charles. She came aboard the administration of the FCT 11 years ago, beginning as an organizer. She served the FCT for six years in that position before being elected vice president, a position she has held for five years.

“We’ve done a lot of great things in the FCT and I am proud of what we have accomplished for Catholic school teachers,” Sweeney said. “There has been great teamwork in our Union’s administration and among our membership, and that’s what has made us successful.”

Ms. Sweeney saluted the FCT’s affiliation with Local 153/OPEIU, and had special words of praise for Business Manager Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan. “They have both always been there for us,” Sweeney said. “Their assistance has been invaluable, and I will always appreciate their efforts on behalf of our membership. Sweeney also saluted her fellow FCT officers, President Patricia Gabriel, Vice President Julia Pignataro, and Secretary-Treasurer Joanne Perrotta.

Asked what she will do during her retirement, Sweeney answered, “Lots of things and no things. I look at it as turning a new and exciting page.” She added, “I will always be here for this union or any union. I firmly believe in unions and I’ll always be available to help if needed.”

Sweeney was feted at a retirement dinner where it was agreed by all that she did an exemplary job as an FCT officer and will be missed greatly.

Borough of Roseland Employees Join Local 153

When employees of the Borough of Roseland, New Jersey had gone without a wage increase for five years and had lost 10 annual days off, they turned not to a last resort, but to workers’ first and best resort: union membership!

After Local 153 received an organizing lead in February, a meeting was arranged between Assistant Business Manager John Edmonds and a few of the Borough of Roseland employees. Over time, additional employees began attending the meetings. Soon, Edmonds had received a majority of cards from the employees authorizing the Union to represent them Edmonds filed for a card count through the New Jersey Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC).

The verification of the card check at PERC was held in May, and Local 153 secured the majority of the cards. The employees are now members of Local 153 and the Union is currently putting together a draft collective bargaining agreement for negotiations.

We welcome the Borough of Roseland employees into Local 153!
Happy 100th Birthday, Charles Ponti Sr!

Charles Ponti Sr. has just begun his second century. The President of the Local 153 Retirees Association, Ponti has been a member of Local 153 for 76 years! He turned 100 years of age recently, and this led to a salute at the OPEIU convention.

Reaching age 100 wasn’t the only reason for the salute. Ponti is a strong believer in unions and an even stronger believer in his union, Local 153. A familiar face at membership meetings, Ponti has always displayed a feistiness that is both charming and effective. He knows how to make people laugh and he knows how to fight, too.

“I like to tell organizers, ‘if you do not fight, you’re no organizer,’” Ponti told the convention delegates, who cheered him loudly. Praising the art of organizing, Ponti added, “As one person, you can’t do anything. But when you organize, you can do anything.”

Following his remarks, Ponti’s family was invited on stage by Michael Goodwin, where they joined all 400 OPEIU delegates in singing Happy Birthday. Surrounded by those family members, Ponti received a plaque in memory of the occasion. The plaque replicates a letter from the most reverend John J. Myers, Archbishop of Newark, saluting Charles Ponti on his 100th birthday and his eight decades of dedication and service to the labor movement.

Local 153 News joins everyone in congratulating Charles Ponti Sr. on his 100th birthday and for his unceasing commitment to unions and Local 153. Happy birthday!

UPP Plaza Furniture has Moved to a New Location

UPP Plaza Furniture
121 Front Street
Massapequa Park, NY 11762
(across from LIRR Train Station)
(516) 799-3500
Monday – Saturday: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Thursday: 9:00 am to 7:00 pm
Sunday: By Appointment Only
www.PlazaFurnitureNY.com

• Brand Name Furniture at Discounted Prices for Union Members and their Families
• Our Prices Will Not Be Beat
• Free Delivery within 50 Miles
• Furniture for Every Room (Bedroom, Dining Room, Home Office, Mattresses, etc.)
• All Price Ranges Available on Furniture
• Price Quotes Available on any Furniture You See from our Competitors
• Over 70 Years of Quality Service
• Factories that Feature Made in the USA!!
• Shop Via Phone or Shop on Line
• Value and Customer Service is Unbeatable
• www.PlazaFurnitureNY.com
Summary Annual Report for the Local 153 Long Term Disability Fund

This is a summary of the annual report of the LOCAL 153 LONG TERM DISABILITY FUND, EIN 13-6261542, Plan No. 501, for period April 01, 2011 through March 31, 2012. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Insurance Information
The plan has a contract with Cigna Life Insurance Co. of New York to pay long-term disability claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending March 31, 2012 were $94,243.

Basic Financial Statement
The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was $286,210 as of March 31, 2012, compared to $296,621 as of April 01, 2011. During the plan year, the plan experienced a decrease in its net assets of $10,411. This decrease includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan's assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of $112,638, including employer contributions of $107,425, realized losses of ($658) from the sale of assets, and earnings from investments of $5,871.

Plan expenses were $123,049. These expenses included $28,923 in administrative expenses, and $94,126 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights To Additional Information
You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:
- an accountant's report;
- financial information;
- assets held for investment;
- transactions in excess of 5% of the plan assets;
- insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, write or call the office of BOARD OF TRUSTEES LOCAL 153 LONG TERM DISABILITY FUND at 265 WEST 14TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011, or by telephone at (212) 741-8260. The charge to cover copying costs will be $3.00 for the full annual report, or $0.10 per page for any part thereof.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report. The charge to cover copying costs given above does not include a charge for the copying of these portions of the report because these portions are furnished without charge.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (BOARD OF TRUSTEES LOCAL 153 LONG TERM DISABILITY FUND, 265 WEST 14TH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10011) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210.
Local 153 News
Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO
265 West 14th Street • New York, NY 10011

Address Service Requested

Local 153 Benefits and Services

• Towing/Service Call Benefit—All Local 153 members are eligible to receive a towing/service call benefit through Nation Safe Drivers, providing up to two towing/service calls per year, per household, valued at up to $100 each. The benefit applies to all Local 153 members, as well as family members living in the same household. For further information, contact your Chief Steward or call Local 153 at 212-741-8251.

• Identity Theft Protection—A fully-managed identity theft restoration program for Local 153 members and family members living in the same household. The program includes a professionally trained advocate assigned to all identity theft victims who will perform a fully-managed identity restoration program. It also includes a monitoring program for identity information that is traded or sold. Members should go to http://promos.privacymaxx.com/opeiu153/ to learn more or to register for this free benefit.

• Death and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefits—A $6,000 death benefit provided by Local 153 to members at no additional cost. Members must be active, dues-paying and in good standing for 12 months or more. An additional $6,000 benefit for accidental death or dismemberment is also provided. For further information, contact your Chief Steward or call Local 153 at (212) 741-8251.

• Supplementary Disability/Workers’ Compensation Benefit—A flat, once-a-year benefit of $300 will be paid to a member in good standing for 12 months or more after 6 weeks of such disability. Members must be current with payment of dues. In the event dues are not checked off by the employer while the member is on disability, the member must send dues payments directly to Local 153. For more information, call (212) 741-8251.

• PerksCard—Local 153 members receive a PerksCard, which is their passport to one of the nation’s premier lifestyle discount programs. PerksCard offers savings from a huge network of 15,000 local and national vendors, and the list is still growing. Members can purchase $25 dining certificates for $6 by phone, fax or e-mail, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. or visit www.perkscard.com to make a purchase or register.

• Dental Care—Top quality dental care at reasonable rates may be obtained by members at the following Manhattan location—Group Health Dental Facility, 230 West 41st St. (between Seventh & Eighth Avenues) Phone (212) 398-9690. (Emblem Health is accepted as payment-in-full for most services.)

• Metrodent Dental Access Plan—Offers members a means of reducing the high cost of dental care through a network of dentists and specialists who provide substantial savings of up to 35% on dental care. If you have not received information or have questions, call Local 153 at (212) 741-8250.

• Vision Care—Top quality vision services are available to Local 153 members at General Vision Services in all five boroughs, Westchester County, Long Island, and New Jersey. Members of the Local 153 Health Fund receive varying benefits, depending on the plan. Non-members receive discounts, too. If you are a member of the Health Fund call (212) 292-4682 for details and locations. All other union members should call (212) 741-8250.

• Auto Insurance Discount—An Accident Prevention/Defensive Driving class is available to members at no cost. Successful completion of the class will allow members with New York State drivers’ licenses to get an immediate 10% rate reduction on liability and collision premiums for three years, along with up to four points automatically deducted from their record by the Department of Motor Vehicles. In New Jersey the premium reduction is 5% and up to two points deducted. Unfortunately, Connecticut does not yet have such a program. For information, call Victoria Tirado-Roman at 212-675-3210.

• Union Purchasing Plan—Furniture and household furnishings at reduced prices. UPP Plaza Furniture is located at 121 Front Street, Massapequa, NY 11762. Phone: (516) 799-3500.

• Retirement Status—Retired members may continue membership in Local 153. Dues for retired members are $21 per year, and for $60 a year, retired members receive additional benefits, including a $2,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment benefit, the PerksCard retail discount program, the WellDyne Rx discount programs that include dental, prescription drugs, vision, hearing and a 24-hour doctor assistance line, and two (2) towing/service calls per year valued up to $100 each. For further information, call (212) 741-8262.

• Working Advantage Discounts—Provides discounts on movie tickets, video rentals, shows, theme parks, sporting events, online shopping and more. To use this program, visit www.workingadvantage.com and register as a Local 153 member by clicking on the right hand side of the home page and entering ID no. 924400144.

• Union Support Services—For more information regarding alcohol and drug problems, please call 212-741-8250.