

December
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OSARC

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OSARC newsletter



For the 12th straight year, OSARC's December meeting will feature a holiday "feast" with extra-special, delicious "goodies" to eat, along with OSARC's own home-grown talent performing for us all. You'll have the opportunity to join your brothers and sisters in songs of the season. This year, as in the past few years, we will be treated to the musical talent of professional guest musicians, courtesy of the New York Folk Music Society, in which OSARCer Eileen Pentel plays a major role. If you have a special talent you wish to contribute to the program, give Eileen a call at 718-672-6399 and let her know. If you get her voicemail, leave a message and let her know it's about the holiday party. Play an instrument, sing, tell jokes, or recite poetry? We need you. You'll have a good time and your brothers and sisters will be grateful. If you don't come, you'll never know what you're missing.

YOUR OSARC DUES FOR 2020 ARE DUE IN JANUARY

An early warning that next month's *Newsletter* will be accompanied by your annual membership renewal notice. When you receive the January *Newsletter*, we ask that you very promptly mail a check or money order payable to "OSARC," along with the green membership form, back to the union in the envelope provided. A team of agile OSARC volunteers, under the supervision of Treasurer Hattie Thomas, will be working to process your dues in January. It makes life a whole lot easier for them if you pay promptly. Remember, that dues are solicited at the beginning of the calendar year no matter when you paid them in 2019. Meantime, best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season and a spectacular new year to you and yours!

Next Organization of Staff Analysts' Retirees Club Event
Wednesday • December 11, 2019 • 12:30pm - 2:30pm

OSARC Holiday Extravaganza

Guest Performers: Members of the NY Folk Music Society and Talented OSARCers (including, hopefully, YOU) will share music and song. Food will be much more festive than usual.

OSA Union Office • 220 East 23rd Street • 7th Floor

OSARC Officers 2019-2020

Chair.....Helen Hanigan-Kosuda
 Vice-Chair.....Bob Pfefferman
 Treasurer.....Hattie Thomas
 Secretary.....Theodore White
 COMRO Representatives.....Joan Garippa, Mark Lewis, Jay Warshofsky

Newsletter Editor/Writer/Photos: Rob Spencer
 Reporter/Writer: Ted White Art: Ted White



We'll Be Seeing You In All The Old Familiar Places

Thirty-six (36) OSARC members and friends attended the November OSARC luncheon/meeting:



Albida Ali

Albida Ali, Sybil Allen, Sharon Austin, Renee Bash, Maxine Batie, Joan Borovoy Haimowitz, Jacqueline Bradnock-Merveil, Michael Cole, Colleen Cox, Bonnie Dermack, Joan Garippa, Helen Hanigan-Kosuda, Roslyn Jones, Rosanne Levitt, Mark Lewis, Laura Limuli, Nilsa Mangual, John Mazarella, Margaret Williams McClammy, Dolores Parson, Eileen Pentel, Bob Pfefferman, Fred Ranzoni, Nancy Russell, Michael Schady, John Scrofani, Linda Scrofani, Velma Small, Sallie Stroman,

Apinya Sukpanichnant, Hattie Thomas, Ruth Verbit, Teddy White, Isza Williams-Darlington, Eric Wollman, Linda Young

Albida Ali is about to retire from the NYC Housing Authority. Welcome, Albida!

We look forward to seeing *you* at our next event!

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In Memoriam

We regret to report the passing of three (3) retirees and two active members of the union. **Harry King** retired in 2010 as an Associate Staff Analyst at the Dept. Of Information Technology and Telecommunications. **Thomas Duggan** retired in 2010 as an Administrative Staff Analyst at the Department of Citywide Administrative Services. **Esther Mitchell Cooper-Lucas** retired in 2016 as a Senior Healthcare Program Planner/Analyst at HHC's Manhattan Early Intervention Program. **Beth Hyde**, an active member, was a Confidential Strategy Planner at the Department of Transportation. Finally, active member **Raymond Vinci-**

guerra was an Associate Staff Analyst at the Teachers' Retirement System.

The Newsletter extends its condolences to the families and friends of our late brothers and sisters.

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Welcome: Recent OSA Retirees

We welcome the following recent retirees to the post-employment world and encourage them all to join the OSA Retirees Club, if they have not done so already.

Attend our upcoming meetings and events and please consider becoming active in your Club. The meetings are fun and informative and a way to stay in touch with your union brothers and sisters.

NYCHA	Melinda Ulrich	Administrative Staff Analyst
NYPD	JoAnn Ross	Administrative Staff Analyst
HRA	Luz Baez Correa	Administrative Staff Analyst
ACS	Nadezhda Kovelman	AdminCommunity Relations Specialist
DOT	William Henning	Associate Staff Analyst
DCAS	Theodore Cimmo	Associate Staff Analyst
DOC	Edward Lepkowski	Associate Staff Analyst
FISA	Thomas McCormick	Associate Staff Analyst
ACS	Larry Thompson	Staff Analyst
DOB	Eydie Copeland	Staff Analyst

Finally, we apologize to **Karen Mongiello**, whose name in this column last month had a typo. She retired from HRA as an Administrative Staff Analyst. Welcome Karen and all of this issue's retirees!

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OSARC Calendar

Mark your calendar for this month's annual OSARC Holiday Extravaganza featuring a special feast and home-grown OSARC talent, as well as skilled professionals.

Then, on January 15, 2020, we will have a discussion of the 2020 political season through the lens of organized labor's interests. Remember that the January meeting will be held on the third rather than second Wednesday of January.

February 19 will feature a presentation on tax issues – and we would very much like to have a short presentation honoring Black History Month. If you have an interest in making a presentation on some aspect of African-American history, reach out to the officers at the December meeting and let them know what you would like to cover or email editor Rob Spencer at robspencer@osaunion.org.

The March and May meeting topics have not been set yet, but the dates for those meetings are March 11, 2020 and May 13, 2020.



Linda Young

The April trip will take place on April 15th, the third Wednesday in April. Be sure to review the articles elsewhere in this issue about past trips and new possibilities. You can send your suggestions of places you think OSARC should visit by e-mail to *Newsletter* Editor Rob Spencer at robspencer@osaunion.org.

Finally, June 10, 2020 will be our annual gala luncheon. We may return to Tony's DiNapoli. If you would like a different destination and know of a restaurant that can handle approximately 100 OSARCers comfortably at a reasonable price point, let the officers know or, again, email *Newsletter* Editor Rob Spencer your suggestions.

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Where Have You Gone, OSARC?

OSARC has taken many day trips over the organization's 27-year history. Here's a summary of where we've gone and what we've seen, year by year. When more than one trip was taken in a given year, they are indicated by number.

We are trying to come up with a destination for the April, 2020 OSARC trip and destinations for future years, so take a look at where we've been and look over the report from Renee Bash which appears elsewhere in this issue and make any suggestions for where you would like to go this coming year or any year in the future. Email *Newsletter* Editor Rob Spencer at robspencer@osaunion.org with your ideas or selections from Renee's proposals.

- 2018: Tour of Frances Taven, Lower Manhattan
- 2017: Tour of Wave Hill, The Bronx
- 2016: (1) "Activist New York Exhibit" at the Museum of the City of New York
(2) Tour of City Hall
- 2015: The World Trade Center 9/11 Museum & Memorial
- 2014: Grand Central Terminal 100th Anniversary
- 2013: Louis Armstrong House Museum, Corona, Queens
- 2012: (1) NY Hall of Science, Flushing Meadows Park
(2) Peony Pavilion Chinese Drama at Lincoln Center
- 2011: Brooklyn Museum
- 2010: The General Grant National Memorial (Grant's Tomb).
- 2009: Federal Reserve Bank of NY
- 2008: (1) Tour of Wall Street area
(2) Tour of City Hall followed by a tour of the African Burial Ground National Monument
(3) Top of the Rock observation deck, Rockefeller Center
- 2007: The Cloisters in Fort Tryon Park
- 2006: (1) Statue of Liberty, Liberty Island
(2) Cathedral of St. John the Divine
(3) The "Splendor of the Word" exhibit, NYPL
- 2005: (1) "Lower Manhattan History Walking Tour" at the Custom's House
(2) Ellis Island
(3) NYC Transit Museum
(4) Onassis Center (Olympic Tower Atrium)
(5) NY Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture

- 2004: (1) The United Nations
(2) City Island Nautical Museum & Historical Society (special tour and urban walking tour)
- 2003: Gracie Mansion
- 2002: New York Chinese Scholar's Garden at the Staten Island Botanical Gardens
- 2001: Brooklyn Botanical Gardens
- 2000: Hayden Planetarium
- 1998: Sleepy Hollow, New York
- 1997: Ellis Island
- 1994: Ellis Island

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Report From Trip Committee Chair Renée

Trip Committee Chair Renee Bash investigated several possible trips for April 15, 2020 and presented some of those options at the November OSARC meeting. She outlined three possible destinations: The Intrepid Sea, Air and Space Museum, the KGB Espionage Museum and the private Skyscape Museum which traces the history of spying over the past 50 years.

Here are some details about the options Renee presented.

Intrepid Sea, Air, and Space

Museum Tour. Twelfth Avenue at 46th St. on pier 86. The price for a group tour of 15 or more seniors, 65 or older, is \$25 per person, paid in advance. Renee says that to the best of her knowledge, the group will not be carded for age. Veterans get free admission, and should have proof of service, but if none is available, they can submit to a brief interview about their service. There are some add-ons available: \$11 extra per person for a guided tour, another \$11 extra per person for a boxed lunch in the cafeteria. People may bring their own lunch, which must be consumed in the cafeteria.

There was some concern voiced at the meeting about accessibility for the disabled. There is elevator accessibility to "most" outdoor levels (they estimate the size of the accessible area as 85%-90% of the museum). The one unavailable site for those with disabilities is the submarine. Time spent there is about 40 minutes, including waiting times. Other areas to be visited are the aircraft carrier, the Concorde, and the Space Shuttle Pavillion. The museum is immense.

The KGB Espionage Museum, 245 West 14th Street. This is a new, smallish museum. Admission for seniors is \$17 per person. People may come and pay on site. There will be a general talk at the beginning, but then people are free to roam and explore on their own. Renee promised to bring museum flyers to the December meeting. A recent article in the *Chelsea Clinton News* described the museum as "a literal walk through the history of the Soviet surveillance state, starting with the pre-KGB KNVD, the KGB itself, and the post-KGB, FSB. Compelling exhibits illustrate its history, its practices and its



**Trip Committee Chair
Renee Bash**

tools for enforcing loyalty and punishing non-conformity.”

Skyscape. A bigger and nearly twice as expensive espionage museum as “KGB” opened this year. It is a “private museum” giving the history of spying from WWII to the present. The tour is self-guided and “interactive.” A “briefing” is included. Viewing the museum takes about 90-120 minutes. Group tours are available for 20 or more seniors for a discounted \$32.60 per person (including tax). It is located at 928 Eighth Avenue at 55th Street.



Sharon Austin

Renee surveyed those at the OSARC meeting in November and found interest in the Intrepid and the KGB Museum, with lesser interest in Skyscape.

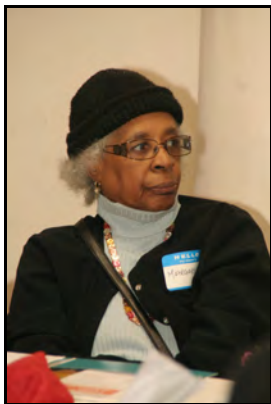
If you would be interested in going to any of these destinations with OSARC, please email *Newsletter* Editor Rob Spencer at robspencer@osaunion.org. You can also propose any other trip destination you would find compelling and suitable for a group trip. Please do a little research on price and what a group trip would entail to that destination and let us know.

Renee will be discussing trip destinations at the December meeting, so you can make suggestions from the floor as well.

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Docs Make Big Money On Drugs

ProPublica, the non-profit newsroom, recently reported that more than 700 doctors in the United States have made at least \$1 million from the pharmaceutical industry and medical device companies since the government created a database to track the relationships and payments between drug companies and physicians. In addition, more than 2,500 physicians received at least \$500,000 each from drugmakers and medical device companies during that time. ProPublica examined 56 million payments made to doctors from 2014 to 2018. While proponents of the compiling of such payments had argued that transparency might lead doctors and the drug industry to rethink the amount of money being doled out, in fact, the companies have not reduced their payments and doctors continue to take them.



Margaret Williams McClammy

According to ProPublica, the companies hire doctors for dinner talks, sponsored speeches, and consulting and the amount of spending remains stable at \$2.1 to \$2.2 billion a year in payments. The number of doctors taking these payments has also remained stable at about 600,000 in each of the five

years studied.

ProPublica pointed out that the pharmaceutical companies have paid fines to “resolve allegations around their marketing practices.”

An example cited by ProPublica was drug firm Insys paying a \$2 million fine, agreeing to forfeit \$28 million and paying an additional \$195 million to settle a case in which prosecutors accused the firm of paying doctors for educational meals the Department of Justice called “a vehicle to pay bribes and kickbacks to targeted practitioners in exchange for increased... prescriptions to patients and for increased dosage of those prescriptions.” In another example, Avantir Pharmaceuticals agreed to pay \$108 million, admitting kickbacks to doctors while marketing drugs for unapproved uses.

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Poll Finds Medical Costs Are Killing People

A new poll released by the Gallup organization revealed that thirteen (13%) percent of Americans know a friend or family member who died within the past five years because they could not afford required medical treatment.

The results also showed a rising percentage of adults who reported they did not have sufficient funds in the past year to “pay for needed medicine or drugs that a doctor prescribed.” This percentage increased significantly, from 18.9% in January 2019 to 22.9% in September.

The AFL-CIO affiliated senior lobby, the Alliance For Retired Americans, reported the poll and Alliance Secretary-Treasurer Joseph Peters, Jr. noted “in our country, no one should die or go without needed medication because they can’t afford it.



Sallie Stroman

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Construction Trade Unions Oppose Drug Price Bill

In the last few issues of this *Newsletter*, we described HR3, a bill that has heavy support from House Democrats, including Speaker Nancy Pelosi. The bill attempts to control the outrageous inflation in drug prices most Americans have been facing in recent years. The legislation has the support of many unions and labor groups, including the United Auto Workers, the A.F.L.-C.I.O., and unions representing teachers and other government workers. An early December *New York Times* report revealed that major pharmaceutical companies are now working with building and construction trade unions to undermine the bill with an ad campaign on social media echoing industry talking points and by targeting Democrats in vulnerable districts. The coalition is hiring former union officials to front the PR effort. The construction unions argue the partnership with the drug companies will yield jobs for their members in construction of plants and facilities which could be undermined by reducing drug company profits.

Stand And Be Counted: Ensuring the Success of Census 2020 in NYC

by OSARC Secretary Theodore White

Our monthly retirees meeting was held on a brilliant, yet chilly, November 13th. OSARC members were in great spirits as the meeting began with excellent suggestions and commentary by Renee Bash, who for many years chaired our Travel Committee.

Bash walked us through a preliminary discussion about where we could potentially enjoy our annual field trip in April of 2020. I very much liked the enthusiasm coming from our OSARC brothers and sisters over the possible trip destinations. We noted the trip this year will be on the third Wednesday of April to avoid conflict with the Passover holiday.

Information prepared by Bash appears elsewhere in this *Newsletter*. Please let us know if you would be interested in taking part in any of the trips she outlines by emailing *Newsletter* editor Rob Spencer at robspencer@osaunion.org. In addition, if you would like to propose another trip destination, send those ideas along in your email as well.

Mark Lewis and Joan Garippa make a great team of COMRO representatives and they delivered a lively and informative COMRO report. A full COMRO report is available for your review elsewhere in this issue of the *OSARC Newsletter*.

The hospitality committee was commended for helping to provide a nourishing lunch. The determined efforts of Chair Helen Hanigan-Kosuda and Vice-Chair Bob Pfefferman were essential and greatly appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering to work with the hospitality committee on the morning of the OSARC meetings, let us know. The more members that help, the less work for all involved.

What's So Important About The Census?

Our guest speaker was Zakera Ahmed, a Supervisory Partnership Specialist in the New York Regional Office of the Field Division of the US Census Bureau. Ahmed reminded all of the importance of getting an accurate count of the City's population, something that failed to occur ten years ago when many believe the City's population was severely undercounted.

An undercount could mean bad news for the City and New York State through the loss of as many as two seats in the United States House of Representatives. In addition, the Census count helps shape the distribution to our



**Zakera Ahmed of the
US Census Bureau**

communities of over \$675 billion dollars in federal aid and payments. The last thing we need is an undercount in 2020 that would negatively impact resources for programs dependent on federal funding.

Among the programs for which the federal Census count helps to determine federal funding are public education, public housing, hospitals, roads and bridges, SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, Head Start and more.

Given all that is at stake, Ahmed said New York absolutely cannot

risk an undercount, especially since we already are at a disadvantage. Ahmed pointed out that, in 2010, New York City's self-response rate was just 62%, compared to the national average of 76%. Ahmed added that the U.S. Census Bureau now estimates, due to a variety of factors, that the City's self-response rate may be even lower in 2020 – a 58% self-response rate.

The first round of outreach will take place in March 2020 from the 12th to the 20th, when notices will arrive in your mailbox on how to complete the Census form online or by phone. Some individuals will receive a paper questionnaire.

Lack of self-response to the Census questionnaire often causes inaccurate information to be recorded in the Census. Federal Census Takers (Census Enumerators) will go into the field to follow up and visit homes that failed to respond during the initial outreach period.

If you don't answer your door, they have the right to ask anyone nearby who appears to be a neighbor about you. That individual may not know the exact number or age of everyone residing in your home.

Another reason why Ahmed said the City Census response is expected to be lower than in 2010 is our large number of immigrant residents, documented or not. Despite the fact that President Trump's proposed addition of a citizenship question to the Census was struck down in the courts, many immigrants are likely to be unaware of that development and may be frightened into becoming invisible. Continuing Federal actions against non-citizens are prolonging the fear of responding to the Census questionnaire and to the Census takers.

Ahmed observed that, even without the issue of the citizenship question, many immigrants are not even aware of the existence of the Census, since there may not be a similar Census process in their home countries. They may be under the misconception that the purpose of our Census is to count citizens only rather than all residents.

Ahmed pointed out that the goal is to reach everyone, that the federal



Ted White



Joyce Cleveland



Nilsa Mangual Rios

constitutional mandate for census-taking every ten years specifies that every person in the country when the Census is being taken must be counted as a United States resident.

It is the number of people residing in New York City that determines the amount of service needed here (e.g. schools, adult and special education, hospitals and other medical services, Medicaid, SNAP (food stamp) allocations, low income housing, roads and bridges).

Whether or not the people in NYC are citizens, or are permanent residents of a particular address, is irrelevant to the process of allocating funds or the process of allocating Congressional seats. Ahmed emphasized that New York State stands to lose two Congressional seats if our undercount is as severe as it was in 2010. This will mean fewer elected officials advocating in Washington D.C. on behalf of our state and our policy preferences and values.

An additional reason why NYC's large percentage of immigrant residents will likely contribute to an undercount is the language barrier these folks will face. Estimates are that 200 languages are spoken in our City. The paper version of the Census questionnaire will be in English and Spanish; the online questionnaire will be in English plus 12 other languages; a telephone line explaining how to prepare and submit the questionnaire will be available in those 13 languages. Explanatory literature and videos will be circulated to affected communities in 59 languages.

Yet another reason why NYC's Census response is expected to be low is the fact that, for the first time, the Census questionnaire will be fillable online. It is estimated that 33% of people in our City have no internet access; in Brooklyn as many as 40% have no access. Further, people who do have internet access may use it for some shopping but may not trust the confidentiality of information about them that they consider personal.

Ahmed noted that undocumented residents may fear that, if they submit an online questionnaire, it will be hacked by immigration officials.

People who do not have personal internet access often do not know how to use technology and may be fearful of its use (seniors, for example). People who have internet access only on phones often are not accustomed to locating, preparing and submitting questionnaires there, or know how to do so.

How will outreach work? In March 2020, the Census Bureau will mail letters to known



Hattie Thomas

addresses: 20% will contain paper Census questionnaires; 80% will offer a password to access the online questionnaire.

The Census Bureau is conducting outreach to communities to encourage them to get involved in ensuring full participation by their members. City officials and community-based organizations, churches and libraries plan to pursue provision of internet-access sites for people who do not have personal internet access, but simply providing access will not necessarily enable people to be able to prepare and submit a Census questionnaire, and offering them telephone directions on how to do an online questionnaire may be of little help to the technologically impaired.

Additional, related strategies, must be devised or these people will be among the NYC residents who do not self-respond and who, therefore, may not be counted.

Ahmed argued that the only one way we can help ensure a complete Census count is by engaging family, friends, and neighbors directly and inspiring them to participate in the Census process proudly, if only for their own self-interest.

Many people are concerned about the confidentiality of census data so we must reassure them by explaining that, historically, census data about individual respondents has never has been revealed (not to a landlord or to immigration officials). Federal law makes it illegal to reveal or share census data, even with another Federal agency, and subjects the perpetrator to a 5 year prison term and a \$250,000 fine.



Michael Cole

Which Groups Are At Risk For An Undercount?

Ahmed pointed out that many groups were found to be undercounted in New York City in the 2010 Census, and they are expected to be undercounted again in 2020, unless the public intervenes intensively.

One severely undercounted group in 2010 was children ages 0-5. It is estimated that one million U.S. children were not counted and 70,000 NYC children were not counted. Today, there are an estimated 1,789,069 children in NYC, with 80,023 younger than 5 years old. Children 0-5 years escape the count because single parents may not report them, separated or divorced parents of children who live in two households may be confused about which parent should report the child resulting in neither parent doing so, grandparents or other relatives and associates temporarily raising someone else's children (say a detained parent or a parent away in treatment) or housing/raising a child during only part of a week may not report the child on the Census. In addition, official or informal foster parents or group homes or residences may not report a child.

Others groups likely to be undercounted are:

- Single parents in general (whose time and attention are

overextended, or who reside in someone else's home)

- People residing in an apartment that has no official address (basement, garden, attic, and garage 'apartments')
- People residing in an apartment or house for which their name or presence is not on the lease, or known to the landlord (Single refugees and poor immigrant families who reside in groups, students who rent a room in someone else's apartment or house)
- Former/recent prisoners (parolees, probationers) who are unused to being included in government requests for civic participation (such as positive questionnaires) and/or may not have a permanent address or feel that they have a permanent address, and/or may reside in a site where former prisoners are forbidden (most NYCHA apartments, for example).
- Former/recently homeless individuals and former/recent medical and mental health patients who are unused to being included in government requests for civic participation and/or may not have a permanent address or feel that they have a permanent address.
- Seniors, living alone or with relatives or service providers
- Persons with physical, visual or cognitive impairment that could interfere with their preparing and submitting a Census questionnaire
- All others who do not have personal access to internet technology (on computer or phone) and/or are unfamiliar with using technology to prepare and submit forms and/or are unable to use technology,
- Homeless individuals (on the street or not residing in a site that they consider a 'permanent' residence or home)
- Undocumented NY residents
- Other immigrant residents who are fearful non-citizens
- Minimal English-speakers and English-readers, and non-English-speakers/readers
- Blacks (see #CheckBlack Census2020: Medgar Evers College Center for Law & Social Justice, www.clsj.org/censusjustice; participate through www.clsj.org/NYCBAC2020)
- L a t i n x (s e e <http://www.NALEO.org/census2020>).



Joan Borovoy



Rosanne Levitt

Neighborhood Organizing Census Committees

The NYC Census Office is offering “NYC Census 2020 Teach-Ins,” where you can learn about their Neighborhood Organizing Census Committees (NOCCs) and how to get involved in ensuring a fair count in many different ways or how to develop your own fair count effort.

A NOCC is your local, neighborhood census organizing platform that allows New Yorkers to raise awareness within their own community about the importance of participating in the Census. NYC Census 2020 will train you to hold civil rights-style teach-ins on the census, host phone banks and text banks, organize community Days of Action, and more. These efforts will teach basics about what the Census is, how it works, how Census data is used, why the Census matters for NYC, and how you can participate in the NOCC program and/or develop other volunteer efforts specific to your target community.

Government officials acknowledge that community-based organizations, clergy and concerned activists and neighbors are best situated to reach their own populations and will best know how to reach their own communities about the importance of the Census, convince them to fill out the Census questionnaire and make sure they submit it.

By working in your neighborhood as well as speaking with friends, families, and neighbors, you can make sure your community is fully represented in the Census. Among activities suggested to support full Census response are canvassing, community-based tabling, hosting community meetings, social media outreach, and coordinating your activities with community-based “trusted messengers.”

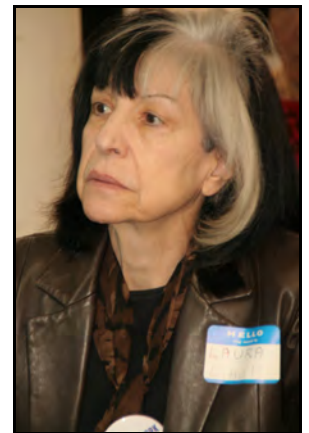
Each Borough President has created a Complete Count Committee with which you can work or you can create your own Complete Count Committee at your church or community group.

The CUNY Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research at The CUNY Graduate Center has created a series of “Hard to Count” maps to focus outreach and educational efforts on specific geographic areas at greatest risk of an undercount for specific groups of people. Information is available at www.CensusHardToCountMaps2020.us

Some of the foregoing information is provided thanks to a handout from OSARC member Laura Limuli, who is active with the New York Counts 2020 Brooklyn Complete Count Committee. She can provide information at 347-432-7208 or LJLimuli@gmail.com.

Working For The Census

I worked as a Census taker in 1980 here in New York City. The pay was very good. As a father of two young kids at the



Laura Limuli



Zakera Ahmed of the US Census Bureau

time, I really needed the money because I was laid off from my provisional civil service job when President Reagan shut down the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program. The salary I got from the Census work made all the difference.

As Ms. Ahmed told us, the pay is even better now. It seems it would be perfect for a retiree to work for Census 2020 because, as she stated loud and clear, no salary was less than \$25 per hour. The available jobs feature great pay, flexible hours, and paid training. You can apply for jobs as Census Takers, Supervisors or Managers online at 2020census.gov/jobs. For more information or help in applying, you can also call 1-855-JOB-2020.

I see it as the perfect opportunity to earn extra income while helping our community. Spread the word to family and friends. People can apply for 2020 Census work if they are at least 18 years old, a U.S. Citizen, have a valid Social Security number and an email address. As part of the application process, applicants will be asked questions related to their educational, work, and other experiences. Potential employees must pass a criminal background check and review of criminal records, including fingerprinting. Once these steps are completed, potential employees will receive information about training.

Prospective employees should have access to a vehicle



Isza Williams-Darlington

and a valid driver's license, unless public transportation is readily available. Prospective employees should also have access to an internet-connected computer (to complete the training process). Work schedules depend on individual positions. At the time of the 1980 Census, I lived on Roosevelt Island and my work was done in Manhattan. Generally, the hours for field positions are flexible. Some positions require work during the day, and other positions require evening and weekend work interviewing the public. In

addition, supervisory positions require employees to be available for certain day, evening, and/or weekend shifts. We learned that nowadays the Census Bureau is committed to hiring Census Takers to work in their own communities. Employees will be paid during training at a slightly lower rate than their regular hourly rate. Field employees will be reimbursed for authorized work expenses, like car mileage.

In April 2019, the website for the 2020 Census went live – 2020census.gov. In January 2020, the first enumeration of the 2020 Census takes place in Toksook Bay, Alaska (they get a head start due to remote areas with unique accessibility challenges).

In March 2020, the public can begin responding to the 2020 Census online. Replying by mail or phone will also be an option.

On April 1, 2020 we observe Census Day. From June 2020 through July 2020, Census Takers go door to door to count people who have not responded to the 2020 Census online or by phone or mail. By December 31, 2020, as required by law, the Census Bureau reports to the President of the United States the population count and the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to each state.

The initial 2020 Census data are made available to the public in 2021.

Whether you decide to try to work for the Census or simply work

to ensure it is accurate in your community - Good luck!

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COMRO Report - October 2019

The Coalition of Municipal Retiree Organizations (COMRO) meets monthly and brings together representatives of the retiree sections of municipal unions, including OSA. The following coverage is based on minutes provided by COMRO Secretary Eileen Moran. Mark Lewis, Jay Warshofsky and Joan Garippa attended the October COMRO meeting for OSARC.

COMRO representatives discussed early voting, which came to New York State for the first time this year. Members had questions about the propositions on the New York City ballot (which all passed in the November general election.). Unions taking positions on any of the propositions were asked to share the information with the COMRO Secretary for dissemination to other COMRO members. DC37 had concerns about the proposal related to the creation of a "rainy day fund" for the City. It is intended to compensate for market fluctuations by setting aside some funds to reduce the need for drastic budget cuts in lean years as New York City is required to balance its budget. NYC budgeting is still bound by rules imposed after the 1975 fiscal crisis, so state approval would also be needed.



Eileen Pentel



Velma Small

Efforts on pension COLA reform include raising the pension base covered from the present \$18,000 maximum to \$24,000. It was estimated that this increase, if enacted, would cost an additional \$450 million. Meanwhile, a COLA based on the median City pension payment would be considerably higher.

COMRO's guest speaker was Kathleen Daniels, who discussed next year's Census. Daniels is working on the census for New York City. She spoke about the 2020 census and the need for an accurate count for both the City

and State as it will determine the number of New York State Congressional seats and billions in federal funding. Federal allocations for education, mass transit, roads, bridges, and housing are all based on the census.

The privacy of data collected for the Census is protected, with severe penalties of a \$250,000 fine and a mandated 5 years in prison should the Census privacy rules be violated.

The anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies of the Trump administration, as well as a switch to a more online census collection system will make an accurate count in our City and State more difficult. Both are working hard and investing millions to insure Census accuracy and a fair share of federal funding.

In 2010, New York City's self-response rate was 61.9%, with almost 4 in 10 New Yorkers not responding. Brooklyn's 55% rate was the lowest in New York, compared to a national average of 76%.

Only 35% of Brighton Beach, Brooklyn, with a large population of Russian immigrants, responded to the initial census mailing. NYC's enumerators got the response rate up to 74%, still missing 1 in 4 residents. Washington Heights' self-response of 77% enabled the building of three new schools in the community.

For 2020, all city agencies will be engaged to explain the Census and the importance of responding. Advertisements for the Census and its relevance to all New Yorkers will appear in subways, buses, and newspapers. CUNY will partner in the City's effort for an accurate count.

Requests for Proposals (RFP) may also allocate up to \$20 million to trusted community or religious organizations.

The self-response phase of the Census begins in March with a letter to all addresses, asking residents to self respond for their household on line or by phone. Census phone workers will be available in multiple languages. The online count may be a



Ruth Verbit

challenge for some older New Yorkers, so public libraries may be called upon to provide internet access and assistance.

The field campaign, with door knocking, aims to identify and count non-responders from the first phase of the count. NYC is divided into 245 census tracts. A much smaller number will receive a longer census form.

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The invited guest speaker for November, Neal Tepel of the media outlet LaborPress, was unable to attend due to a family emergency.



OSARC reps to COMRO Joan Garippa and Mark Lewis

It was announced that several municipal unions are collaborating to reach their retirees in Florida to increase voter registration and turnout of unionists in the 2020 elections.

Recent news stories revealed possible contamination with carcinogens in blood pressure (valsartan) and anti-acid medications (Zantac/Ranitidine). These problems affected both brand and generic drugs and led to a massive recall in both circumstances. The incidence was higher in drugs produced outside of the United States.

COMRO members offered suggestions for guest speakers for upcoming meetings, including Maria Alvarez of Senior Action, several elected officials, with the realization that state legislators may never be available on Wednesdays between January and June. Comptroller Scott Stringer was suggested, as was political consultant Hank Sheinkopf, Transport Workers Union International President John Samuelson, consultant Vinny Montalbano, State Senator John Liu, and a Municipal Labor Committee representative who could speak about the agreement on health savings negotiated between the MLC and the City.

Author Katherine Eban has published a new book entitled "Bottle of Lies," about the quality of generic drugs (and some

brand name drugs) produced overseas. Eban found that these pharmaceuticals were unreliable and inconsistent, as the manufacturing process in these countries was not effectively monitored. Overseas production, particularly drugs from India and China, exhibited shoddy manufacturing practices to maximize profit while lowering costs with minimal or fraudulent inspections. These practices present health risks for those taking these prescriptions.

Ranbaxy, an Indian drug firm, was subjected to \$1.6 billion in fines and prevented from selling inferior ingredients in the U.S. Meanwhile, Pfizer manipulated testing samples to avoid accountability. Factories are deliberately located in remote, inaccessible areas to avoid scrutiny.

The issue of how best to increase the cap on the COLA on City Pensions was raised. The goal is to increase it to \$24,000 from the present \$18,000 cap, along with a permanent mechanism for increases due to inflationary impacts.

In June of 2020, COMRO will be celebrating its 25th Anniversary and the group will be discussing whether or not to mark the anniversary with a more formal celebration.

Most Medicare-eligible retirees were expected to get any Income Related Medicare Adjustment (IRMAA) they were due for 2018 (in addition to their basic Medicare Part B reimbursement from the City) in October, but some folks more recently on Medicare received a letter that they would get their reimbursement by November 15. Upon request, the Comptroller plans to send information about how to apply for Medicare Part B reimbursement for those not previously enrolled or newly eligible.

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Film Examines Long Term Care Crisis

The Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, the union of public university workers will host a screening and discussion of the documentary film "CARE," about the present crisis in delivery of long term care for the elderly. The event will take place at PSC/CUNY's headquarters, on the 16th Floor at 61 Broadway on Wednesday, December 11th from 6 to 8pm. The screening and discussion is free to all and light refreshments will be served.



Jacqueline Bradnock-Merveil

At some point in everyone's lives, they will need some form of ongoing care. The need for care is expanding with the older population in the United States projected to double over the next two decades. Our healthcare system is unprepared for this growth in need.

In-home care is one of the most affordable and desired long-term care solutions, as opposed to nursing home or other institutional care. The work is often severely undervalued.

Families struggle to access and afford skilled care.

The documentary, produced by Deirdre Fishel and Tony Heriza, examines paid in-home caregiving. Approximately 90% of Americans wish to age at home but many cannot depend exclusively on family and friends to meet these needs. The film explores the complexities of care work, as well as the life-changing attachments that often develop between care workers and those who receive it. The film urges viewers to consider the many barriers that keep people from doing this admirable work and others from receiving the care they need and deserve. The film was originally broadcast on PBS in September, 2017.

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Deferred Comp Plan Transitions To New Recordkeeping Firm

For those of you in the City's Deferred Compensation Plan, the past few weeks may have been confusing. In November, the Plan changed its recordkeeper/administrator from FAScore, LLC to Voya Financial.

The change in firm was effective on November 8, 2019. Sometime in November you should have received a new PIN number, along with instructions on how to set up a new username and password to access your Deferred Comp account online with Voya via a link on the Deferred Comp Plan's website. Access was effective as of November 12th.

The final report issued by FAScore was issued as of the end of November and should arrive early in December. The report will show a zero balance in your account. At the same time, the balance as of November 8th will be transferred to Voya. The 3rd Quarter 2019 statement will cover the period July 1st through November 8th.

The 4th Quarter 2019 statement will be issued by Voya and will cover the period November 9th through the end of the year. This statement will be mailed to you in mid-January.

Beginning on November 12th you had access to your new Voya account, after you establish a username and password using the PIN mailed to your home address.

If you are distributing from your 401k or 457 plan or IRA with the Deferred Comp plan, distributions issued on or before November 5, 2019 will receive a Form 1099-R from FAScore, LLC. Distributions issued after November 11, 2019 will appear on a Form 1099-R from Voya Financial.

According to the Deferred Comp Plan, the transition resulted from a procurement for recordkeeping services, issued in accordance with NYS regulations.



Bob Pfefferman

After an extensive review, the DCP Board selected Voya based upon the best combination of technical merit and price. The change is meant to give participants the best possible services at the lowest possible cost and to offer participants the latest available technological benefits, according to DCP promotional material.

The Plan's recordkeeper maintains the individual participant account balances and issues quarterly statements. Through the phone or via a link on the DCP website, you can access your account to obtain information and make changes. You will notice a new look when you access your account online after the transition to Voya.

The transition should not have affected investment choices which remain the same, or any other aspect of your DCP account, except if you had previously chosen automatic rebalancing of your account. You will have to make new automatic rebalancing elections with Voya.

For a period of time, via a link on the DCP website, you will be able to access your account with the old recordkeeper FASCore to view historical information, including statements, account balances and transactions that occurred prior to the transition.

According to DCP, participant accounts continue to belong to you — including all contributions and related earnings. Accounts remain invested at all times, and participant contributions and loan repayments remain in place.

For most DCP participants, no action was needed during the transition or afterwards except setting up a new user name and password to access the new website for Voya. As noted, if you have automatic rebalancing set up on your account, you will have to re-establish the rebalancing with Voya.

For those who have the Self-Directed Brokerage option on their DCP account, which is offered through TD Ameritrade, a separate letter will be received from the Plan about how the recordkeeper transition will affect their account. TD Ameritrade will also send DCP participants who have a brokerage account a separate communication regarding the transition.

Starting approximately the end of December, DCP will be adding a mobile app that will allow you to access your



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account and make changes through your smartphone and tablet.

If you have questions about your account you can call the DCP Client Service Center at (212) 306-7760 and speak with a Client Service Representative. However, the DCP warns that volume of calls is very high in the post-transition period.



OSARC Chair Helen Hanigan-Kosuda presented former OSARC Co-Chair and current activist Fred Ranzoni with a gift on behalf of the Club as Fred became a proud grandpa for the first time at what he called an "advanced age."

The Medicare Advantage War

In October, President Trump issued an executive order which, among other things, tilts even more than before toward Medicare Advantage, which are health plans offered to Medicare-eligible retirees by private insurers that contract with Medicare. Medicare Advantage plans currently cover about a third of the program's 60 million beneficiaries. The executive order was originally called "Protecting Medicare From Socialist Destruction," but was renamed "Protecting and Improving Medicare for Our Nation's Seniors."

At the time of the executive order, Nancy Altman of Social Security Works, which advocates for protection of and improvements to Social Security and Medicare, issued a statement which warned that Trump's order was a sneak attack on Medicare:

"The President's executive order is Backdoor Privatization of Medicare. The President's executive order will push more seniors into private Medicare Advantage plans. For years, the Republican caucus put money into Medicare Advantage plans and allowed them to offer benefits that traditional Medicare is forbidden to cover. (eye, ear, transportation etc.) Medicare Advantage is stealth privatization intended to weaken and undermine traditional Medicare.

Under the current administration, the for-profit insurers are flooding seniors inboxes and mailboxes with advertisements for Medicare Advantage. What these ads don't mention is that Medicare Advantage plans often have narrow networks, restricting what doctors and hospitals patients are allowed to see and often restrict the doctors to a certain geographical region that restricts care for those who travel. Worse, a recent government report found that, just like other for-profit insurers, Medicare Advantage plans improperly deny care "in



Colleen Cox

an attempt to increase their profits.” It’s no surprise that older, sicker seniors are more likely to drop Medicare Advantage plans because of ever-increasing costs and denied, needed benefits. By allowing practices by the insurers that in essence allow the plans to “cherry pick” healthy seniors while leaving the sickest and most costly to be covered through traditional Medicare, this seriously impacts the solvency of Medicare in the long term.

Medicare is an effective, popular government program that does not generate corporate insurance profits. That is why for profit health insurance and pharmaceutical corporations want to weaken and eventually destroy it. Medicare Advantage plans also seemingly waste public dollars by overcharging Medicare by \$30 billion in the past three years... Medicare, like Social Security, works, period.”



OSARC’s own Ted White (who created the art) says: “Hard to be a couch potato when holiday music and cheer abound, especially at the White House, home to Teddy and Kathy White, that is! Happy Holidays!



Happy Birthday to OSA Retirees Born in December

Raphael Agbune, Mary E. Akalski, Mahmoud Sami Ali, William Allen, Tiva Amaritnant, Michael Ambrosia, Elliot Ames, Thomas Andrews, Francisco Arcentales, Kwame Asante, Sharon P. Austin, Joyce P. Badawy, Thomas Baldwin, Judith Balos, Ruthena Barcus, Mary Bardy, Edith Joan Barrow, Theresa Barry, Richard Barth, Eileen Bartky, Michael C. Bartlett, James A. Beavan, Yolanda Beckett, Raymond Benz, Richard N. Bernard, Edward Bianchi, Harrupal Bisnath, Kevin Blanchard, Shirley Bonadie, Joseph Bonelli, Edward C. Bowen, Cheryl A. Boyce, Edward Bradley, Harry G. Bragg, Connie Bray, Joyce B. Bronstorff, Robert L. Brown, Denise Brown, Antoinette Buckley, Brian J. Burke, Nicolae Busuioc, Michael Calabrese, Denise A. Campbell, Dolores Canavaciol, Michelle A. Carlos, Dorothy M. Carrieri-Smith, Ann Marie Caso, Joseph Castagna, Gerard E. Castagna, Lana Cherry, Lily S. Cheung, Ida Chin, Anthony Cirigliano, Irwin M. Cohen, Orphia E. Crump, Benjamin Dairo, Richard M. Dalrymple, Pratip K. Dasgupta, Christopher F. Davis, Anthony J. DeGennaro, Arsenia Delgado, Patrick H. Dennis, Zoraida Diaz, Charles DiGiacomo, Munir U. Din, Ellen Diner, Ronald K. Dobson, Anna Donovan, Vincent Dufour, Philip C. Eisman, Madeline Escamille, Bruce Farbowitz, Joseph L. Faure, Jane P. Fernen, Charles T. Fitzpatrick, John E. Francis, Seth Frankel, Marion E. Franklin, Marcus Freeman, Barry Gabriel, Adenago Galarza, Ted Gallagher, Mark Gerstl, Cynthia F. Gilliam, Shirley O. Gilliam, Mary A. Giraldi, Tatyana Gitis, Edwina H. Glasco, Marianne Gluck, Neil Godden, Irwin J. Goldberg, Tatyana Golovitser, Renee Gonzalez, Mary C. Gorman, Arlene T Gray, James Green Jr., Fay D. Grey, Josefino D. Gumpeng, Noela Haddock, Edmund Hall, Helen Hanigan-Kosuda, Sharon Harris, Valencia Houghton, James J. Hazley, Harvey W. Hecht, Gwendolyn L. Henderson, Dorothy Henry, Arnold Herskovitz, Christine Hession, Veronica Hill-Lewis, Thomas Hotz, Hilary Hudson, David Hyde, Margarette Jabouin, Daniel J. Jacobson, Elsie T. James, Anna M. James, Colleen Jinks, William Jones, Elizabeth Jones, Peter Kanakaris, Philippa Karteron, Daniel Katz, George R. Keenan, Kevin M. Kelly, Marina Khasileva, Mavis P. King, Harriet L.C. King, Jean Kirk, Alfred Klein, Eric H. Klein, John S. Klumpp, Diane M. Koehler, Ronald Komer, Leon Komondorea, Henry L. Korobelnik, Angel La Paz, Edward S. Lakner, Saundra Lamb, George A. Lang, Robert S. Lawrence, Tony Lee, Ling Lee, Thomas W. Leonard, Richard Leonard, Jocelyn T. Lobo, Alex K. Lukose, Mary Lynch, Shafia Mamun, Richard Matarangelo, Carmen Matias, John R. Mauldin, Thomas McCormick, Michael E. McCray, Maria L. McGhee, Thomas McNulty, Bruce Mednick, Neil Mendelsohn, Joseph Miller, Michael Minis, Maggie Moats, Sadad Morcos, Liza Morcos, James M. Moss Jr., Patricianne Murnane, Virginia A. Murphy, T. Rasul Murray, Marilyn E. Ng-A-Qui, Edward A. Nicasastro, Jon Norville, Joyce O'Connor, Cathyanne Obidienzo, Rockie Ojomu-Kayoes, Daniel Orlando, Miguel A. Pagan, Gloria Page, Larry M. Pappert, Ronald A. Parente, Bertdella Patterson, Robert M. Pellicci, Jack Pitilon, Anita Pittas, Phyllis Pittinsky, Janetta Praileau, Helene A. Price, Daniel A. Puiatti, Risa Puld, Harris M. Rachlin, Lawrence Racioppo, Ruth M. Reinecke, Joseph Reklis, Harold Rhodes Jr, Joyce L. Rice, Dorothy L. Rick, Martin L. Ricketts, Shirley B. Ricks, Jose B. Rivera, Joyce Rivers, Patricia Robinson, Christine Robinson, Frances Roker, Margarette Rousseau, Robert H. Ruger, Claire R. Samuel, Susan Scheer, Rekha D. Schoumaker, Maria Segarra, Abdus Shahid, Naresh Sharma, Gail Siegal, Susan Silvestro, Valeria Singletary, Elaine A. Smith, Thomas Smith, Kalman Soloway, Larry Stevens, Ekram Tadros, Gloria Tapper, Leonie Taylor, Agnes Thanjan, Bridget Thomas, Debra A Thomas, Michael C. Tomlinson, Rosemarie Torres, Bethzaida Vazquez, Sarah R. Vilar, Gregory Vilchitski, Michael J. Vincent, Karmelita L. Walker, Jeffrey F. White, Darrell A. Williams, Joe D. Williams, Bassanio Wong, Judith Woods, Simeon D. Wright, Anita B. Yurman-King, Margie D. Zinzi



