



# WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 494



Issue 2, Spring 2006

## Helicopter Pilots Win First Union Contract

**E**mergency medical service helicopter pilots covering a wide area of the United States have voted 395 to 63 to ratify a first union contract with their employer, Air Methods Corporation (AMC), based in Denver, Colorado, reported OPEIU International Representative Paul Bohelski. Professional Helicopter Pilots Association Local 109 reached the agreement that covers 647 pilots in 38 states on February 23. The ratification vote took place by phone and email ballot ending March 31.

The pilots unionized in the fall of 2003; 25 months of negotiations with AMC followed, leading to numerous gains in the  
*(Continued on page 7)*



The Local 109 Pilot Negotiating Committee members are Troy Montanez (RMH), Jeff Stackpole (ARCH), Steve Grace (Mercy Air), Scot Groshong (F/W Division) and Danny McDade (AMC). Not pictured: International Representative Paul Bohelski.

## Christine Page Elected OPEIU Vice President

### Local 174 Elects Officers



Christine Page

**A**t its January 2006 meeting, the Executive Board elected Local 174 Business Representative Christine Page as OPEIU Vice President to serve the balance of the unexpired term of Judy Solkovitz, who has retired. The balance of the term runs to the 2007 Convention.

“I’m very pleased to be able to represent our members on the

Executive Board,” Page said. “I’d like to thank the Executive Board for its confidence in my abilities, and I promise to work diligently on behalf of our members.”

### Local 174 Unanimously Re-elects Page, Other Officers

Local 174 Business Representative Page, President Leslie Guerrero and five members of the Executive Board were re-elected by white ballot, underscoring the members’ confidence in the union’s leadership. A white ballot election means there was no

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## Editorial



### The Labor Movement is Alive and Well!

By Michael Goodwin, International President

As the famous author and satirist Mark Twain once said: “The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated.” This was said in response to news reports that he had either died or was on his deathbed.

Parallels to Twain’s observations could easily apply to today’s pundits who believe that the labor movement has either died or is on its deathbed. This wishful thinking should be discarded because nothing could be further from the truth. The best days of the labor movement are yet to come!

I am very proud of the accomplishments of OPEIU representatives and organizers who are working day in and day out to grow the labor movement. Certainly these dedicated employees of the International Union and Local Unions are not ready to accept labor’s demise. They look to tomorrow to a bigger and stronger labor movement with OPEIU leading the way.

As you read through reports in *White Collar*, you can see that it is brimming with success stories. In this issue alone, you have learned of the victory of 647 emergency medical service helicopter pilots who have won an excellent contract with Air Methods Corporation and the valiant fight of 20,000 hotel workers in New York City against the powerful and mighty to win a new contract providing dignity and respect. New York City union hotel workers are already among the highest paid hotel workers in the United States. And ITPE Local 4873 in Savannah, Georgia, has just completed its great convention boasting a 30 percent increase in membership in just 60 months!

And remember those reports announcing the dedication of the Professional Helicopter Pilots Association’s new headquarters in Daleville, Alabama. PHPA headquarters are part of PHPA Local 102’s new headquarters that was built a short time ago. We also learned of a new building purchased by Local 537 as its new headquarters in Pasadena, California. And Local 100 in Dade County, Florida is planning to move to new offices that it will own rather than rent. Are any of these reports indicative of a dying labor movement? I don’t think so. I believe it is proof that the labor movement is alive and well as we build union halls rather than tear them down.

We are approaching an historic time in our history when the wheel of fortune is going to point our way. You may remember that in 1994, the Democrats lost control of the House of Representatives after 40 years with a disastrous turnover of 52

seats, unprecedented in U.S. history. What’s interesting about that fact is that the Republican Party was ahead in the polls at the time by 6 percent, leading to the landslide. Today, Democrats are leading in the polls by 13 percent!

And, there is a distinct possibility that the Senate will change hands too.

Both of these major events are important because the labor movement is supporting the most important piece of legislation to be advanced since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act in 1935. It’s called the “Employees Free Choice Act,” which will protect workers’ freedom to choose a union. More working people than ever—some 57 million—say they would join a union if they had a chance. Employer harassment, intimidation and coercion in the face of organizing campaigns would be eliminated. In addition to allowing workers the right to freely choose whether to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation, EFCA also provides for mediation and arbitration for first contract disputes and establishes stronger penalties on employers for violating workers’ rights.

As of this writing, the labor movement has won 213 cosponsors of EFCA legislation in the House and 42 in the Senate. Needed for passage are five more votes in the House and nine more in the Senate. We would then have to deal with the possibility of a presidential veto. But I’m not worried about that now. I’m anxious to get the legislation passed and placed on the president’s desk. A veto would only expedite what many of us expect will happen in 2008, when we send the present resident of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue back to Texas—a much needed change!

There are only six months to the November 2006 elections and only 30 months to the big celebration in 2008. As has been said so many times in the past, “the will of workers acting together will never be suppressed.”

I see millions of workers working together in 2006, as they did in 2005, which led to the first percentage gain in membership in the labor movement in five years with the addition of 125,000 new members. We will continue to make similar gains this year, but you can expect extraordinary gains in membership after the passage of EFCA. What we need to do now is to continue to express our beliefs in workers’ rights and work like hell for the passage of EFCA!

## Hotel Members Set Goal for Negotiations

**R**epresentatives of 20,000 hotel members in New York City met as a negotiating committee to set goals for negotiations to renew their contract, which expires June 30, 2006. The negotiating committee consists of 2,700 hotel members, including representatives from OPEIU Local 153, which represents 1,500 office clerical and security employees in the nearly 150 hotels in NYC.

At the Hotel Trades Council's second annual convention, HEAT negotiating committee members, as they are known, discussed the HEAT system – a program designed to communicate with members quickly and effectively. Speakers included Hotel Trades Council President Peter Ward, UNITE HERE President Bruce Raynor, UNITE HERE hospitality division President John Wilhelm and OPEIU President and Secretary-Treasurer of the Hotel Trades Council Michael Goodwin.

Goodwin remembered standing in the same room less than two years ago when the first convention endorsed Proposition One, which raised more than \$25 million for the Hotel Trades Council's Defense Fund. "I don't know if you realize this, but no union in history has ever taken that bold a step in the fight for a contract, and I salute you for it," Goodwin said. He also praised Council President Ward and the union for the great preparation for this year's industry-wide negotiations. "Because of this contract, hotel workers don't have to be among the 'have nots,'" Goodwin said, "but instead, they deserve to be among the 'have mores!'"

Goodwin also reviewed the union's history of winning outstanding contracts and said that, if the membership remains unit-



**Michael Goodwin and Local 153 Hotel Representative Rebecca Pomares meet with members following the contract committee convention.**

ed, this time will be no different. "Stick together and we'll have more!" Goodwin said.

He also assured all HEAT members that they went into this contract fight with overwhelming support. "You have the support of UNITE HERE, you have your own union's support and I pledge to you that you will get all the help you need from OPEIU as well!"

During the convention, HEAT captains and network leaders were also warned to stay vigilant in monitoring the behavior of management during negotiations, looking for any instances where managers violate union members' legal rights under federal labor law. The violations, known as unfair labor practices (ULPs), are designed to threaten and intimidate members and weaken the union.

The union's attorney, Richard Maroko, discussed what these rights are so that HEAT members would be able to spot violations and then distributed ULP reporting cards so all would have the proper reporting method. "Management loves to write up members," Ward said. "Now through the ULP reporting cards, members will be writing up management."

Ward also told the convention that the union had notified the Hotel Association that it would refuse to allow the Hilton Corporation to be part of management's bargaining group. Ward reviewed the Hilton's record of repeated and willful contract violations over the past few years amounting to more than \$2.6 million in back pay awards for members. Hilton, the worst violator of the Union's contract, repeatedly commits the same violations and seems to deliberately ignore fire, health and safety regulations. Hilton also tried to stop 28 HEAT captains from attending the union's convention.

The convention also reviewed the negotiation process, including the procedure for voting on contract proposals and strike pay provisions. HEAT buttons were distributed to network leaders and captains to be given to all members to wear to show solidarity during the negotiations.



**The 2,700-member Contract Committee meets in convention in New York City.**

# Letters to the Editor

## Dear Mr. Goodwin:

You and OPEIU are very kind and generous to give me the \$500.00 grant due to my having been impacted by Hurricane Katrina. It was a moving experience to be presented a check for that amount by Renee Cardone at our recent Clinical Social Work Guild #49 Board Meeting. Renee had mentioned to me that this grant was being considered, but actually receiving it came as a happy surprise. This kind of caring and assistance serves as yet another reason to be proud of being a part of OPEIU.

Sincerely,

**Anne F. Heard, B.C.S.W., D.C.S.W**  
Guild 49, New Orleans, Louisiana

## Dear Mr. Goodwin:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Maurine Hodgson, and I am a member of OPEIU Local 95 located in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin.

I recently read the Winter, 2006 issue (No. 493) of "White Collar," and would like to express my concern in reading the article on page 18 written by Joe Darby of OPEIU Local 459.

Let me first say that I understand Mr. Darby is feeling threatened and feels a need to take a stand for what he believes are his rights to defend benefits he feels he has coming. However, I fully support State amendments to constitutions that ban same-sex marriages. I do not feel using the "White Collar" to say things such as "Please stand with my partner and me and help defeat these mean-spirited and anti-family marriage amendments when they come to your state" helps in any way unite us as union workers.

I am neither mean-spirited, nor anti-family. Quite the contrary, I am VERY MUCH pro-family, and am surrounded by many,



**Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcomed in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: anonymous letters will not be printed.**

**You can also reach us on the Web: <http://www.opeiu.org>**

many workers who also consider themselves pro-family. I have nothing against Joe Darby or his partner, but I do take exceptions to OPEIU becoming a tool for him to use in promoting his agenda, and to slander union brothers and sisters that oppose his views.

I would like your assurance that future articles submitted for publication in "White Collar" are edited so that one group's agenda is neither promoted, nor allowed to attack another person's view of what is "right" or

"wrong." There will be no solidarity in OPEIU if we are forced to accept statements like those made by Joe Darby.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

**Maurine Hodgson**  
Local 95, Wisconsin Rapids,  
Wisconsin

**Mr. Green Lewis**  
OPEIU Vice President

## Dear Green:

Good afternoon, Brother Lewis. Your call this afternoon was both a pleasure and a source of reassurance for those of us at the A. Philip Randolph Institute.

We welcome the news of OPEIU's continued financial support for the work that we do and the contribution that you make as a prominent and outstanding board member.

Would you please pass on our gratitude to Brother President Michael Goodwin for always being there and to your leadership for securing the legacy of A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin.

We would be honored to have each of your area vice presidents, board members and directors pass along this letter of encouragement for affiliation to the A. Philip Randolph Institute, along with their generous financial support to the local membership within their areas of responsibility.

Again, thank you.

In unity,

**Clayola Brown**  
President

A. Philip Randolph Institute

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

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Official Organ of  
**OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION**  
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC  
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**MICHAEL GOODWIN**  
President

**NANCY WOHLFORTH**  
Secretary-Treasurer



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## AFL-CIO Seeks a Diverse Leadership

The 2005 AFL-CIO Convention in Chicago provided an opportunity for labor to celebrate the growing diversity of the movement. The AFL-CIO Executive Council submitted a resolution firmly stating that unions must reflect the diversity of its communities and union movement leadership must reflect the diversity of our members. Resolution 2, "A Diverse Movement Calls for Diverse Leadership," was approved by delegates at the Chicago event. It reflects a long and tireless fight for non-discriminatory economic justice within the union movement.

Fifty years ago, the AFL and CIO merged to form a more united and inclusive movement. This new labor federation worked to pass the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Pay Act of 1963 to protect working women from wage discrimination. Since then, the union movement has spoken out for equality for all people regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, faith, age, sexual orientation, disability or immigrant status.

Amid the positive strides made by the union movement, there was more work to be done. In 1995, the AFL-CIO Full Participation Committee encouraged

increased recruitment and training of leaders and reported on the importance of greater inclusion of people of color, women and young members as representatives of their organizations. A 2004 study by the AFL-CIO's Working Women's Committee found women perceived a lack of commitment among union leaders to advancing women and that increasing the ranks of women labor leaders would require structural changes in union leadership, training, mentoring and accountability measures.

"Diversity in leadership has always been a top priority of OPEIU," President Michael Goodwin said. "We cannot effectively govern if we do not represent the makeup of our membership. We are happy that the AFL-CIO understands the necessity for a diverse leadership as well."

OPEIU, along with the AFL-CIO, is committed to fight for justice in the workplace. OPEIU members and professional affiliates include a very diverse group of workers and professions. From helicopter pilots to public employees, hotel workers to podiatrists, OPEIU promotes, protects and champions the general welfare and rights of workers and independent contrac-

tors. OPEIU is a union that recognizes the rights of women and minorities to fully participate in leadership positions. Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth is a tireless advocate for civil, human and worker rights, along with our local presidents and members of the OPEIU Executive Board.

Resolution 2 says that to live up to the values that fuel our work for working families, to build a stronger union movement and to ensure that union solidarity embraces all brothers and sisters, we must act decisively to ensure diversity at every level and hold our union organizations accountable to diversity standards. For labor to be successful, we must go beyond acknowledging where we fall short and move into full and committed action.

As we work to build a stronger union movement, Resolution 2 asks that we hear every voice and speak for every worker. In our hiring, organizing, representation, outreach and leadership, the union movement must embody our goal of equal welcome and equal opportunity for all.

The OPEIU Executive Board endorsed the AFL-CIO Resolution 2 at its January 2006 meeting, which reinforces the issue as OPEIU policy.

## An Evening of Family Fun

On February 25, Local 30 held its second annual family event "Night at the San Diego Gulls" hockey game. Thanks to Executive Board Member Katie Doyle, and

Vice President Cathy Young, chair of the Events Committee, there was a great turnout for this event once again. The proceeds will be donated directly to the Local 30 Charity Fund.



Local 30 families enjoy the hockey game.



Walter Allen Jr. and wife, Susan, also attend the game, despite her broken foot!

## ITPE Convention Held in Savannah

The Industrial, Technical, Professional Employees Union (ITPEU), affiliated with OPEIU as Local 4873, held its quadrennial convention in Savannah, Georgia, March 27-28, 2006. The convention delegates passed 15 resolutions, which will guide the union for the next four years, and unanimously amended the ITPE constitution to make the union more efficient and promote membership participation in its governance.

ITPE President John Conley chaired the convention, and Secretary-Treasurer John Brenton III, Vice Presidents Elwood Hampton and Ruthie Jones delivered reports to the delegates on various subjects, such as finances, legislative, organizing and servicing. Guest speakers included Congressman John Barrows, Roy Boyd (ITPE Funds Representative), Jim Nelson (Democratic

congressional candidate), Vivian Dwyer (AIL Public Relations Director), Brett Hulme (AIL Public Relations Representative), and Sandra Hamlett (U.S. Department of Labor).

President Conley invited OPEIU President Michael Goodwin as keynote speaker at the convention banquet held at the conclusion of the convention. President Goodwin told delegates that organizing new members is the top priority and that OPEIU and ITPE are developing a membership benefits program to bring new members into the union.

“This affiliation has been very good for both organizations as we work together to provide membership benefits and devise new and innovative organizing programs,” Goodwin told the gathering. He spoke of the new organizing plan for right-to-work states (see box for more information), and how this focus on organizing has already paid great dividends.

Since the affiliation in 2001, ITPE has grown to 13,000 members compared to 10,000 five years ago.

“ITPE member dues continue to be the lowest of any union in the United States,” Goodwin continued, “and your health and welfare plan remains strong. ITPE President John Conley has asked me to serve as a trustee of the ITPE Pension Plan, and I look forward to improved benefits in that plan as well.”

Goodwin also told delegates how OPEIU and ITPE are an integral part of each other. “When Hurricane Katrina destroyed the lives of so many members, the OPEIU and ITPE union members stepped up and paid out \$140,000, most of which was paid to ITPE members. I’m proud the union came together to do this,” Goodwin said.

Goodwin said that ITPE President Conley has also been elected Vice President of the 112,000-member OPEIU.

### OPEIU Organizing in Right-to-Work States

OPEIU is working with ITPE to organize thousands of members in right-to-work states already covered by the contract who have not yet joined the union.

“We are establishing a new program of membership benefits in these states that will be the leading plan in the country,” OPEIU President Michael Goodwin said speaking to delegates at the ITPE convention. “We will provide benefits that will attract new members to the union, such as death benefits, representation before boards and commissions, basic legal services and access to a variety of ‘perks.’”

These benefits will not only be provided to new members, but to all members, both current and new.

“Because we are in newly chartered waters, we need to establish a pilot program first, and I’m pleased to announce that Las Vegas gives this plan the greatest chance of success,” Goodwin continued. “With an increase in membership in Las Vegas of at least 50 percent, we will move to other cities and states, one at a time. It may take from 24 to 36 months to get to your city or state, but we are optimistic that we will get there.

“Long journeys start with the first step, and we look forward to taking that first step in Las Vegas. We already have four contracts with taxi companies in Las Vegas, representing nearly 2,000 drivers. And on April 12, OPEIU and ITPE had an alliance meeting with the Steelworkers to work with them on a united plan in Las Vegas, and we are very encouraged and excited to move forward,” Goodwin said.

“And while we are waiting for this plan to take hold, I want to emphasize the importance of the orientation language in your contracts,” Goodwin concluded. “Orientation takes place when you are meeting with new employees to tell them about the benefits of the union and ask them to join.”



**ITPE Vice President Ruthie Jones addresses the Convention.**



**ITPE Organizing Director Dennis Arrington presents a resolution.**

## Christine Page Elected OPEIU Vice President

*(Continued from page 1)*

opposition and the uncontested candidates are elected to another three-year term.

"I have profound gratitude to the membership for their support of the important jobs we do," Page said. "While we have had many noteworthy successes in the past three years, we definitely have more work to do.

"We take very seriously the threats of losing union jobs, whether it's outsourcing to foreign countries, keeping up with technology, or changing the title to make jobs non-union," Page continued.

Page added that continued support and involvement from the membership will be critically important to the leadership of

Local 174 in the coming years.

"The last several years have been challenging times for organized labor and our industry," Guerrero said. "Yet our mission to serve the membership has never wavered. We deeply appreciate this strong vote of confidence from the membership, and we remain committed to providing quality leadership for our outstanding and dynamic organization."

This is Guerrero's third term as President, while Page has been proudly serving the membership as Business Representative since 1993.

Also re-elected were Vice President Manuel Ortiz, Secretary-Treasurer Soonja Pak, Recording Secretary Marcia Alvarez,

Trustee Raul Rodriguez and Conductor Sylvia Flig. New presidential appointees and unopposed members include Sergeant-at-Arms Alice Gordell, and Trustees Tony Gonzalves and Norman Aguilar.

This is the first time in decades that Local 174 officials have been re-elected by white ballot. Not only does this type of election emphasize the membership's faith in their elected officials, an un-opposed ballot eliminates election costs. Funds are saved by not hiring an independent agency to supervise and count ballots, as well as printing and mailing costs.

The new, three-year term for the Executive Board will conclude in June 2008.

## Helicopter Pilots Win First Union Contract

*(Continued from page 1)*

tentative pact, which will have a duration of 40 months, retroactive to January 1, 2006. The agreement establishes a first-time grievance procedure and an automatic progression of pay scales. It also contains major gains in standardizing pay rates, and a unique incentive based on geographic location. Pilots that live in high

cost-of-living states will receive a proportionate increase in pay. The contract will also establish a new minimum wage that is appreciably higher than the current minimum.

"We are very pleased with this first contract, and it continues OPEIU's campaign to organize all helicopter pilots in North America" OPEIU President Michael

Goodwin said. "These pilots provide an invaluable service and we believe this contract fully recognizes that."

Currently there are 4,000 helicopter pilots affiliated with OPEIU, and the union's Director of Organization Kevin Kistler says there are several other campaigns under way to organize additional pilots.

## Help Elect Labor-Friendly Candidates

### **Support OPEIU VOTE Fund**

**Submitted by Region V Vice President Walter Allen Jr.**

**K**nock, Knock... They say when opportunity knocks the wise person answers the door. If ever political opportunity was knocking at the door of working class Americans, it is now. 2006 will be our year.

With all the bad news we've been hearing lately coming from Washington, DC and the administration, surely the tide is changing. People are starting to see the results of the greed and selfishness that are hallmarks of our government. From the war, to the scandals surrounding those in charge, to the indictments, the arrests, and the jail terms being handed out, to the record breaking bad news on the economy, people appear to have had enough. Hopefully the

next sound you hear will be that familiar refrain "It's time for a change!"

On that note, we need to ask ourselves, are we ready to answer the door that opportunity is knocking on?

2006 can be a very good year for working families as we have an opportunity to take back the House and the Senate, and begin the healing that will bring back the faith people once had in their government. For too many years now, those in charge have gorged themselves at the expense of the hard working people of this country who rely most on the programs for which our government is responsible. Public education, health care, jobs, and paying off the massive debts run up by the current lead-

ership are among the most important issues we face in the years ahead.

So how do we get ready to take back control of the agenda in Washington, D.C. to make certain that the issues of working families are heard and supported? As members of OPEIU we have a distinct advantage—we have strong, focused leadership with the full support of the Vice Presidents across the country. And we have the Voice of the Electorate (VOTE) fund.

The VOTE fund is one way in which we support candidates who support the workers we represent. The candidates we will support for office MUST support the causes of working families and MUST stand up and be heard!

## Why Unions?

By John DeTizio, MAGE Local 2002 Labor Relations Director

Do you ever wonder what this country would look like today if unions didn't exist? I contend that we would reside in a more divided nation, the haves and the have-nots. As my Italian grandmother use to say, "a chi tutto — a chi niente..." "some have too much — some have too little." It's just human nature, as soon as you have a lot, it doesn't seem like a lot anymore, and you need more, more, more. When they asked Rockefeller, "How much is enough?" he said "just a little bit more."

Take a look at the recent report from the Institute for Policy Studies which compared workers wages to CEO compensation in 2004. For every \$1 workers received CEO's received \$431.

A similar study performed by Business Week shows that in the 1990s CEO pay increased 535 percent, while during that same period, worker pay increased 32.3 percent.

Is it a coincidence that in 2001 workers in right to work states earned \$5,333 less than workers in union jobs?

Did you know that right now the average United States CEO makes \$10 million a year while an average entry-level

employee makes \$22,000?

Did you know that one percent of U.S. households now control 38 percent of private wealth?

Did you know that the CEO's of Yahoo, Inc., and XTO Energy, Inc., earned an average annual compensation of \$43 million each from 2002 through 2004? Phillip Purcell, CEO of Morgan Stanley earned nearly that much for years until he was ousted by their Board and given another \$44 million in separation pay.

How much is enough? The "haves" will never have enough and without unions the "have-nots" would not have any.

The unending battle continues. Republicans are cutting the dividend tax and the estate tax. The estate tax, which affects only the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans, was already temporarily rolled back in the 2001 tax bill. Now they are trying to reduce it permanently. Cutting the dividend tax also affects only the wealthiest Americans.

At the same time the unions and the Democrats are trying diligently to raise the minimum wage. The Republicans are adamantly opposed to it.



John DeTizio

My point is this: There are legions of groups that wealthy people pay into that look out for them. I have no problem with that. They have the right to look out for their own. We, too, must look out for ourselves. The middle class — the working families are what make this country great as history and human nature and above evidence shows. Without unions there will be no middle class!

## White Ballot for Local 29

The Officers of OPEIU 29 were elected by white ballot at the February 2006 General Membership Meeting. This is the third time that the majority of incumbents have renewed their term in office. President Michael Goodwin presided over the official installation of officers on April 19.

Congratulations to the newly elected

officers: **President/Business Manager**, Tamara R. Rubyn, **Secretary-Treasurer**, Patricia G. Sanchez, **Vice President**, Geoffrey Gamble, **Trustees**, Rene Steward, Katheryn Denny, Maya Garcia. **Executive Board Members**:

**Hospital Sector**: Jacqueline Dew, Linda Gilmore, Esmeralda Gomez, Alice Robinson, **Insurance Sector**: Holly Carey,

Sharon Clark, Linda Delay, Sheila Wiltz, **Grocery/Trucking Sector**: Isabelle Bromstead, **Trade Union Sector**: Eric Sicneros, **Miscellaneous/Other Sector**: Yvonne Caisse, **Valley Area**: Velma Mason, **South Bay Area**: Carmen Hernandez, **Health & Welfare Trustees**: Tamara R. Rubyn, Carol King, Kelly Gschwend, **Pension Trustee**: Patricia G. Sanchez.

"My friends, it is solidarity of labor we want. We do not want to find fault with each other, but to solidify our forces and say to each other we must be together; our masters are joined together and we must do the same thing."

—Mother Jones



## Four-Year Agreement Reached at LAFCU

**L**ocal 459 and Lansing Area Federal Credit Union (formerly Automakers) reached agreement on a new four-year contract with many improvements for members, including:

- Zero monthly premium co-pay for medical insurance for full time employees
- Part-time employees will receive full medical, dental and optical for \$32.50 per week
- Dental increased from \$1,000 to \$1,500 yearly
- New health care opt out of \$170 per month for all employees not receiving benefits
- New banking procedure that allows employees to roll over 40 hours of Paid Absence entitlement each year
- New 401K match
- New life insurance plan for retirees
- Increase of paid medical insurance during short term disability leaves
- New seniority recognition bonuses of \$1,000 for all employees at 25 and 40 years of service
- Bereavement leaves to include grandparents-in-law
- Training pay doubled from \$1 to \$2 per hour

All step scales are now five years in length; formerly there were seven-year scales. This will automatically allow employees to move to the top of the scale when they reach five years, and represents

an increase of \$3.24 per hour at the top end.

There were also entire classifications moved from Level B to the higher paid Level C. All Collectors, Loss Prevention Specialists and Head Tellers will receive this adjustment, which gives them an additional wage increase of more than \$1,200 per year.

Cost of Living Allowances (COLA), which represent approximately a three percent wage increase per year, will continue. Wage increases of seven percent over the term of the agreement were also gained.

The maximum total COLA plus general wage increases for the life of the contract will be capped at 20 percent of base pay.

The bargaining team members were Kimberly Austin, Clare M. Baker, Pat Bleisener, Pat Trudgen, Kelly Simon, Ginger Van Ells and Steve Van Vleet. They were assisted by Service Representative Lance A. Rhines.

Local 459 represents 110 employees at LAFCU. The agreement was ratified by a vote of 84-6.



**Kelly Simon, Clare Baker and Ginger Van Ells. (Back row) Kim Austin, Lance Rhines, Pat Trudgen, Steve VanVleet and Pat Bleisener.**

## Arbitration Award Reinstates Local 29 Member

**L**ocal 29 was successful in its bid to have a 32-year employee reinstated after first being given no reason for suspension in early 2005, and then being terminated for "falsification of medical records."

The employer failed to show there was good reason for the termination. There was no dispute about what the employee did, the question was whether it was misconduct and if so, whether termination was an appropriate penalty. The employer was obligated to fulfill the requirement of just cause

for discipline of employees contained in the collective bargaining agreement.

It was also determined that the employer violated sections 8(a) (1) and (3) of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRB) and that the employee was unlawfully terminated because of involvement in union activities, such as participating in union negotiating teams and serving as a shop steward. It was ruled that the employee would be reinstated and made whole, meaning they would receive back pay and interest. Congratulations to Local 29!

**Mark Your  
Calendars Now**

**Southeast/Southwest  
Area Educational  
Conference**

**June 9-11, 2006  
Tunica, Mississippi  
(Near Memphis, Tenn.)**



## WASHINGTON WINDOW

It was a rallying cry that rose from hundreds of thousands of people as they marched in Washington, in New York, in Chicago, in the Twin Cities, in St. Louis, in Los Angeles and nationwide, for full rights for immigrants in the U.S.: “Hoy marchamos, manana votamos.” “Today we march, tomorrow we vote.”

Maybe that message will get through to the politicians. Maybe that message will also get through to the House GOP majority. Its anti-immigrant legislation, H.R. 4437, that sent hundreds of thousands of people into the streets on April 10, would make felons not just of undocumented workers but of anyone who helps them live and work in the U.S., including teachers and union organizers.

And maybe that message will get

through to Maryland GOP Gov. Robert Ehrlich and Minnesota GOP Gov. Tim Pawlenty. It got through to Maryland’s Democratic legislature: It overrode Ehrlich’s previous decision, and restored state health care coverage to poor legal immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years.

Will it get through to Pawlenty, who wants to turn local police into immigration agents? 40,000 people marched in St. Paul against that and other anti-immigrant schemes. “Hoy marchamos, manana votamos,” governor. You face voters this year.

Will it get through to Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-Ill.), one of 36 House Democrats who voted for H.R. 4437? He represents parts of Chicago’s Southwest

Side and nearby suburbs. Lipinski made it through the Illinois primary in March, but the city section of his district has a growing Hispanic population. They showed up as protesters April 10 at his district office. “Hoy marchamos, manana votamos,” congressman—in 2008.

Now we have to keep the pressure on: One, to continue the push for true legalization of the undocumented workers, bringing them out of the shadows so that—among other things—we can organize them. Labor law does not cover them. Two, doing the hard work of organizing them. Three, if the GOP-run Congress passes H.R. 4437 and GOP President George W. Bush signs it, defying the law to help the workers.

Hoy marchamos, manana votamos.

## Work and Health

### Over-The-Counter Medications: Are They as Safe as They Seem?

**Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D.**

**Associate Professor of Surgery, The Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NYC  
OPEIU Local 153 Health Fund Medical Director**

It has long been believed that over-the-counter medication must be safe, why else could you buy it without a prescription. But until now, very little thought has been given to the potential problems that could occur if certain of these medications were taken simultaneously. A recent large study of over 3.2 million individuals was done to evaluate exactly this issue.

Researchers for the University of Utah and the pharmaceutical company Pfizer, Inc., found that among the 3.2 million individuals whose medical records were reviewed, almost 12,000 were taking Naprosin (naproxen), and over 38,000 were taking Advil (ibuprofen). The patients who during the same

period took both these drugs, known as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS), were 2.5 to 2.74 times more likely to experience serious GI problems such as ulcers, perforations or bleeding than those who did not take these over-the-counter medications.

When researchers looked at the smaller groups of ibuprofen and naproxen users who also took aspirin, there was even a greater increase of serious problems. Patients taking both ibuprofen and aspirin had a risk of serious GI problems that was 3.4 times higher than patients taking ibuprofen. For the naproxen and aspirin users, their risk was 2 times higher than those on naproxen alone. **Aspirin can significant-**

**ly increase the risk of problems among patients using over-the-counter NSAIDS.**

When one is using more than one over-the-counter product at the same time, it is extremely important that you ask the pharmacist in the drugstore in which you bought the products or your physician if no pharmacist is available, if there is a potential interaction between the over-the-counter medications you are taking. This may very well prevent a serious medical complication, or even worse.

*Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D., P.C. specializes in general surgery/proctology. He can be reached at (212) 396-0050.*

*Lobbyist Corner*

# Administration Budget Will Wreck Havoc on Seniors and Students

**Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis**

Republicans and President Bush are dedicated to chipping away at Medicare and Medicaid. The Medicare health program for the elderly will be cut by \$36 billion over the next five years. The proposed reduction in the Medicaid program is \$4.7 billion. Medicaid is a joint state-federal program that provides health care to the poor. The Education Department budget has a reduction of 28 percent, which eliminates 42 education programs and makes further cuts in others. This administration and the Republican-led Congress are making life harder for seniors who need health care and for students who are trying to find a way to pay for college. This is another example of the disregard for workers and their family concerns in everyday life.

### **A Few Examples to Refresh our Minds:**

- No minimum wage increase since 1997.
- The loss of 2.8 million manufacturing jobs since George Bush took office.
- The shipping by corporations of an estimated 830,000 white collar U.S. jobs overseas by the end of 2006. Some estimates say up to 14 million middle-class jobs could be exported out of the U.S. in the next ten years.
- Private pension programs are being eliminated or reduced.
- Health care for workers and their families is costing much more in co-payments and deductibles.
- Hurricane Katrina victims continue to be without housing, schools, and medical services.

Now is the time for your voices to be heard and your votes to be counted. This is an election year. Your congressman and/or congresswoman and senator will be up for re-election in November. Do you know how they voted? Have you reviewed the voting records on working-family issues?

### **The OPEIU agenda for the 109th Congress is to:**

- Continue to protect Social Security.
- Enact the Employee Free Choice Act.
- Support legislation to protect private pensions.
- Provide an increase in the minimum wage.
- Continue to provide funds for Hurricane Katrina victims.
- Restore funds to Medicare and Medicaid programs.
- Continue to fight for specific legislation important to OPEIU guilds and local unions.
- Support fair and balanced immigration legislation.

### **Take Action — Your Involvement is More Important Than Ever!**

Many people ask—how can I make a difference? Can one voice alone make the president stop his assault on working families, or make Congress protect our rights? It's true that one voice alone is easy to dismiss. But the sound of our voices strongly united cannot be silenced. We must take action together to protect working America. Your involvement is more important than ever! Here's how you can take action today!

Contact your local representatives. Every letter counts. Every phone call can make a difference. If you prefer to make written contact, OPEIU advises you to either mail or e-mail all correspondence.

If you don't know who your House representative is, the Clerk of the House maintains addresses and phone numbers of all Members and Committees: Clerk of the House, US Capitol, Room H154, Washington, DC 20515; phone (202) 225-7000; hours 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

**Your action is needed. Do your part to help yourself and your family!**

# Tragedy Emphasizes Need for Increased Mine Safety

The disaster at the Sago Mine in Tallmansville, West Virginia tragically illustrates the need for increased safety regulations at mines throughout the country. The Sago coal mine explosion occurred on January 2, 2006 and trapped thirteen miners for nearly two days. One miner survived and is now undergoing a difficult recovery and rehabilitation process.

Sago was the worst mining disaster in the U.S. since a 2001 disaster in Alabama killed thirteen, and the worst in West Virginia since a 1968 disaster that took 78 lives.

Among those who died in the Sago mine was George Junior Hamner, 54. Hamner left a heartbreaking note on his lunch bucket for his wife and daughter. (See box at right).

Hi Deb & Sara,  
 I'm still OK at 2:40 p.m. I don't know what is going on between here & outside. We don't hear any attempts at drilling or rescue. The section is full of smoke & fumes so we can't escape. We are all alive at this time. I just want you & Sara to know. I love you both and always have. Be strong and I hope no one else has to show you this note. I'm in no pain but don't know how long the air will last. Tell everyone I'm thinking of them especially Billy, Marion, Will, Bill & Peg. I love you all.  
 Junior Hamner, 1-2-06



## Dreams do come true!

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3/06

## Local 30 Scholarship Winners

The winners of Local 30 Scholarships were drawn at the regular membership meetings held in October in both Los Angeles and San Diego. The awards for 2005 were \$1,000 each, and the winners were: Janis Melzer, Dawn-Marie Tol, Elizabeth S. Rosenthal, Leticia Martinez and Rochelle Carter. Congratulations to the winners!



Janis Melzer

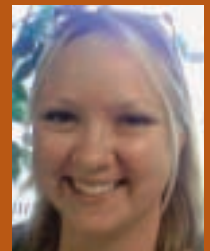


Dawn-Marie Tol



Leticia Martinez

Left, Elizabeth Rosenthal and right, Rochelle Carter



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