

# "Local 43 President Steven's Letter To The Membership"

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## GAINS OF 1937 AND PROPOSED GAINS FOR 1938

*Written by SR Stevens, Local #43 President  
(edited for readability)*

As President, I believe it is my duty to make a report of the activities of Local 43 for the year of 1937.

Beginning March 1, the following committees were appointed: Legislative, Pension, Civil Service, Entertainment, House Uniform, Bylaws, and Day Off. All committees met, elected their chairmen, and outlined their plans for the future.

The Legislative Committee was the first committee to meet and agreed on full restoration of salary, plus \$14 increase for hosemen, which would total \$200.00 per month, with all officers raised accordingly, and also a day off. The full restoration of salaries and the raise was backed up by these facts; high cost of living, wages paid in other Fire Departments, and salaries paid to outside workers. The day off a week was backed up by the fact that most all cities of any size were already getting a day off. This plan was presented to Commissioner Riley, who agreed with the program and said he would make a survey of the city's finances in order to put this plan into effect.

It was decided that the day off was very important and had been postponed too many times and needed the attention of a special committee. A special committee was appointed and three different plans were worked out. The Day Off Committee arranged a meeting with Commissioner Riley and the different plans were submitted to him. He agreed with the program and also agreed that it would be a great benefit to the department. The plans were left with Commissioner Riley and he agreed to try to put one of them in effect. He also told the Committee that they would have to drop the day off or the salary increase and get one of them at a time. A special meeting was called immediately for the Executive Board, Legislative Committee, and the Time Off Committee. The Committees considered both of the questions and decided the raise in pay would be the easiest of the two to get at that time, although the day off was most important. They thought it would be better to get one than to lose both of them and would immediately start to work on the day off as soon as we got a raise in salary. This recommendation was submitted to the next meeting of Local 43 and was concurred with by a large majority.

We immediately notified Commissioner Riley. He suggested that we call representatives of the various city employee groups together and said he would ask his honor, the Mayor, to call the members of the Council together to consider the raising of our salaries. The representatives of the various groups of the city met, with the exception of the police department, and decided to do all in their power to have the City Council put into effect full restoration plus an increase over full restoration of from 2.5-10%, the 10% to go to the men of the lower brackets, who didn't get a raise when the uniform forces were raised in 1926 and who at the present time are working for less than common laborers in other lines of work. The outcome of our meeting with the City Council was that they agreed to full restoration of salaries to go into effect on May 1st and, they would consider the increase whenever the finances of

the city would bear the expense. The representatives of all city employees met immediately to consider future action for putting the rest of our programs into effect. At this time, the Committees agreed on a two-point program; first the raising of those in the lower brackets, second a day off for firefighters. It was also brought out that there was enough money to give us back pay from April 15th on our full restoration. A committee of three were appointed to take this matter up with the Council and succeeded in getting you back pay for 15 days. The chairman of our Legislative Committee, a committee of Local 43 and myself, met with the members of the City Council to try to have the rest of our program put into effect by April 1938 and we feel that we have made progress towards that end. If the unexpected doesn't happen, we will have the pay adjusted for those in the lower brackets and some time off for the firefighters before 1938 is half over.

The Legislative Committee has accomplished much, by securing increases in salaries and back pay, also by delivery of checks, free laundry service, house uniforms (which reduced expenses), and reduction of tap-outs at night.

The Pension Committee is working out plans to refinance our pension. They are scheduled to meet a committee of citizens to try and agree on a plan whereby we will be able to have the cooperation of the insurance companies instead of their opposition. We feel if we are successful, it will work to the advantage and benefit of the insurance companies, the public, and the firefighters. All that we are asking for is the same cooperation and consideration that the insurance companies have already given firemen's pensions in all large cities throughout the United States. We must realize that the pension is all we have for future security of ourselves and families and must do all in our power to make it a sound pension.

The Bylaw Committee has worked long and hard revising the bylaws of Local 43 as well as the beneficiary and the loan association. The bylaws have been amended a number of times since they were adopted in 1929 and it was impossible for the members and officers to interpret them correctly. The committee will submit the revised bylaws at the next meeting for your consideration.

The Civil Service Committee has been studying the different forms of civil service that are in effect in various cities with the idea of perfecting and correcting our civil services so it will be for the benefit of all, giving everyone a fair and honest chance for promotion. The members met with the Civil Service Board and exchanged ideas. As soon as the last Junior Captains examination papers are available, they will make a study of them and see what corrections can be made for future examinations.

It has been requested by a number of our members that we ask the Civil Service Board to change the classification of our Junior Captain to Senior Captain, giving all Captains the same rating. I informed members that the proper way for them to get action was for them to present their case to the Civil Service Committee, who in turn will make recommendations to Local 43 for its consideration.

There have also been several requests, that steps should be taken in regards to a higher rate of pay for drivers of apparatus and tillermen on account of the extra duties they perform going to and from fires as well as the added responsibility that they must assume. This matter will be put into the hands of the Legislative Committee and their recommendation will be presented to Local 43.

The Entertainment Committee put on a program for both shifts. It was one of those shows you hear about but very seldom see. The entertainment seemed to be a huge success. The committee is planning a get together party for the firemen and their wives. The purpose of these entertainments is to promote a friendly feeling among our membership, which should result in a better understanding of our problems.

We have an unfinished program for 1938. The day-off-a-week and increase in salary, prospects seem very good for the first six months of this year. These have been promised by the City Council as soon as the finances permit. Our pension is a paramount issue for 1938. The primary election will soon be at hand and the general election in November. Now is the time to find out who our friends are that are running for the state legislature. Bills are being prepared for the state legislature, which convenes in January 1939. Also bills are being prepared which might be submitted to the vote of the people. We want to be prepared for any emergency.

A plan is being worked out to be put upon our Local to shorten our work week to a 48 hour week and, if agreed upon by our membership, will be put to a vote of the people.

This is a big program and will take a great deal of work, time, and money, but we will never better our conditions unless we have a program we are willing to work for and use our organized efforts to put it in effect.

In closing, I wish to thank all of you and express my appreciation for you faithful and valuable services that you have rendered to me and Local 43. It is only through your cooperation and help that we are able to make the gains in the past.

Make a New Year's resolution to attend your union meetings in the future and help the different committees with your program.

President Local 43 *Sylvester R. Stevens*