

Solidarity News

Pride in Our Union Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 2 – Fall 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

The summer is officially over now that we are back from the Labor Day break. It went by so quickly, after a really bad start, thanks, in large part to the New York State Senate.

The let down that I felt after the Senate "coup" was distressing. We were geared up for the Marriage Equality vote, the GENDA vote and the Dignity vote and then all of sudden, there was nothing, but stress, waiting, and the unknown.

I know this has not been an easy time for any community that counts on the NYS Legislature to pass laws that affect our social and economic well-being.

I, like many of us, had plans. They included: a victory to celebrate, both personally and professionally; planning my own wedding for next year; and focusing on new challenges that did not revolve solely around legislation. Those challenges include working on two Pride in Our Union events this Fall and Winter. I was also hoping to focus on statewide GENDA implementation rather than passage.

With a break in the crazy action, however, there was time to reflect on the recent actions taken by labor leaders, union members and staffers to mobilize and keep equality and justice issues affecting LGBT New Yorkers in the fore front. A huge thank you is due for those actions and efforts and those to come.

What follows are items that are of particular interest to those working for Equality and Justice.

If you would like to publicize your LGBT union-based event or share additional solidarity news through this newsletter, please submit it to me no later than the first Monday of each month.

You should Include:

- In the subject line: "PIOU Newsletter Submission
- In the body: Geographic Area, Name of Event or News, Date and Time, Address, a 3 to 5 Sentence Description.
- Please also include contact Information for any questions I may have.

In solidarity,

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Solidarity News: Unions to LGBT Community

- James Bertolone, President of the Rochester and Genesee Valley Area labor Federation, AFLCIO and Member of the Executive Council, New York State AFLCIO, penned a letter on May 29, 2009 to Senators Alesi, Robach and Maziarz of Rochester
(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/James%20Bertolone%20Letter%20Rochester.pdf>)
- Mike Hoffert President of the Buffalo Central Labor Council penned a letter on Jun 12, 2009, to Senator William Stachowski of Buffalo, in support of Marriage Equality
(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/Michael%20Hoffert%20Letter%20Buffalo.pdf>)
- Mary Sullivan, President of the Capital District Area Labor Federation penned a letter in early June, 2009, to the Sponsor of the GENDA Bill, Senator Tom Duane, and all six co-sponsors of the bill, urging the passage of GENDA
(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/Mary%20Sullivan%20GENDA%20letter.pdf>)
- Stuart Appelbaum, Mike Fishman, George Gresham, Denis Hughes and Randi Weingarten penned a letter in strong support of Marriage Equality to each member of the New York State Senate on June 8, 2009
(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/Union%20Leaders%20%20to%20Senate%20on%20Marriage%20Support.pdf>)
- The Stage Directors and Choreographers Society issued a Memo of Support of the Marriage Equality Bill on June 16, 2009
(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/SDC%20Memo%20of%20Support.pdf>)
- Local 802 Associated Musicians of Greater New York issued a Memo in support of the Marriage Equality Bill in June 2009

(<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/Local%20802%20Support%20Memo%20Musicians.pdf>)

During the month of June, Carmen Acosta of 1199 SEIU and Tamara Cantave of SEIU Local 32BJ were assigned by their unions to work at the Pride Agenda to assist with organizing in support of Marriage Equality and GENDA. Their dedication and expertise was invaluable to the Pride Agenda's efforts around phone banking, visibility and collecting letters from constituents in key districts.

Electronic News

Stuart Appelbaum president of the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union (RWDSU), Vice President of the New York State AFL-CIO and the New York City Central Labor Council penned an entry for the Huffington Post on June 18, 2009 To read the article on line or the 69 comments to Mr. Appelbaum's article, go to the link at Huffington Post:

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stuart-appelbaum/being-gay-its-who-i-am_b_217741.html

Print News

The Times Union, Albany, New York published an article titled "Unions Joining Gay Rites Fight" by Irene Jay Liu on June 5, 2009

<http://www.timesunion.com/AspStories/story.asp?storyID=807215&category=REGION>

Solidarity News: LGBT Community to Unions

Pride Agenda supported 1199 SEIU United Health Care Workers East in the Contract Struggle with the Jordan Health Center in Rochester, New York. Executive Director, Alan Van Capelle wrote a letter to the President and Full Board of Directors of the Jordan Health Center. The negotiations were settled a short time after.

Pride Agenda supported the Retail Action Project (RAP), RWDSU in the struggle against Scoop NYC during a demonstration at their Flagship Store in protest of wage-hour violations & discriminatory firing of documented West African immigrant workers at the Scoop NYC Flagship store 475 Broadway. Pride Agenda staff attended the 100 person protest in July.

Published

The Pride Agenda published **Pride in Our Union: A Labor Movement Handbook**, which captures the legal rights of LGBT workers & building solidarity with LGBT New Yorkers. To obtain a copy, contact Pride in Our Union Coordinator, Sheilah Sable by email (ssable@prideagenda.org) or print it from our website:

<http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/pdfs/Pride%20In%20Our%20Union%20Handbook.pdf>

The Pride Agenda published a public thank you on June 26, 2009 in ***The Chief***, the Civil Services Leader, an civil employees weekly, thanking labor leaders, labor unions and federations for making LGBT workers feel "Pride in Our Union" by taking many of the steps in solidarity captured in this Newsletter and much more during the course of the last year and prior.

(http://www.prideagenda.org/Portals/0/union/piou_ad_09-v4%20Chief%206-09.pdf)

Farewell

Congratulations to Carrie Gleason, who recently emailed about great news: Carrie is being honored with the Revson Fellowship at Columbia University, where she will study new media and public policy over the next year. We will miss Carrie's involvement with the PIOUS committee in NYC and whose tireless energy has helped to grow the Retail Action Project from an idea into a successful and active entity with a growing diverse and dynamic membership of NYC retail workers who organize, raise awareness and speak out, holding law breaking retailers accountable; and last but not least;

Mazel Tov and congratulations to Jacob Lieberman, a Labor Movement and Pride Agenda comrade, who will be leaving his post as Downstate Director of Pride In Action at the end of August to pursue a lifetime dream of becoming a Rabbi. Jacob will begin his studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) outside Philadelphia this September. He will be missed.