



# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC

No. 517

Issue 2, Summer 2012

## Local 277 Members Ratify Five-Year Agreement with Lockheed

**L**ocal 277 members overwhelmingly ratified a new five-year agreement with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company. “The cap on the medical insurance costs over the five years of the agreement is a huge benefit for Local 277 members and our negotiating team fought hard to maintain that benefit,” said OPEIU Vice President and Local 277 President Becky Turner.

The new agreement includes a ratification bonus of \$3,000; a 14 percent wage increase over the life of the agreement (3 percent in each of the first three years and 2.5 percent in the last two years); five annual supplemental COLA payments of \$800 totaling \$4,000 over the life of the agreement, as well as quarterly COLA adjustments to the hourly base wage of all

*(Continued on page 7)*



**OPEIU Vice President and Local 277 President Becky Turner reviews the contract details with the bargaining unit. Pictured on stage is the Local 277 negotiating committee: (left to right) Executive Board members Sandy Smith and Gene Patton, Turner, Secretary-Treasurer Margo Peel, Business Representative Tyler Turner, and Executive Board members Ramona Alexander and Jackie Curry.**

## ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 Organizes Custodians, Security Guards

**I**TPE/OPEIU Local 4873 has made organizing a top priority and these efforts are paying off as it recently organized new members in both the custodial and security guard fields.

On April 23, 2012, Local 4873 organ-

ized a group of 79 service contract workers employed with Zero Waste Solutions located at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center in Brunswick, Georgia. The Zero Waste Solutions custodial employees voted 58-12 for Local 4873 representation.

“The Zero Waste Solutions employees are a fantastic group,” said Local 4873 Representative John Brenton IV. “I have the utmost respect for the employees who came to meetings, got involved, and worked

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## Investing in America: Building an Economy That Lasts

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The 2012 political dialogue led by Democrats has shifted recently from the economy to social issues such as same-sex marriage, health care decisions and equal pay for women. This is unusual since it has historically been the Republicans who raised such “wedge” issues to distract voters from the real issues facing the country — jobs and the economy.

I am sure that as we approach the November elections, jobs and the economy will be the deciding factors as to who will lead the United States for the next four years. The Obama administration has developed a platform to run on with the slogan, “Investing in America: Building an Economy That Lasts.” Creating an economy built to last means that America must make investments that will equip workers to compete effectively in the global economy.

Many political observers agree with the assessment that if the economy continues to improve, President Obama will win re-election. A slowdown of economic growth and an increase in unemployment will spell trouble for President Obama, particularly since the election is already projected to be close.

The economy was growing, however, and the unemployment rate was on its way down until Republicans in Congress did everything possible to block President Obama’s efforts for continued growth. Congress’ failure to pass measures such as the American Jobs Act or to make critical investments in highway infrastructure resulted in the addition of just 69,000 jobs in May. This slowdown in growth is troubling, considering that, thanks to President Obama, before that the economy had added 4.3 million private sector jobs, increasing each month for 27 straight months. In 2012 alone, nearly 800,000 private sector jobs were created, but not as many as we would want to see. While not good enough to make the necessary correction, this growth in jobs offsets the more than eight million jobs lost from the recession, which started before President Obama took

office. [See charts on page 3.]

Also, for the first time in decades, manufacturing jobs in the United States have recovered faster than the rest of the economy, supporting growth and job creation. Over the past two years, the economy has added 334,000 manufacturing jobs — the strongest two-year period of manufacturing job growth since the late 1990s. Manufacturing production has surged 5.7 percent on an annualized basis since its low in June 2009, the fastest pace of growth of production in a decade! Part of this growth can be attributed to the fight to stop companies from moving good-paying jobs to low cost labor centers outside the U.S.

The competitiveness of America’s producers of goods and services to be traded has improved, and with it, there has been a strong growth in exports. Over the past 12 months, exports have been growing at an annualized rate of 16.1 percent, as compared to 2009. That means that America is ahead of schedule in meeting the president’s goal of doubling exports over 2009 levels by the end of 2014.

Experts have examined the relative attractiveness of the U.S. as a location for manufacturing and have concluded that the U.S. will become an increasingly appealing option, especially for products consumed in North America. This conclusion is based on the productivity of U.S. workers, transportation and supply links, which are now becoming as economical in the United States as in other parts of the world, including China.

The highly-skilled U.S. workforce continues to be a source of advantage across the service sector. Companies “in-sourcing” to the United States indicates better performance in U.S. service centers as compared to outside the U.S., off-setting the benefits of lower wages abroad.

Over the past three years, the Obama administration has taken steps to stabilize the financial system, rescue the auto industry, cut taxes for the middle class, and make investments to put Americans back to work. The

administration’s policies have helped arrest the greatest financial shock since the Great Depression by doing such things as getting credit flowing more freely, a key element in making the U.S. more attractive for investments. In addition, the president has signed into law increased aid through Pell Grants to improve workers’ skills; tax incentives to encourage investment in the U.S.; and investments to rebuild infrastructure.

Obviously, I could go on for hours citing actions that the administration has taken to encourage “Investing in America: Building an Economy That Lasts,” but I believe the examples cited above tell the story — the Obama administration needs to be re-elected to continue the progress it has made over the last three years.

As noted, the election is projected to be close and the vote of each and every person will be critical to the ultimate result. Let’s not forget Florida in the 2000 elections where we ended up with the U.S. Supreme Court designating George W. Bush as president, notwithstanding the fact that Vice President Al Gore defeated Bush in Florida and received more than 600,000 votes nationally.

Get involved, be active and make sure that you and the members of your family register to vote as we support “Investing in America: Building an Economy That Lasts!”



(Used by permission.)

**International President Michael Goodwin meets with Vice President Joseph R. Biden at his residence in Washington, D.C. on May 23, 2012.**

# Transportation Executives Association Affiliates with OPEIU

The Transportation Executives Association (TEA), an independent labor organization representing approximately 80 professional and administrative employees, superintendents and lawyers of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), has affiliated with OPEIU, effective May 1, 2012. It will become a Directly Affiliated Group (DAG) of OPEIU, known as DAG 76.

“The TEA is dedicated to improving the salary, benefits and working conditions for its members and to advancing their independence and professionalism,” said International President Michael Goodwin. “Their affiliation with OPEIU will further that mission, providing them with the organizing, legislative and legal support they need and the autonomy that their organization needs with full

control of its own administration and finances. We look forward to working with TEA President Ryan Flynn, Vice President Carrie Dubose and the other TEA leadership to best represent the needs of the membership.”

DAG 76 joins several other OPEIU Local Unions that represent employees at the MBTA, known as the T, including Local 6, Local 453 and Local 600.

## Mary Short Named OPEIU Vice President



Mary Short

The OPEIU Executive Board has appointed Mary Short to serve as Vice President for Region II on the Executive Board. Short is the president of Local 32 in Union, New Jersey.

“Mary has been a dedicated union leader for many years who has worked diligently to improve wages and conditions for working families in New Jersey and surrounding areas,” said International President Michael Goodwin. “Her experience at Local 32 — defending members and negotiating higher pay and benefits — makes her the perfect person to represent the members of Region

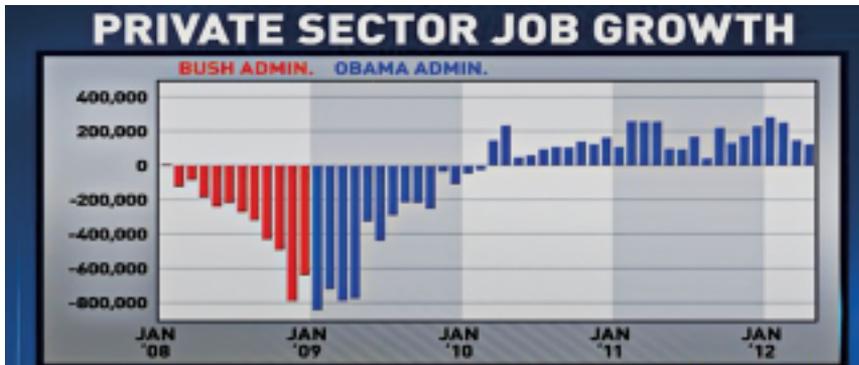
II on the Executive Board.”

Short has been employed by the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) since March 3, 1980, and has been a dedicated union leader since, helping to organize its clerical workers in 1989. She has served as the unit’s chief steward since their first contract was negotiated that same year. Short has held a number of positions with Local 32, including executive board member, recording secretary, vice president, and her current position as president.

“I thank God, President Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Mahoney, the OPEIU Executive Board and Local 32’s Executive Board for their support and the opportunity given to me by this appointment to continue serving OPEIU members and future members,” said Short.

Short fills a vacancy left on the board by the death of Allen Byron on February 10, 2012. Byron had represented OPEIU Region II and served as Secretary-Treasurer/Business Manager of Local 32 since 2006. He had served on the OPEIU Executive Board since January 2010.

### Job Growth and Unemployment Claims— Both Going in the Right Direction!



CREDIT: STEVE BENEN, MADDOW BLOG

### WHITE COLLAR

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INTERNATIONAL UNION  
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## President Goodwin Joins Farm Workers' 50th Anniversary Celebration

**I**nternational President Michael Goodwin was an honored guest and speaker at the United Farm Workers' (UFW) 50th Anniversary Convention held May 17-20, 2012, in Bakersfield, California.

Goodwin told the delegates representing more than 2,000 farm workers about the long and very special relationship between OPEIU and UFW, which began in the 1960s between UFW former President Cesar Chavez and then-OPEIU International President John Kelly. "UFW's President Arturo Rodriguez and I have continued that relationship to this day," said Goodwin, recounting the many UFW marches and rallies he has personally participated in through the years, including the 1994 march, where he joined the group from Fresno, California to Highway City, California to re-enact the

historic march led by Chavez in 1966 and held on the first anniversary of his death.

He also told of when OPEIU sent more than 100 staff and members to Watsonville, California in April 1997 to support the strawberry workers and join the approximately 30,000 marchers who descended on the city.

Part of the 50th anniversary celebration included a visit for all convention delegates to the National Chavez Center, Lady of Guadalupe de la Paz, in the Tehachapi Mountain hamlet of Keene, which hosts Chavez's gravesite, a visitor center and museum, a sprawling renovated educational center and a meditation garden.

"It's an extremely peaceful and beautiful place where one can reflect on the many struggles, as well as accomplishments, of the farm workers over the years," said

Goodwin. "One of the more striking elements is a fountain monument to the five UFW martyrs who died while seeking justice for farm workers. I was fortunate to attend an event in March 2012 where these brave unionists were inducted into the Department of Labor's Hall of Fame. Standing in front of the fountain, I was deeply moved thinking of the ultimate sacrifice made by Nan Freeman, Rufino Contreras, Nagi Daifallah, Juan De La Cruz and Rene Lopez.

"I was so pleased to hear President Rodriguez say to me at that DOL event that OPEIU is one of them, part of the UFW family," Goodwin continued. "No higher compliment could have been paid. We are grateful to be part of the UFW extended family and we appreciate the acknowledgment of President Rodriguez."



International President Michael Goodwin addresses the United Farm Workers' (UFW) 50th Anniversary Convention on Friday, May 18, 2012. Also pictured is UFW President Arturo Rodriguez (seated) and a UFW welcoming delegation.



At the National Chavez Center, Lady of Guadalupe de la Paz, sits the fountain monument to the five UFW martyrs: Nan Freeman, Rufino Contreras, Nagi Daifallah, Juan De La Cruz and Rene Lopez. Also pictured in front of the monument is the gravesite of UFW's former president, Cesar Chavez.

**For more information  
about OPEIU, visit our website at  
[opeiu.org](http://opeiu.org)**

## OPEIU Wins Article XX Case

### Huge Victory for Teachers Without Contract Since 2007

An impartial umpire has ruled in favor of OPEIU by dismissing an Article XX case brought by the Laborers' International Union of North America (LIUNA) as untimely. The umpire, Michael H. Gottesman, ruled that LIUNA's six-month "undue delay" in filing an Article XX resulted in prejudice and therefore must be dismissed.

The dispute arose after the Federation of Catholic Teachers (FCT), an affiliate of OPEIU, filed a petition with the state employment relations board (PERB) seeking certification as the representative of the Monsignor Farrell High School faculty in Staten Island, New York, in 2009. For

many years, the faculty had been represented by Lay Faculty Association, an affiliate of LIUNA. The filing of the petition was not a violation of Article XX, as LIUNA did not enjoy the protection of Article XX of the AFL-CIO Constitution following its disaffiliation from the AFL-CIO in May 2006.

International Vice President for Region II and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer, Richard Lanigan, served as OPEIU counsel on the case.

"We are extremely pleased for the teachers at Monsignor Farrell High School who, because of this Article XX ruling, are one step closer to being able to participate in

an election to choose the union that will represent them," said FCT President Pat Gabriel. "We are truly grateful to have Richard Lanigan's Article XX expertise.

"Before the teachers can vote, there is one more hurdle to clear," Gabriel continued. "A New York State Public Employment Relations Board hearing will take place on June 21, and our hope is that the PERB judge will find in our favor so that justice for this group of teachers can finally prevail. The Federation of Catholic Teachers would be proud to include the teachers at Msgr. Farrell High School among our members."

The results of the June 21 hearing will appear in the next issue of *White Collar*.

## OPEIU Nurses Council Elects Officers

The OPEIU Nurses Council executive board elected officers to two-year terms at its meeting held in Dallas, Texas, on May 2, 2012. The council represents approximately 10,000 nurses affiliated with OPEIU throughout the United States and was formed to help resolve issues affecting the nursing profession and to foster a climate of professionalism within the nursing community by promoting best practices regarding patient care, safety concerns and compensation issues.

Paige Yates, RN, president of Local 22 in Little Rock, Arkansas, has been elected to serve as council chair. Joan Craft, RN, pres-

ident of the Hawai'i Nurses' Association (HNA)/Local 50 was elected as vice chair, and Dina Carlisle, RN, trustee of Local 40 in Mt. Clemens, Michigan was elected secretary-treasurer.

"The board has elected officers who care deeply about the future of the nursing profession," said International President Michael Goodwin. "The council was established to strengthen the nurses within the industry, both at the bargaining table and in terms of organizing new members, and these officers are dedicated to fulfilling that mission.

"Solidarity among nurses, regardless of

Local Union affiliation and region, makes OPEIU a more effective representative of the nursing profession throughout the country," Goodwin continued.

At the meeting, the council also approved financial support from Local Unions. Council-affiliated Local Unions are entitled to seats based upon membership: a Local Union with up to 100 members is entitled to one seat, 101 to 499 members is entitled to two seats, and more than 500 members is entitled to three seats.

The council is planning its next meeting for fall 2012 at a location to be determined.

## ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 Organizes Custodians, Security Guards

*(Continued from page 1)*

to bring people together. The level of communication during the whole process was impressive, with even last minute changes and details being spread to every employee on the day of the election. The unity that I see right now at this site is something I hope never goes away."

After just two months of negotiations, Local 4873 also organized 35 security guards at a security firm, Basic Contracting Services, Inc., located at the Navajo Refinery in Artesia, New Mexico, and at a second location in Lovington, N.M. The Navajo Refinery is a private sector company owned by the Navajo tribe, but not locat-

ed on a Navajo reservation.

"The negotiations went well," said Local 4873 Representative Joe Serrano. "I wish all my contracts went as smoothly. They heard about ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 and wanted to be a part of our union."

The McNamara-O'Hara Service Contract Act (SCA) applies to contracts entered into by the United States with the purpose of providing services to the U.S. through the use of service employees. The SCA requires contractors and subcontractors to pay these service employees prevailing wages and benefits or the rates included in the predecessor contractor's agreement, if higher.



**New Shop Stewards Idella Bradley and Henry Jolley were instrumental in organizing the Zero Waste Solutions employees.**

## Butch Grafton: A Lifetime of Dedication and Service

OPEIU is recognizing the many contributions to the union made by Captain Butch Grafton, one of the founders of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association (PHPA), who retired this year after serving as PHPA president since its establishment in March 2002. PHPA is a council within OPEIU that represents the union's 3,000 helicopter pilots located throughout the United States and Canada.

Grafton has been a member of Local 102 for 32 years, and has been a strong advocate for the helicopter pilots at Fort Rucker, Alabama for his entire career. He began teaching instrument flying at the U.S. Army Flight School at Ft. Rucker in 1980 and continues to teach today.

He also was part of the first delegation of pilots representing helicopter pilots in the United States to attend an International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations Helicopter Committee meeting in Madrid, Spain in 2000.

After having been elected by his peers as the first president of the newly formed PHPA, he served with dedication and distinction over the many years, working to build PHPA into the world-class organization it is today.

"The PHPA Council applauds Butch Grafton for his great work and, with sincere gratitude, hereby bestows upon him the title of PHPA Council President Emeritus," International President Michael Goodwin said at an event held in Grafton's honor in February 2012 in Dallas, Texas.



**Captain Butch Grafton**

## OPEIU Mourns Vice President Emerita Carolyn Combs Johnson



**Carolyn Combs Johnson**

OPEIU is saddened to report the death of Vice President Emerita Carolyn Combs "CC" Johnson, who died April 19, 2012, at the age of 85. Johnson served on the OPEIU Executive

Board from January 1986 to June 1998, and her contribution to the union will be forever felt and remembered.

Johnson served as president of Local 391 in Chicago, representing employees at Roosevelt University from 1950 until her retirement in 1994. "Carolyn was a great confidante of former OPEIU President John Kelly, and then of mine, and was well respected and loved by everyone who met her," said International President Michael Goodwin.

To recognize her lifetime of dedication and service, OPEIU has drafted the following resolution:

Whereas, Carolyn Combs has spent a lifetime representing employees at Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois; and

Whereas, she has been an outstanding leader in pursuit of improved wages and working conditions, serving the members of OPEIU Local 391 in various categories, including many years as president; and

Whereas, her talent, skills and dedication to trade unionism were well recognized in the labor community to such an extent that she was appointed as a vice president

on the OPEIU Executive Board in January 1986 and elected to four successive terms at OPEIU Conventions starting in June 1986 until her retirement in June 1998; and

Whereas, her service on the OPEIU Executive Board was exemplary as she made a tremendous contribution to the growth and influence of the union; and

Whereas, following her retirement, she continued to remain immensely interested and involved in union affairs providing guidance and counsel to union officers that followed her; and

Whereas, Carolyn Combs Johnson has contributed a lifetime of dedication and service and her beautiful smile, calm demeanor and counseling will be sorely missed by all of the 108,000 members of OPEIU.

Michael Goodwin  
*International President*

Mary Mahoney  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

April 28, 2012  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

## Guild 45 President John Mattiacci Awarded Ellis Island Medal of Honor

**F**irst National Guild for Healthcare Providers of the Lower Extremity/OPEIU Guild 45 President John A. Mattiacci, D.P.M., has received the prestigious 2012 Ellis Island Medal of Honor for his outstanding service to his community. Dr. Mattiacci is an OPEIU International Vice President representing Region II, serving since 1998.

At a ceremony held on May 12, 2012, on Ellis Island in New York City, Dr. Mattiacci received the award. He was chosen from among more than 10,000 deserving and distinguished nominees.

The Ellis Island Medal of Honor was created in 1986 to pay tribute to the immigrant experience and individual achievement, and is awarded to U.S. citizens from various ethnic backgrounds. The honorees are awarded for demonstrating outstanding qualities in their personal and professional lives, yet maintaining the richness of their particular heritage. The Ellis Island Medal of Honor is recognized by the United States House of Representatives and the Senate, and as such, the names of all winners are listed in the Congressional Record.

“We are so proud that Dr. Mattiacci has been honored by this terrific organization,” said International President Michael Goodwin. “He has dedicated his life to helping people, first as a doctor committed to healing, and second as a labor activist who works tirelessly to improve conditions for podiatrists.”

Dr. Mattiacci is a board certified physician practicing podiatric medicine and surgery since 1970, and is currently Dean and CEO of the Temple University, School of Podiatric Medicine in Philadelphia.

Honorees typically include U.S.

Presidents, Nobel Prize winners, leaders of industry, and gifted artists, performers and athletes. Dr. Mattiacci joins the list of notable medal recipients, which includes Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, President William J. Clinton and Frank Sinatra.



**Dr. John Mattiacci and his family at the Ellis Island Medal of Honor ceremony on May 12, 2012. Pictured left to right: (front row) Maureen and John Mattiacci and their children (back row) Nicholas Mattiacci, Mary Hartman, Michelle Paesler and John Mattiacci Jr.**

## Local 277 Members Ratify Five-Year Agreement with Lockheed

*(Continued from page 1)*

Local 277 represented employees; a 14 percent increase in the defined benefit pension plan for all employees on the current payroll; a 17.25 percent increase in both the company-paid life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance; and an improvement to the short-term disability payment benefit. The agreement also includes 62 holidays over the course of the agreement, including the December holiday break each year. The current dental and vision plans were maintained with no changes. The automatic

rate progression was improved as well as the shift differential for second shift employees.

A new classification was added, combining employees from two existing classifications, with the majority of the population in the new classification receiving an upgrade. The agreement also provides for several other updated job descriptions in order to maintain job duties in the bargaining unit. The company will make available to Local 277 members a “Transitional Duty Program” to provide fulltime productive work assignments when

an employee’s work restrictions cannot be accommodated.

Turner said that she is proud of the hard work of the negotiating committee and that the Local 277 committee represented more than 200 years of seniority at the Lockheed Martin Aero facility. Members of the Local 277 negotiating committee included Secretary-Treasurer Margo Peel, Business Representative Tyler Turner, and Executive Board members Ramona Alexander, Jackie Curry, Gene Patton, and Sandy Smith. The negotiating committee was led by President Turner.

## Southeast/Southwest Area Educational Conference Provides Grievance and Arbitration Instruction



Delegates to the Southeast/Southwest Area Educational Conference in Orlando, Florida on May 3-6, 2012 listen attentively to instructor E. William Hockenberry, Esq., discuss advanced grievance handling. Hockenberry is an attorney in private practice and, since 1983, a labor arbitrator, mediator, fact-finder and hearing officer serving on numerous labor and grievance examiner panels in the private, public and federal employment sectors.



Instructor Michael LeRoy discusses the ins and outs of arbitration, contract interaction and discipline. LeRoy is a professor at the School of Labor and Employment Relations, and College of Law at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



Kevin Kistler, OPEIU's director of organization and field services, leads a lively discussion on the 2012 fall elections, including the issue of voter suppression, and emphasizes the importance of all Local Unions contributing to the J.B. Moss VOTE Fund.



Michael Noonan, AFL-CIO strategic planning and technology director, tells delegates about the Labor Action Network (LAN), a tool offered by the National AFL-CIO to expand the ability of labor to effectively organize at the grassroots level. [See box below for more information about LAN.]

### The Labor Action Network

The Labor Action Network (LAN) is the newest tool in the arsenal of technology offered by the AFL-CIO to help improve and strengthen the political grassroots efforts of all affiliated National Unions, including OPEIU.

The LAN allows approved users to access an array of tools both to perform analytical functions for strategic planning and also to produce product to run an effective field program in near real time. It also allows the user to store and retrieve

results from contacts with members as well as build an activity database.

While giving the approved user these tools, it also operates with the highest level of security available and meets the security requirements required under the National AFL-CIO Executive Council Policy on International Union Membership Data. Local Unions interested in utilizing LAN should contact OPEIU at [frontdesk@opeiu.org](mailto:frontdesk@opeiu.org).

## Local Union News

### Rutland Nurses Ratify New Contract

Following contract negotiations that began in October 2011, nurses at Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC) in Rutland, Vermont, represented by Local 6 have ratified a new agreement that will mean significant wage increases and preservation of historic benefits. These include maintenance of employer paid contributions to the 403(b) plan and a freeze in the amounts employees pay for their health and dental plans, as well as modification to the recognition clause to include Case Managers in the bargaining unit. The contract is retroactive to December 2, 2011, and will expire September 30, 2014.

The contract, ratified on March 28, 2012, “could not have been accomplished without the unusual dedication and participation of the negotiating committee and the RRMC nurses,” said Local 6’s General Counsel and Business Manager Robert Manning.

The Rutland nurses held a leafleting rally on March 9, 2012 to make the public aware of the fight for a fair contract. On October 27, 2011, the same day negotiations commenced, hospital management announced it was increasing health and dental premiums on its non-union workforce, eliminating all employer-matching contributions to their 403(b) plans, and eliminating employer paid short-term disability and vision benefits. Local 6 entered negotiations with the hospital demanding even greater cuts for the unionized nurses.

Manning said that after more than three months of negotiations, including obtaining the assistance of a federal mediator, it looked as if the parties were heading to impasse. So, on March 9, nearly 100 nurses and family members, supported by fellow nurses at other area hospitals in Vermont (Fletcher Allen and Copley), took to the streets to make their voices heard. Organized by International Organizer David Flores, the workers received tremendous community support—honking horns, fists pumping, and cheers. Manning praised Flores’ organizing effort, saying, “Dave came into town and rallied an impressive turnout that

shook management — and he did this even while sick with the flu!”

Local 6 Business Agent Erik Barrette was also instrumental in the success of these events, as well as during negotiations. “That type of tremendous dedication is what you find in the labor movement and in OPEIU in particular,” said Manning. “Local 6 would like to thank International President Michael Goodwin, Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler for all their support in making this rally happen.”

On March 12 and 13, a fired-up union committee met with a concerned management team and, after two all-day, all-night negotiating sessions, hammered out a contract. “We came up with some creative solutions that allowed us to achieve a win-win agreement in many aspects, as well as increase the nurses’ share of benefits,” said Manning. “The importance and power of Local 6 was aptly demonstrated in Rutland, Vermont.”



**Local 6 members and their families leafleting during the nurses’ fight for a fair contract.**

## Going to the Show!



Baseball umpire Todd Tichenor has been hired by Major League Baseball to become a permanent full-time member of the umpire staff for the 2012 season. Tichenor was a member of AMLU/OPEIU Guild 322 during his time as a Minor League Umpire. Congratulations to Tichenor on making it to the big leagues!

## Local Union News

# Local 179 Organizes Third Party Benefit Administrator, Ratifies Agreement

In December 2011, Local 179 organized a group of 25 claims processors and customer service representatives who work for a third party benefit administrator, CompuSys, Inc. in Ringgold, Georgia, and these members have now ratified their first collective bargaining agreement!

The employer granted voluntary recognition after the Sheriff of Catoosa County certified in December 2011 that 23 employees had requested representation by OPEIU. Shortly after, the remaining two employees who had been out on leave also signed representation cards, making it a 100 percent representation request. All employees in the bargaining unit have also signed membership and dues authorization cards, making it a unit with 100 percent membership!

Contract negotiations began in January 2012. The employees selected Rita Sanders, Karen Landers and Dana Moore to serve as their negotiating committee.

Primarily at issue were wages, as the employees have not received a pay adjustment in four years, except in 2010, when the employer transferred 2 percent from the employees' 401(k) plan to the employees' wages, calling it a wage increase. Additionally medical benefits had been changed and were significantly reduced, medical costs and premiums were shifted to the employees, and long-term employees are taking home less money today than they were four years ago!

Senior International Representative and Local 2001 Business Representative Faye Headrick assisted Local 179 with the campaign and said, "the employees were on fire! A meeting was held to discuss the possibility of organizing and within one day of that meeting, all 23 employees had signed representational cards. All action was on the fast track after that."

"No one at CompuSys had ever been involved in anything like this before and we didn't know what to expect," said Rita Sanders, negotiating committee member. "We were all just tired of having benefits taken away from us, getting no pay increases, and having no say in how things were going, until someone in our

community recommended OPEIU. We contacted them in November 2011 and were meeting with them within days. We and OPEIU did what needed to be done, and here we are, six months later, with a contract and guarantees of what our benefits and wages will be for the next three years.

"We never expected this to go so quickly and we are very excited to become a part of the OPEIU," Sanders continued. "We are very appreciative of the help we received from Local 179 and the International."

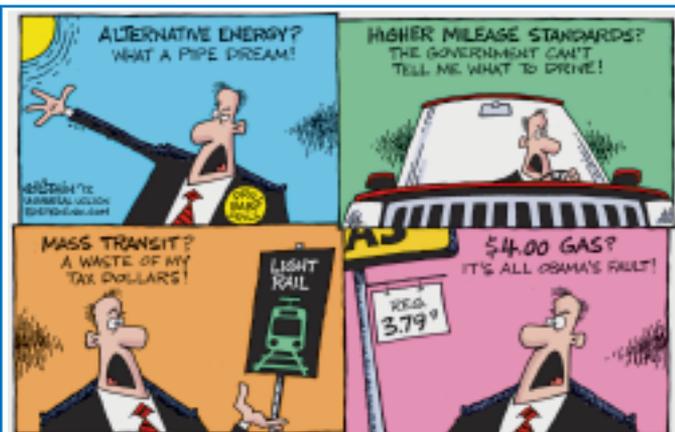


**Local 179 members employed at CompuSys, pictured from left to right are: (front row) Martha Estes, Michelle Uselton, Denise Moody, Lamonica Grissom, Dana Moore, Brandy Vice, (middle row) Angie Bridges, Teresa Moore, Kristi Huges, Tammy Crumley, Rhonda Body, Karen Landers, Crystal Nauman, (back row) Roger Garrison, Shelley McGhee, Scarlet McDaniel, Susan Byous, Kim Hall, Pamela Lambert, Rita Sanders and Jason Freeman.**

## Local 251 Mourns Loss of Former President Rivas

Local 251 mourns the loss of former President Susan Rivas, who died May 14, 2012, at the age of 67.

Rivas served as Local 251 president from November 2000 until her retirement on January 1, 2010. She began working at Sandia National Laboratories in May 1998 as an office administrative assistant in the "floater pool" and she became president of the Local Union just two years later. "Sue was very tenacious when it came to defending members' rights, always taking on labor relations with gusto and confidence," said Local 251's current President Kelley Allen. "Sue always focused on what was right, no matter what the outcome, with her main focus always being fairness. She was a tremendous teacher, mentor, and dear friend to me."



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## Local Union News

# Local 212 Honored for Display of Solidarity During 2011 Lockout!

**L**ocal 212 in Buffalo, New York, has been recognized by the Coalition for Economic Justice for its display of solidarity and triumph during the 2011 lockout at HealthNow New York, Inc., d.b.a. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Western New York (BCBS of WNY).

At an event held on May 10, 2012, in Buffalo and attended by OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney, International Vice President and Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan, and International Representatives Patt Gibbs, Susan French and Gary Nuber, Local 212 was awarded the “Fight of the Year” award. It was recognized for the “contributions it has made in the fight for jobs with justice in Buffalo and Western New York,” said Local 212 President Caroline Muszynski.

During the 12-week lockout, which began April 26, 2011, Local 212 members maintained a highly visible community presence that put constant pressure on BCBS of WNY to end the lockout and return the 390 members to work. As a result, members returned to work on August 1, 2011, following a negotiated company-paid two-week vacation and a three-year contract that included wage increases and a job security provision.

“The message these brave workers have sent to all of our shop stewards and members is the need to be absolutely unified on union proposals and in the face of adverse employer demands,” International President Michael Goodwin said when the members returned to work. “They have demonstrated that solidarity and worker resistance prevails!”

The Coalition for Economic Justice unites labor, faith and community allies to advance sustainable economic development, government and corporate accountability and worker justice.



**The Coalition for Economic Justice presents its Fight of the Year award to Local 212 officers, members of the Executive Board and members of the Union Action Committee Team (uACT). The uACT Team coordinated picketing efforts during the lockout. Pictured at the event are: (left to right) Local 212 Executive Board Member Brenda St. John, OPEIU International Vice President Richard Lanigan, International Representative Gary Nuber, Local 212 President Caroline Muszynski, uACT members Char Brown and Denise Byer, Local 212 Executive Board Member Luis Rodriguez, Negotiating Team Member Roberta Novak, Local 212 Vice President Chanelle Goode, Local 212 Executive Board Member Lynn Brooks, uACT member Janice Segal, Local 212 Secretary-Treasurer Cathy Cohen, International Representative Patt Gibbs and uACT member Donna Amos.**

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## Helicopter Pilots at Bristow LLC Ratify Agreement

**O**il service industry helicopter pilots in the Gulf of Mexico and Alaska, members of Local 107 employed by Bristow LLC, have voted to ratify a three-year agreement covering 235 pilots.

The agreement comes after 18 months of negotiations and was ratified by 84.3 percent of the voting members. The secret ballot ratification vote was conducted by Survey and Ballot Systems. The agreement is expected to be signed soon, and

will be retroactive to March 26, 2012.

The new agreement provides four percent wage increases each year of the contract, for a total of 12 percent over the life of the agreement. Substantial improvements were also made to contract language, making it much easier to understand and interpret, “which we believe will result in fewer grievances in the future,” said Local 107 President Pete Catalano.

“This was a very good negotiation,” Catalano continued. “This is our fourth contract with Bristow, and we’re pleased with the results and look forward to continuing to work with the company to best represent our member pilots.”

Local 107 is affiliated with the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association (PHPA), a council within OPEIU, bringing together its 3,000 helicopter pilots with one voice.

## Three New Contracts at Head Start in Puerto Rico

**T**here is good news from Puerto Rico with three new collective bargaining agreements for OPEIU workers employed at Head Start centers. The agreements cover more than 260 teachers, teachers’ aides, food service workers and their assistants, social workers, parent activities coordinators, nurses and coordinators of children with special needs, among others.

International Representative Iram Ramirez led hard-fought efforts to get these employers to negotiate the three contracts, two of which cover newly organized units.

“After more than two years of negotiations for the Head Start centers in the towns of Luquillo and Rio Grande, we said we would not tolerate further delay. We were able to get the chairman of the company to sit at the negotiating table with us, and after an eight-hour meeting, not only did we sign the agreement for these workers, but we also signed an agreement for workers in centers in the towns of Loíza and Canóvanas. And all the CBAs are excellent

and ensure the terms and conditions of employment for these workers.

“For example, we got the employer to negotiate all the duties and function of workers,” continued Ramirez. “This was a real issue to our members as it was common practice of the employer to send the work-

ers to do tasks that were not part of their classification and/or profession. Similarly, we negotiated a discipline process that contains about ten steps that the employer must follow in order to discipline the workers.” OPEIU has assigned the new units to Local 4873.



Head Start employees rally for a new contract.