

## **Message from the President**

This fall and winter have been a busy time for your Executive Board, Legal and Political Action teams. We met often locally, as well as with the State in Albany at N.Y.S.U.T. Headquarters. This letter is to bring you up to speed as to what your Union has been doing to represent you.

We held our bi-annual Representative Assembly meeting at Danford's Hotel in Port Jefferson N.Y. We made suggested revisions to our By-laws that we hope to approve at the spring meeting. The proposed changes are posted in The Guardian, and in the Long Island Chapter newsletter, the Bucket and Buoy.

Time was spent reacquainting ourselves with the Delegates from our upstate regions, and discussing local problems. We are still trying to recruit members and representatives across the state. The following regions are still not represented: Allegany Parks, Genesee Parks, New York City Parks, Palisades Parks, Saratoga Capital District, Taconic Parks and Thousand Island Parks. If you are a lifeguard in any of these Regions, please contact us as we welcome your support.

The Delegate Assembly approved our operating budget for 2011. We provided the opportunity for Regions to have access to dues money to be used for local needs.

Negotiations were ongoing for the entire fall and winter. Our Negotiating Team met with the Governors Office of Employee Relations in October. Our Team rejected their offer to settle the 2003-2007 contract. The offer remains confidential, but it is fair to say that the offer from the Division of Budget represented no gain for the lifeguards across the state. We sent a letter to GOER requesting a follow-up on negotiations. N.Y.S.U.T's lobbying staff is currently trying to get support from the Governor's Office.

Negotiations are on-going, and we hope to get some movement in our direction from Albany. Even though this fiscal environment represents a challenge, we will not waiver from the task before us. We are committed to continue negotiations until we can offer our members a settlement that reflects the superior job we all do. We are working directly with the American Federation of Teachers in researching lifeguard agencies across the country, to determine their pay scales and conditions of employment. We will use this valuable information as we move forward with future negotiations.

As President of the NYSLC, I was invited to give testimony to the New York State Standing Committee on Tourism, Parks, Arts, and Sports. This was an oversight analysis and investigation committee as it applies to the budget. This was the first time in the history of the New York State lifeguards that we were recognized as a labor union and asked to speak in Albany to the Assembly. My testimony is posted in The Guardian. I emphasized the point, that to insure public safety, we could not have a reduction in Lifeguards. We achieved some progress, as the Governor's budget for the summer of 2011 shows no cuts in lifeguard staffing for this summer. The Union also actively pursued a grievance on behalf of a member's pay issue. This grievance was settled after being argued at the Governors Office of Employees Relations. The member's pay was adjusted as we had hoped. This is a significant step for our Union, because it established our right to pursue a grievance at the highest levels.

As the winter winds down and we prepare for summer, we continue to represent our Lifeguards across the state. We are in a difficult time, as organized labor across the country is under attack. We will continue to stand strong and united. Be safe as we look to the warm weather.

I look forward to meeting with you on the beach this summer.

In solidarity,  
Bruce Meirowitz