

Long Island Chapter

Labor and Employment Relations Association

Newsletter

SHAPING THE WORKPLACE OF THE *FUTURE*



bug

March 2006

Peter Bee President
pbee@beereadylaw.com

www.lilera.org

Dr. Gerald Grayson Editor
jerryarb@optonline.net

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE:

The Long Island LERA meeting at the Nassau County Bar Association on December 14, 2005 was a big success. In addition to our "regular business" (approval of the September minutes, the Treasurer's report, etc.), we passed a ByLaw change moving from "strict quotas" to



Peter Bee

"target guidelines" on having Executive Board members from categories of Labor, Management, Government, and Academia (see page 4). In addition, we also elected the unopposed slate of the Nominating Committee. Democracy in action!

Our Long Island Chapter also acknowledged our scheduled receipt of awards from our parent organization, (please join if you are not already a member), National LERA, meeting in Boston, January 6 - 8, for "Outstanding Chapter" and "Merit" in various categories. Kudos to Gene Ginsberg, Richard Roth, Phil Nicholson, Jerry Grayson, and my assistant Susan Black. We thank Richard again for attending the meeting on our behalf and receiving the awards.

Committee Co-Chairs Tom Wassel and Richard Roth worked on the preliminary plans for the Spring Conference at an early January committee meeting. They reported that they seem to be moving us toward a May 19, 2006 date (though still tentative as of this writing). The committee welcomes any suggestions for topics so that we will have another examination of "cutting edge" labor/employment topics <richarbit@aol.com>. At our March 6, 2006 meeting (Pomodoro Ristorante, Hauppauge), we will hear more about this! Please bring a friend or colleague or one of each.

UPCOMING CHAPTER MEETINGS

PLEASE ADD THESE TO YOUR CALENDAR

MON., MAR. 6, 2006 (SEE INSERT)

**SPRING CONFERENCE, MAY 19
DESEVERSKY CENTER, OLD WESTBURY**

WED., JUNE 14, 2006 (NASSAU BAR)

CHAPTER IS HONORED BY NATIONAL LERA

At the National LERA Conference held in Boston from January 6 to 8, 2006 we received an Outstanding Chapter Award for 2005. Richard J. Roth accepted the award on behalf of the chapter. More than 450 LERA members took part in the conference which extended over three days.

John J. Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, was the distinguished speaker. His subject was the future of the labor movement. He addressed the economic conditions of the country and noted the increasing disparity in the distribution of income between the rich and the poor. He also decried the anti-labor agenda of the Bush administration. He was hopeful that some of the local unions who recently left the AFL-CIO would be coming back and pledged renewed effort on behalf of his federation to organize. He informed us about the recent success to get 80,000 workers in the Virginia area to join the Working America pro-

Continued on Page 3

PHOTOS FROM THE DECEMBER 2005 HOLIDAY PARTY



The Executive Board deliberating prior to the party.



Bluth and Myers



Gray, Chalet and Naness



Hill, Boyle, Chambers, Ferro



Adelman, Periman and Conlon (above).

Greenbaum, Fishberg, Wassel and Roth (right).

(If there are errors in any photo ID's we apologize in advance.)



Wassel, Irizarry, Muldoon, Gewert, Romano



EDITORIAL Continued From Page 4

Universities were supposed to be model citizens of the community, but no longer. By a party-line vote, the National Labor Relations Board decided that it will not force NYU to bargain in good faith with its teachers. Nevertheless, the least we should expect is that the school would honor the same standards of employee treatment demanded of companies. Under federal law, it is illegal for employers to threaten employees with retaliation for participating in collective action.

This prohibition does not represent a legal technicality, but a moral standard of basic respect for the democratic rights of employees. In the threats issued last week, however, NYU President John E. Sexton indicated his disregard for even these minimal standards.

According to Sexton, teachers who continue striking will be banned for teaching in the spring and will be denied their full salary for that term. Such punitive threats are patently illegal under federal law; while it is permissible to dock the pay of people while they are on strike, it is illegal to ban them from future work as punishment for past strikes.

Sexton further demanded that anyone who takes a teaching job in the spring pledge – as a condition of employment – not to participate in job actions. This type of “yellow dog” contract has been illegal since 1932, when it was banned in legislation authored by New York’s own Fiorello LaGuardia, when he was a member of Congress.

Finally, Sexton suggests that those who participate in strike actions but, God forbid, graduate before they can be punished, may have negative assessments attached to their university record when they apply for jobs at other schools. This type of blacklisting has not been seen since the dark days of McCarthyism.

For those who are undergraduates this fall, no matter their major, NYU is providing an education in cynicism. For behind administrators’ threats is this clear message: All that Shakespeare and Plato and philosophy and democracy you read about in class is not serious. That’s just for inside the classroom. In the real world the administration believes in the law of the jungle and might makes right.

Union busting is a sleazy practice in any industry. But in a university, it takes a further toll. It undermines the very integrity of intellectual life that draws people to academia in the first place. There is still time for NYU to reverse course and do the right thing. It is for all of us – particularly New York taxpayers who subsidize the tax-exempt university – to insist that it do so.

**Send your opinion to jerryarb@optonline.net.
We will print responses in future issues.**



Nowotny, Schuler-Mauk, Scioli



Fekete, Bee and Gaba

NATIONAL LERA Continued From Page 1

gram, a community affiliate where workers don’t have a union where they work. He expects to have 2 million workers nationwide join this program by the end of 2006.

There were excellent panels and a presentation by Stephen Sleight, president of the IAM, who is the current LERA president. Among them was an assessment of the NLRB after seventy years by former General Counsel Fred Feinstein, and a fascinating panel that dealt with legal and financial issues in the global economy led by Bruce Raynor of UNITE, Andy Levin of the AFL-CIO and management attorney Marshall Babson.

National LERA is concerned about the decline of its membership, from a high of 5000 members about ten years ago, to its current membership of 3000. Moreover, only 11% of these members are below the age of 45, which suggests that we must make a greater effort to get students involved in the organization. Needless to say, National LERA would like our local members to become members of the National, as well, so the organization can continue to have the excellent programs that I was privileged to attend in Boston.

Richard J. Roth

VOTE WAS TAKEN

The following is the text of Article VII of the chapter Bylaws. Changes recommended by the Executive Board were passed at the meeting on December 14, 2005. In the text below, the additions are in italics and the deletions are underlined.

**ARTICLE VII
EXECUTIVE BOARD**

The Executive Board shall consist of the Chapter Officers, the last three (3) past Chapter Presidents, and *the following fifteen (15) additional annually elected members. The Chapter shall strive to have an Executive Board with a distribution of representatives from the following categories: A minimum of three (3) labor representatives, three (3) management representatives, three (3) government representatives, two (2) academic representatives, and four (4) representatives to be elected at large. In the event that a minimum number of representatives in any one category cannot be filled in an election cycle, the remaining positions shall be filled as at-large representatives. The Chapter president shall be the chair of the Executive Board. The Board shall determine all matters of Chapter policy.*

GUEST EDITORIAL

NYU is Teaching Cynicism*

by Gordon Lafer, Prof. of Labor Studies, Univ. of Oregon

*(*Originally printed in The New York Times and reprinted with permission.)*

Its union busting tactics against grad students are breaking laws and undermining academic freedom

The strike by New York University’s graduate student teachers reflects a broader crisis in higher education. NYU, like other schools, has spent the past 20 years downsizing - meaning that less and less of the teaching is done by tenure-track faculty, with the burden shifted to Ph.D. candidates, part-timers and adjuncts.

Graduate students are caught on both sides of this equation: While in school, they are the cheap labor force that makes the system work; but upon graduating they find that there are precious few faculty jobs available – because everyone else has been doing the same thing as NYU. This is what has led Ph.D. candidates across the country to unionize.

But job markets are not the only thing at stake in this struggle. Traditionally, universities serve a very particular role in society. Conceived specifically as a refuge from the dog-eat-dog world of the market, they are home to a wider range of ideas than is tolerated in the business world. This is so because universities are the only place where you can’t get fired for saying what you think. They are a community of scholars where individuals are free to pursue their notion of truth, knowing that, as long as their work is rigorous, their careers will not be sabotaged in retaliation for espousing the “wrong” view.

This form of academic freedom is made possible by one of two things: the institution of tenure or a union contract. By cutting back on tenured positions while refusing to recognize teachers’ unions, NYU is undermining both pillars of academic freedom. In this way, academic managers are pushing a new vision of higher education – not a community of independent scholars free to boldly pursue their notions of truth, but a place of permanent insecurity where everyone is afraid to speak out against those in power.

Continued on Page 3

<p>The Long Island LERA Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Long Island Chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association.</p>		<p>Peter A. Bee 170 Old Country Road Suite 200 Mineola, NY 11501</p>
<p>President</p>	<p>Peter A. Bee</p>	
<p>President Elect</p>	<p>Thomas J. Lilly, Jr.</p>	
<p>1st Vice President</p>	<p>Beverly E. Harrison</p>	
<p>2nd Vice President</p>	<p>Ernesto Mattace, Jr.</p>	
<p>Secretary</p>	<p>Amanda Barker</p>	
<p>Treasurer</p>	<p>Eugene S. Ginsberg</p>	
<p>Newsletter Editor</p>	<p>Gerald H. Grayson</p>	
<p>Associate Editor</p>	<p>Beverly E. Harrison</p>	
<p>Notices of address change should be sent to Membership Chairman, Richard Roth at <richarbit@aol.com>.</p>		
<p>Inquiries about this publication, as well as submissions, etc. should be sent to Jerry Grayson at <jerryarb@optonline.net>.</p>		

**LONG ISLAND CHAPTER
LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT RELATIONS ASSOCIATION**

**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006**

**PLACE: Pomodorino Ristorante
648 Motor Parkway
Hauppauge, New York
Tel:(631) 951-0026**

DATE: Monday, March 6th, 2006

**TIME: 4:30 p.m., Executive Board Meeting
5:30 p.m., Social Hour (cash bar)
6:30 p.m., Dinner**

please cut coupon and return with your payment

**TO: EUGENE S. GINSBERG, 300 GARDEN CITY PLAZA, 5TH FLOOR,
GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK 11530
(516) 746-9307**

RESERVATION FORM

Please register the following person(s) for the March 6 meeting. I understand that the fee for dinner for members is \$35 if prepaid, and \$40 at the door. For non-members the fee is \$45. Dinner checks should be made payable to L.I. L.E.R.A.

Name: _____ Organization: _____

Address: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Number of Persons: _____ Check Amount: _____ Telephone: _____