



Members at HIP Win Good Wages and Benefits

More than 700 members employed by the Health Insurance Plan of Greater New York (HIP) have won a new three-year contract with good wage increases, an exchange of holidays, a unique option regarding employee health contributions, and an improved dental plan, reported Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan.

For years, members at HIP enjoyed employer-provided fully paid health coverage. This time, however, the company was insistent that all employees pay a portion of the monthly cost to offset the rising cost of providing benefits. The company took this position in anticipation of the implementation of its merger with Group Health Inc. (GHI), which became effective in November 2006. The two companies have merged to form a new company to be known as “Emblem Health.”

Although the employees of both GHI and HIP are represented by Local 153, wages, benefits and working conditions are different. HIP was seeking a shorter term contract with the union to reconcile the differences between the GHI and HIP contracts at the earliest possible time. On the other hand, the union was interested in a longer term contract to allow for the merg-



Outside HIP offices in lower Manhattan, members authorize strike action if no contract agreement is reached. Senior Representative Patricia Hoffman is pictured at far right (blue jacket).

er to be fully implemented and time to evaluate its effects.

The negotiations resulted in the union winning on all of its core concerns. The union won on wages, employee contributions for health care, good wage increases with the exchange of holidays and an improved dental plan and term of contract.

The contract provides a unique option **for employees to opt out** of paying employee contributions for health care.

Employees who elect this option will receive 14 percent in general wage increases as follows:

- Effective 12/1/06—5%
- Effective 12/1/07—4%
- Effective 12/1/08—4%
- Effective 10/1/09—1%

However, employees who elect to pay employee contributions for health care starting in the second year of the contract, of

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Notice to Employees

Editorial



2006—Rewards and Challenges

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The year 2006 has had both rewards and challenges. The highlight of the rewards was the turnover of control in the U.S. Congress from the Republicans to the Democrats. This newfound authority gives the Democrats the opportunity to set the agenda for the first time in 12 years. You may remember that in 1994, the then new Republican Congress set an agenda titled “Contract with America” led by Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich (D-GA), a regrettable program designed to disadvantage many of America’s working families. Issues important to working families such as increases in the minimum wage, labor law reform, fair trade, making prescription drugs more affordable and true Social Security reform, were ignored. Now the Democrats will have a chance to change the agenda so that these issues will be included.

The Democrats were in power in Congress for 40 years and missed many opportunities to fully support the people who put them there in the first place. Those shortcomings were only fully appreciated after they were removed from leadership in 1994—after it was too late! The OPEIU and the AFL-CIO will remind the new Congress that it was your vote, votes of millions of union members and their families, which made the difference in 2006! Labor delivered 25 percent of all votes cast, with a membership of only half that size. We cannot let the mistakes of the previous 40-year leadership by the Democrats be repeated now.

One of the biggest challenges for OPEIU in 2006 was the commencement of the first helicopter strike in the history of the industry. Local 108, in New Iberia, Louisiana, representing 560 helicopter pilots, was forced to strike on September 20, 2006, after more than two years of bargaining. With the realization that the strike was not as effective as expected due to right-to-work laws, the union developed a “new strategy” and called off the strike after 52 days on November 10, 2006. As of this writing, the company has refused to return the striking pilots to work as required by the Railway Labor Act. The union sued in federal court and filed a motion for a preliminary injunction requiring the company to abide by the law.

Another challenge is the ongoing litigation between OPEIU and the Canadian sector. As you know, the Canadians announced their independence from OPEIU on June 20, 2004, just prior to the Convention. The matter has been before the court in

Vancouver, BC since, and the trial is scheduled for October 2007, more than three years later! In addition to all of our issues, the Canadians are suing for one fourth of OPEIU’s treasury, on the theory of ratio and proportional division of funds when an organization breaks up. Their claim is made, notwithstanding the fact that OPEIU paid more than \$10 million in General and Strike Fund monies in excess of per capita received from the Canadian Local Unions over the years. In addition to those funds, the Canadians seem to forget that it was American staff and money that organized many of their groups in the first place.

It is important, however, that we spend less time complaining about the past and start to think about planning for the future. The OPEIU has great plans for expansion, particularly in right-to-work states where a large percentage of employees are covered by OPEIU contracts, but have not joined the union because they don’t have to under state law. There are also several groups where membership is voluntary, such as OMCE (Local 153, New York)

It is important that we spend less time complaining about the past and start to think about planning for the future.

and MAGE (Local 2002, Lansing, Michigan). In response, the OPEIU has initiated a “members only” membership benefit program in specified right-to-work states and voluntary groups. The concept

is to provide a package of benefits for members that are so beneficial that non-members would want to join.

Among the locations selected for the new program is Las Vegas, Nevada, formed under the banner of the “Alliance,” a coalition between ITPE/OPEIU and the United Steelworkers. The Alliance is attempting to organize more than 3,000 taxi and limousine drivers already covered by union contracts. The unions have organized the drivers at ten taxi and limousine companies representing 4,500 drivers, but only 1,500 members. With the new program, we are now approaching 2,000 members, with high expectations that a large number of drivers will join soon.

The program will also be applied in Dade and Broward counties, Florida (GSAF, Local 100), Little Rock, Arkansas (Local 22), Galveston, Texas (Local 27), the state of Michigan (MAGE, Local 2002), Northwestern Mutual Life, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Local 35) and ADP Security Services employees in Virginia (Local 2). We are very excited about the new membership benefits program and look forward to its success!

Best wishes for a happy, healthy and prosperous new year to you and your family!

Local 108 Helicopter Pilots Continue to Struggle

The struggle by helicopter pilots employed by PHI, Inc. in Lafayette Louisiana, members of OPEIU Local 108, continues since the first helicopter strike ever in the industry began on September 20, 2006. The strike was precipitated by the company unilaterally implementing its own contract on August 28, 2006 after more than two years of bargaining. As of this writing, no mutually agreed to contract has been reached, and the striking pilots are still not back at work.

Immediately following the start of the strike, PHI reassigned its management employees and instructors to do the work of the striking pilots. They also employed contract pilots and permanent replacements at premium rates of pay.

The Local 108 bargaining unit is covered by the Railway Labor Act (RLA), which contains provisions different from the National Labor Relations Act. One of those differences allows PHI to offer individual strikers who are willing to abandon the picket line and return to work a "bonus" of \$1,000 for each seven days of work, along with the company's implemented contract. Unfortunately, many of the strikers accepted PHI's offer.

By November 10, 2006 it was apparent that the union needed to adopt "a new strategy." Under the RLA, when a union makes an "unconditional offer to return to work" and terminates its strike, the company is required to return striking pilots to work to open positions for which they are qualified, in order of seniority. The Local 108 Executive Board voted to make that recommendation to the membership at a meeting held later that day. The membership approved the Executive Board's recommendation and voted to make the offer.

Following membership approval, the "unconditional offer to return to work" was delivered to PHI that same day. The company responded on November 22, 2006 with a draft document titled "Preliminary Unconditional Return to Work Agreement" setting preconditions before PHI would accept striking pilots back to work. The preconditions included:

- Returning pilots will be subject to terms and conditions established by PHI, consistent with its business and operational

needs and safety concerns.

- The pilots will be subject to rates of pay, rules and working conditions in accordance with PHI's unilaterally implemented contract of August 28, 2006.

- OPEIU and Local 108 will be barred from calling, sanctioning, condoning, participating in or otherwise engaging in any strike, work stoppage, slowdown, sickout, picketing, corporate campaign activities, or other self-help measures, either individually or collectively.

- The issuance by OPEIU and Local 108 of appropriate clarifications, corrections, and/or retraction of communications to the Securities and Exchange Commission, Federal Aviation Administration, or Congresspersons, media, customers, and others that the OPEIU and Local 108 have contacted in pursuing its corporate campaign against PHI.

- OPEIU, Local 108, and returning pilots will not condone, nor participate in, the harassment, intimidation, or threats of any pilot; nor will they otherwise discriminate against any pilot who continued working during the union-called job action, and that any pilot participating in such activities will



OPEIU and Local 108 sue in Federal District Court in Lafayette, Louisiana and make a motion for a preliminary injunction against PHI (pictured above is the U.S. Supreme Court).

be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- OPEIU and Local 108 will not seek, nor demand, any retribution (financial or otherwise) from any pilot who continued to work, or who returned to work, during the union-called job action, regardless of the pilot's union-membership or agency fee status.

Obviously, the union could not accept such preconditions, many of which are clearly unlawful under the RLA. The company

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Local 109 Mourns Loss of Member

Underscoring the dangers EMS pilots face every day, a member of Local 109 was killed when the air ambulance helicopter he was flying crashed in dense fog about 80 miles east of Los Angeles on December 10, 2006.

Local 109, who represents pilots employed at Air Methods Corp., is mourning the loss of pilot Paul G. LaTour, 46. Also killed in the accident were nurse Katrina J. Kish, 42, and paramedic Jerald W. Miller, 40. LaTour was an experienced pilot who was especially experienced in the terrain and atmospheric features of the High Desert.

The Bell helicopter, operated by Denver-based Air Method Corp.'s Mercy Air Services, was en route to its base in Victorville when it crashed near the city of Hesperia at about 6 pm. It had just dropped off an injured person at a hospital.

Letters to the Editor

Local 30 Members Express Gratitude

Dear President Goodwin:

A note of appreciation to Walter Allen for his diligence and perseverance in completing the call/standby pay increase. I know the negotiations have been ongoing since October 2005 and finalized in July 2006. In discussions with Walter Allen on many occasions to check on the progress of the negotiations, I always received positive feedback.

The call/standby pay increase is long overdue and will bring Local 30 members one step closer to wage parity with all other Kaiser California union members. Thanks again to Walter Allen for all his hard work and commitment in seeing this through.

Brian Ziegler
Radiology Department
Kaiser

We brought this issue to the union's attention as we began the bargaining process last year. Walter knew that we had tried many times to fix this problem and failed. And now we have finally resolved an issue that has hurt Local 30 members since 1995. Good job, Walter.

Marianne Giordano
Local 30 President/Echo Tech
Kaiser Medical Center

For further info about the call/standby pay increase, see story right.



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>

Local 30 Members Celebrate Call/Standby Pay Win

The longstanding issue of substandard wages for call/standby pay has finally been resolved for Local 30 members. After years of being paid just \$4 per hour for all hours spent on call, Local 30 members will now be paid more for their efforts.

"This issue has a long and troubled history for Local 30 members and was a huge priority for us in 2005 bargaining," Local 30 Executive Director Walter Allen said. "When National Bargaining did not resolve the issue, we took it to local bargaining. At that point, with no equity funds to spend on local issues, we were forced to bargain further about call/standby pay after ratification. Finally, our perseverance paid off," he said.

The agreement raised the call/standby pay rate from \$4 per hour to one half of an employee's regular hourly pay, or \$10 per hour maximum effective July 3, 2006. On October 1, 2007 the maximum goes up again to \$12 per hour. All employees affected will also be paid retroactively on all hours spent on call/standby pay status back to July 3, 2006.



Reba Freeman and Walter Caranza, surgical technicians at Kaiser Medical Center, receive the good news about the call/standby pay win.

Labor Jubilant at Democratic Takeover

Riding a huge tide of union votes, leaders of organized labor celebrated the takeover of the upcoming 110th Congress by pro-worker forces, many of them Democrats.

At a November 8 post-election press conference, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney said labor can claim credit for the takeover, since labor provided the winning margin for the Democrats.

AFL-CIO Political Director Karen Ackerman explained that Democrats had a 6.8 million-vote margin in all U.S. House races nationwide, including uncontested races. Of that, she said, 5.6 million came from unionists, their households and their allies.

The unionists' campaigning left the new House with a 233-202 Democratic margin, with one race undecided. That's almost exactly the opposite of the 230-201 GOP edge in the departing, anti-worker 109th Congress. The newcomers include at least one active unionist: Rep. Tim Walz (D-Minn.), a member of the joint NEA-AFT affiliate, Education Minnesota, a high school teacher and an Iraq war veteran.

In the Senate, Democrats went from trailing 55-44, with one pro-Democratic independent, to a 51-49 edge, including two pro-Democratic independents. The closest, last and key victory was Democrat James Webb in Virginia.

Union presidents were all joyful at the results. "The election was a referendum on the Bush agenda and the voters rejected it," Sweeney declared. "Union voters drove a wave that elected a pro-working families

majority in the House and in the Senate," he added.

Ackerman said the volunteers came out in record numbers and gave a top effort. She said there were more than 205,000 of them including 75,000 on Election Day itself. They knocked on 8.25 million doors, made 30 million phone calls and sent out 20 million pieces of information-loaded mail on where candidates stood on workers' issues. The unionists handed out so many worksite leaflets (14 million) that "I lost count," she said.

And they produced big results for worker-backed candidates, Ackerman and pollster Guy Molyneux said. Ackerman had no specific numbers, "We're still analyzing them," she said afterwards, but she estimated unionists and their allies were again 25 percent of the total electorate. That's double the percentage of union members.

"Messages only get through if they're believed and the union message was believed," Ackerman declared. And she also noted that the AFL-CIO and its allies spent much of the final weekend going after "dropoff voters": Unionists who went to the polls in 2004's presidential election, but not the 2002 off-year vote.

Sweeney admitted almost all of the politicians unions supported this year were Democrats, due to the anti-worker agenda

of the GOP-leaning 109th Congress, which returned for a "lame-duck" session on November 13.

One of the few GOPers to get a union endorsement, Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R.-Mo.), won handily. Connecticut unions split between GOP Rep. Rob Simmons and Democrat Joe Courtney; Courtney won.

The union leaders also emphasized that just because the anti-worker GOP majority was ousted on November 7, the work is not done.

"We have no intention of sitting back," Sweeney declared. "We'll keep up our campaign to demand Congress take decisive action" to raise the minimum wage and "give people real power to join unions" by passing the labor-backed Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) and leveling the playing field between workers and management.

Congress also must demand that President Bush "bring the troops home from Iraq rapidly" and "start making a real plan to fight the war on terror," he stated.

"For six years, Bush has pushed an anti-worker agenda that enriches corporations and the wealthy while neglecting—even punishing—working families. The Republican Congress has been complicit in this great national abandonment of worker rights. Yesterday, their rubber stamp was revoked," he concluded.

OPEIU Members Attend AFL-CIO Organizing Conference

Several members of OPEIU attended the AFL-CIO's two-day Organizing Conference in Washington, D.C., on December 8-9, 2006. At the top of the agenda was a campaign and march on the Capitol for the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), a labor-backed bill designed to help boost changes for organizing.

Attending the conference for OPEIU was Local 153's Business Representative Seth Goldstein and Business Representative Myra Hepburn; ITPE Local 4873's Secretary-Treasurer John Bretton and Organizing Director Dennis Arrington; and Local 174's Organizer Lupe Salazar.

Conference participants discussed linking politics to organizing, globalization, building greater organizing capacity within unions, building a constituency for EFCA, and the challenge of organizing immigrants, among other topics.

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Legislative Corner

Now the Work Begins for the 110th Congress

Submitted by OPEIU Lobbyist Robert McGlotten of McGlotten & Jarvis

Democrats now control the U.S. House and Senate, which would not have occurred without your hard work. They now have an opportunity to bring back a government that will address this nation's deep social and economic problems. Democrats must focus on economic justice. The income gap continues to grow wider and wider, jobs are disappearing and new jobs are paying less. The cost of sending our children to school is becoming unaffordable and health care costs are going through the roof. Working families need help today. **THIS MUST BE IN EVERY WORKER'S LETTER** to their member of Congress, Democrat or Republican.

On January 3, 2007 the 110th Congress will begin with new leadership.

Incoming Speaker of the House will be Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Majority Leader of the House Steny Hoyer (D-MD), House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn (D-SC), and Democratic Caucus Chairman Rahm Emanuel (D-IL).

In the Senate, Harry Reid (D-NV) will be the Majority Leader, Richard Durbin (D-IL) Assistant Majority Leader, and Sen. Charles Schumer (D-NY) will chair the Democratic Conference and continue to head the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC).

The new leadership will push the so-called "Six for 06" agenda. That platform focuses on:

- Enacting the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission
- Raising the minimum wage
- Making prescription drugs more affordable
- Moving toward energy independence
- Cutting college costs
- Restoring fiscal responsibility to government

The OPEIU supports the leadership agenda, AND ADDS THE FOLLOWING:

- Raise the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour.
- Restore workers' freedom to form unions: Pass the Employee Free Choice Act and reverse the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) recent ruling that allows employers to deny workers' union rights by classifying them as "supervisors."
- Overturn the ban prohibiting Medicare from negotiating with drug companies for more affordable prescription drugs. Fix the physician payment from Medicare for health care professionals.
- Stop sending good-paying jobs overseas: Reward companies that create jobs at home instead of giving tax dollars to companies that export our jobs.
- Reverse the cuts in student loans made by the Republican Congress.
- Continue to protect the Social Security system.
- Provide increased protection for Defined Benefit (DB) pension programs.

The progress of this agenda will rest with our ability to continue to LOBBY OUR MEMBERS of CONGRESS in our Congressional Districts. This is our opportunity to right 12 years of a DO NOTHING CONGRESS. Let us not forget!

Take Action — Your Involvement is More Important Than Ever!

Many people ask—what difference can I make? 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. 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. The following websites also contain links to congressional directories: <http://www.house.gov/writerep> and <http://www.senate.gov>. You can also access this information at your local library, or call the International Union at 212-675-3210 for a booklet listing of congressional representatives.

Please direct your communication with your Senators to the specific office(s) in question, using the following format: Office of Senator (Name), United States Senate, Washington, DC 20510. You may also phone the U.S. Capitol's switchboard at (202) 224-3121. An operator will connect you directly with the House or Senate office you request.

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

Las Vegas Taxi Drivers Learn More About Advantages of Membership

Scores of taxi and limo drivers in Las Vegas, Nevada gathered October 10, 2006 to learn more about the new “members only” benefits program.

ITPE/OPEIU and the United Steelworkers union have formed an alliance and launched a new campaign to increase membership among the taxi and limo drivers, with its arrival in Las Vegas after months of planning. The “Alliance” will provide membership benefits for taxi and limousine drivers employed by 10 unionized companies in Las Vegas, to build the union and make it stronger. International President Michael Goodwin worked closely with USW President Leo Gerard and ITPE President John Conley to launch the program. Goodwin, Conley, OPEIU Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler and the Assistant to the USW President, Bernie Hostein led the October 10 meeting, along with ITPE Local 4873 Vice President T. Ruthie Jones

and USW Local 711-A President Hussein Abdelgilil.

“This was an historic event,” said Jones. “We had the largest turnout ever for an event held for the taxi drivers in Las Vegas.

“And the program was very well received by the drivers,” Jones continued. “Quite a few drivers signed up on the spot! One of our drivers told me that this was the most fantastic event ever held for them.”

In Las Vegas, the ITPE represents drivers employed by Yellow, Checker, Star and Henderson taxi companies, and the USW represents drivers employed by ABC Union, A-North Las Vegas, ACE, Bell Trans, Vegas Western and Whittlesea. Together, the two unions represent more than 4,000 drivers and more than 1 million employees in the United States and Canada.

“We were extremely pleased with the turnout,” Goodwin said. “It’s apparent that the drivers recognize the benefits of, and are extremely interested in learning

more about “members only” benefits. This is a terrific indicator of how successful this program will be throughout the country.”

The Alliance will provide members of the union with death benefits, disability benefits, legal representation before the Taxi Authority, a Perks national discount card, a Careington health service card, a new mymedicalrecords.com program, scholarships, a free annual towing/service call, AFL-CIO “Union Plus” benefit programs, and much more, at no additional cost to the driver.

“This is the way we’re going to be able to reach out to new members,” Goodwin said. “By offering them real benefits only available through union membership, we’ve found an innovative and effective way to organize.”

For more information about the Alliance program in Las Vegas, visit www.alliancelv.org.



More than 600 taxi and limo drivers meet in Las Vegas, Nevada on October 10 to learn details of the new Alliance membership benefits program.



ITPE President John Conley emphasizes the Alliance benefits program.



Bernie Hostein, asst. to the USW President, listens to drivers' questions.



USW Local 711-A President Hussein Abdelgilil rallies drivers to organize.



ITPE Local 4873 Vice President T. Ruthie Jones addresses the drivers.

Managers Need Protection Now More Than Ever

**Submitted by John DeTizio, Labor Relations Director,
MAGE-OPEIU Local 2002, Michigan**

If there was ever a time when managers and supervisors around the country should seriously consider joining a union for protection, now is the time.

Historically, managers and supervisors in Michigan did not have to worry about being sued individually for violating an employee's civil rights. In fact, in 2002 the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled that supervisors were not individually liable. Specifically, the court ruled that "agents engaging in activity prohibited by the Civil Rights Act (CRA) may not be held individually liable for violating a plaintiff's civil rights." This also applied to a situation where the supervisor or manager neglected to investigate a complaint of discrimination. This was also true under Title VII of the Federal Civil Rights Act where it remains true today. You cannot be sued as an individual agent under the Federal law.

Of course, there remained other dire ramifications for sustained charges of discrimination like discipline and discharge, but at least you could not be sued as an individual under the CRA for your actions or inactions.

That is no longer the case in Michigan! The Michigan Supreme Court has now overruled (JAGER) and determined that the term "employer" includes all of the "agents" or "supervisors" or "managers" of the employer.

In the case of *Elezovic v. Ford Motor Company* 472 MICH 408; 697 NW 2d 851 (2005), the court ruled that the act specifically subjects supervisors to individual liability.

This means that any supervisor in Michigan may be sued by an employee who alleges that the supervisor discriminated against them based on their race, sex, religion, weight, height, marital status, or any other item listed in the Act. Furthermore, a supervisor can be individually sued if made aware of some employee participating in some sort of discriminatory harassment and neglects to act on the complaint.

I would even go so far as to say that a supervisor could very well be sued individually for performing what he/she thought was a thorough investigation into a com-

plaint of discrimination that the complainant determined was not thorough.

Supervisors now may be found liable even if the Department is held harmless. This means that a supervisor's personal assets could be appropriated to pay a damage award that could reach toward \$1 million.

This issue raises grave concerns for a number of reasons.

We all know that, as supervisors, the typical response to issuing corrective action to a subordinate is the subordinate responding with a complaint of discrimination. What is particularly worrisome is that the complainant does not need categorical proof in order to proceed to court and, if they proceed to court, who will represent the supervisor?

Another concern involves the common occurrence of a subordinate simply complaining about peers or supervisors treating them unfairly. At what point should you, as a supervisor, be obligated to investigate the complaint?

I am also concerned that the stakes are now higher for a supervisor who receives so much as a counseling memo if it addresses his treatment of subordinates. A single counseling regarding unfair treatment of a subordinate or unprofessional behavior, like raising your voice, could be used as fodder for an employee to sue the supervisor in the future.



John DeTizio, Labor Relations Director of MAGE-OPEIU Local 2002 in Michigan.

Finally, I am concerned that if this is happening in Michigan, it must be happening or soon will be happening all over the country.

We, as OPEIU members, need to spread the word to our non-unionized friends and neighbors.

If I was a supervisor or manager working in this climate and did not belong to a union, I would want to join one soon! It's not just a matter of organizing to obtain better wages and benefits or to protect your job security anymore. You need to protect what you already have acquired – your savings, your retirement, your children's future!

Perks Card Well Received

The International Union's new membership benefit program in right-to-work states and voluntary membership groups is being well received by the members affected. Local 153 in New York also purchased the Perks Card for its 18,000 members.

The Perks Card is a national discount program providing hundreds of dollars in extra savings on thousands of products through its website. It also saves members money on selected show-and-save retailers such as Linens 'n Things and Applebee's. Also, discounted movie tickets save multiple dollars per ticket. One of the most popular savings is through Overstock.com, where members receive an additional 10 percent discount over and above the traditional low prices.

Local Unions may purchase the Perks Card for their members as a group at the International Union's negotiated group price of \$.25 per month (\$3 per year, a value of \$79.95 per year). Unfortunately, individual memberships are not available.

If your Local Union is interested in Local Union-wide membership, they may contact the International Union for more information.

PHPA Human Factors Safety Conference

The Professional Helicopter Pilots Association (PHPA), which represents more than 4,000 helicopter pilots in 48 nations, held its second Human Factors Safety Conference at the Downtown Marriott Hotel in Memphis, Tennessee on October 27-28, 2006.

The purpose of this forum was to develop recommendations for the recently established International Helicopter Safety Team. Emphasis was placed on developing and evaluating the effectiveness of safety initiatives rather than a review of known problems. The conference was open to individual pilots, as well as operators, manufacturers, customers, and others who were interested in developing strategies to reduce the unacceptable high rate of human factors related helicopter accidents.

“The PHPA Human Factors Safety Conference represents a unique opportunity for both the line pilot community and the industry to address the most cited cause of helicopter mishaps,” PHPA President Butch Grafton said. “This conference included both formal presentations and moderated discussion forums between pilots and other concerned industry participants.

In short, we wanted to know how participants would propose to fix the problems our pilots see daily.”

Seventy-five industry professionals were in attendance for this two-day informational conference.



Pictured left to right are: (standing) Olav Bastiansen, CHC-PA Norway; Troy Montanez, President, Local 109; Tony Cramp, Shell Oil; Butch Grafton, President, PHPA; Steve Rush, President, Local 102; Jorge A. Garcia, Gallegos Mexico; Ken Bruner, President Local 107; Jack Bower, Vice Chairman, IFAL-PA Helicopter Committee; Valerie Godfrey, IFALPA; Glenn Christiansen, Norway Chairman, IFALPA Helicopter Committee; Carlos Limon, Vice President, IFALPA; Paul Bohelski, OPEIU Senior International Representative; Luis Suarez-Lledo Alemany from Spain; (kneeling) Jeff Stackpole, Vice President, Local 109; Bruce Wade, CHL; Bill Blume, Vice President, PHPA; Bill Sykes, Secretary-Treasurer, Local 107.

Ingham Regional Medical Center Technical Unit Ratifies Three-Year Contract

Local 459 members employed in the Technical unit at Ingham Regional Medical Center in Lansing, Michigan, overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract on November 6, 2006.

Highlights of the contract include three percent raises in each of the three years of the contract, longevity bonuses, enhancement of medical leave and a retiree health-care subsidy.

With 97 percent voting yes to ratify the agreement, “that speaks very loudly about how our members feel about the contract,” said Cindy Jeffries, Local 459 Service Representative.

The bargaining team consisted of Chief Steward Roxann Baas, Kerry Miller, Mike Holley, Tamela Beardslee and John Endres. They were assisted by Local 459 Service Representatives Jeffries and Dave Gulvas.



Members of the Local 459 bargaining team pictured from left to right are (standing) Mike Holley, Tamela Beardslee, John Endres, (seated) Roxann Baas and Kerry Miller.

Work and Health

Guidelines to Health: Reducing the Risk of Cancer with Healthy Food Choices and Physical Activities

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**

The American Cancer Society publishes Nutrition and Physical Activities Guidelines to serve as a general plan for its organization to affect the dietary and physical activities of Americans. A national panel of experts in cancer research, prevention, epidemiology, public health, and policy develop the Guidelines, published every five years. As such, they represent the most current scientific evidence related to dietary and activity patterns, and cancer risk.

For the great majority of Americans who do not use tobacco, weight control, healthy dietary choices, and levels of physical activity are the most important modifiable determinants of cancer risks. Evidence suggests that one-third of the more than 500,000 can-

cer deaths that occur in the United States each year can be attributed to diet and physical activity habits, including overweight and obesity, while another third is caused by exposure to tobacco products.

The recommendations for individual choices include maintaining a healthy, relatively constant weight throughout your lifetime; for long-term success, change eating habits rather than just dieting; balance caloric intake with physical activity; and avoid rapid swings in weight. Adopt a physically active lifestyle. One should exercise rigorously for not less than 45 minutes, 5 times per week. Consume a healthy diet with the emphasis on foods derived from plant sources. Eat five portions of fruits or vegetables a day. Choose foods made from

whole grains in preference to those made of refined, bleached flour. Limit consumption of processed and red meats. Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages to no more than one drink per day.

Following these recommendations is not a guarantee of a disease-free life, but will certainly maximize the number of years that you will live without cancer, heart disease and stroke. Making these small efforts today may very well prevent you having to suffer a painful, debilitating disease, and allow you to enjoy a healthy full life for as many years as your first-class genetics will deliver.

Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D., P.C. specializes in general surgery/proctology. He can be reached via email at jsfmd@aol.com.

**For more
information
about the
OPEIU,
visit our
website at
www.opeiu.org**

At Your Service

From financial tools to entertainment treats, from health benefits to educational opportunities, take advantage of the wide range of OPEIU Union Plus discounts and services available to union families.

Financial Savings

Save on **personal loans, insurance, tax preparation and legal service**. Get **FREE credit counseling** and budget advice. Use the **Union Plus Credit Card** with strike skip payment option and a layoff helpline.

Travel Discounts

Enjoy **discounted travel adventures** through **Worldwide Vacation Tours**. Save on **union cruises** on Norwegian Cruise Lines. **Book flights**, reserve hotels and get union discounts on vacation condo rentals and more through our **Travel Center**. Save up to 25% on car, van or SUV rentals with **Avis** and **Budget**.

Health and Well Being

Save an average of 18% on **prescription drugs**. Reduce out-of-pocket expenses on **dental and vision care**. Take up to 60% off membership in more than 1,500 **health clubs**. Get **Accident Insurance** at no cost.

Education Services

Cut costs with a **Union Plus Scholarship** available to union members, spouses and dependent children. Access additional college scholarships, **education loans** and get **free advice** from a financial aid counselor and walk through the "go to college" process at the **College Planning Center**.

Home Benefits

Save on a **mortgage loan** designed for union families—featuring strike, layoff and disability assistance. Get **heating oil and moving discounts**. Get connected with discounts on **Cingular wireless service, Dell computers and Internet service**.

Everyday Savings

Save up to 10% on **quality union-made clothing**. Save 25% on **veterinarian services** and 10% on **Union Plus Pet Insurance**. Take 15% off **flowers** and get low prices on selections at **Powell's Bookstore**, the largest unionized internet bookseller.

Count on your union for a full plate of benefits.

Entertainment Savings

Save up to 40% on **movie tickets**. Get discount **DVD rentals** at Blockbuster. Save up to \$15 per person on **theme parks** across the nation. Get discount admission to **Broadway shows, sporting events and museums** in selected cities.



To learn more about the benefits and savings available to you visit,

www.UnionPlus.org

OPEIU-AtbusSrv Ad 12/06

Members' Children Enjoy Summer Camp

A number of winners of the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Scholarship Fund have written to express their deep gratitude for their awards, and some have even sent pictures! Below are a few of those letters.

My son, Gregory Allen, had a glorious time at the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Summer Camp.

He arrived safely in St. Louis, Missouri on Saturday, July 29, 2006 in the morning and returned home to Detroit, Michigan on Saturday, August 5 quite excited about this great opportunity.

I thank you and all involved in this wonderful chance to show my son new and exciting things as a 13-year-old young man. He learned about the OPEIU and was able to bring information to me regarding the union and its operations. He received lots of 'freebies' provided by the union as well and, of course, had an eventful week full of fun and delicious meals.

**Sincerely,
Michelle Hood
Local 42
Detroit, Michigan**

•••••

I write to you today for several reasons. I wanted you to have a copy of a letter that my son Austin Ramos wrote to Paul Rainsberger regarding his experience at the 2006 Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Summer Camp. After reading it I think you will agree that his experience was definitely a positive one.

I also wanted to personally say "thank you" for giving my son the opportunity to spend the summer at such an awesome camp. From the time that he stepped off of the plane to the day he returned, Austin had so much to say, so much to tell me. He said that the last night of camp was actually sad because everyone realized they were each going back to their part of the country and they wouldn't see each other again. Many of the kids have been maintaining contact via e-mail etc, but it is both amazing and gratifying to see a group of kids bond together so quickly over such a short period of time.

In closing, I just wanted to say that I hope that this program through the University of Missouri will continue for many years to come. I'm not sure if its true

value will ever be known. Thank you for providing my Austin with such a memorable experience.

**Sincerely,
Norrice VanCamp
Local 42
Dearborn, Michigan**

•••••

I am writing to thank you, OPEIU, and the University of Missouri for one of the most fun and educational weeks of my summer. Nowhere else could I learn about the Union and have so much fun. There is also nowhere else you could meet so many different people from all over the country. They all have a story that related to where they are from. Nowhere else could you learn firsthand about so many places and people. I learned a lot of things that will help me in life. Some examples are that you can't get fired for starting a union. Another thing that I learned about was that families can't live on minimum wage. I also learned not to ask a farmer about a three-legged pig. By the way, that's a funny story; I still laugh at it.

I hope that the OPEIU and University of Missouri will continue the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Summer Camp. It has helped many kids to learn and see new things. It was a great learning experience and will help me when I am one day part of the Union. I can only hope that I will be able to send my kids there. Oh, I am sorry this is kind of late; I have not been home in



Austin Ramos and Dan Carter, the dog.

about three weeks so I hope you will forgive this delayed letter. Thanks again.

**Sincerely,
Austin Ramos
Dearborn, Michigan**

•••••

I am Maureen Mattiacci's sister, Chris Wild. My son, Kevin, attended the OPEIU Camp recently. I wanted to personally thank you for allowing Kevin the opportunity to attend this camp. He so much enjoyed being there for the week and I know he greatly benefited from this experience.

Kevin will also be contacting you but I wanted to express my thanks and appreciation as well.

**Best regards,
Chris Wild
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**



OPEIU sons and daughters enjoy their stay at the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Summer Camp in August 2006 in Missouri. If you'd like to join them this summer, apply for a scholarship now. See page 13 for application information. Pictured are (left to right, back row to front row), Jesse, Marvin, Lacey, Veronica, Jordan, Annabella, Austin, Nicole, Ramsey, Suzie, Joseph, Kevin, Bob, Justine, Sarah, John, Greg, Matt, Delshawn, Reza, Marquita, Brandon, Delron, unidentified, Page, Dave and Paul.

Congratulations to OPEIU Scholarship Winners

OPEIU is pleased to announce the winners of the 2006 Howard Coughlin and John Kelly scholarships. Congratulations to all our deserving winners!

Howard Coughlin Scholarship Winners



Hannah Pokock
Local Union 2
Region II
Winner at Large



Nicolas A. Dallas
Local Union 107
Region IV
Winner at Large



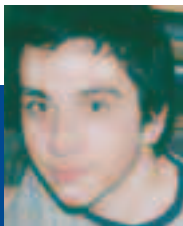
Andrienne E. Bartz
Local Union 393
Region VII
Winner (Part-Time)



Kelly M. Rankin-Gomez
Local Union 512
Region VII
Winner (Part-Time)



Jeffrey Mensch
Local Union 153
Region II
Winner



Veronica A. Canilao
Local Union 29
Region V
Winner



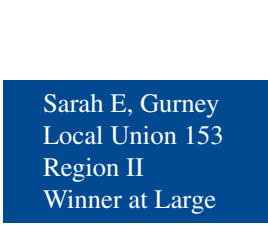
Annabelle L. Fisher
Local Union 23
Region VI
Winner



Michael D. Shaw
Local Union 153
Region II
Winner at Large



Jessica L. McGauley-Jacobson
Local Union 95
Region VII
Winner (Part-Time)



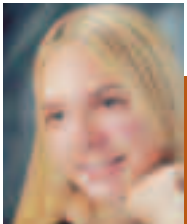
Sarah E. Gurney
Local Union 153
Region II
Winner at Large



Jingshing Wu
Local Union 39
Region VII
Winner



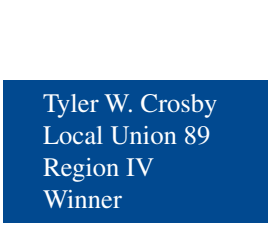
Lisa E. Dumkow
Local Union 73
Region III
Winner



Christopher M. Luken
Local Union 98
Region VII
Winner at Large



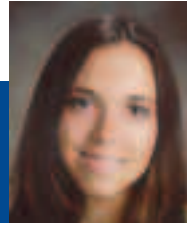
Mamadou Sy
Local Union 32
Region II



Tyler W. Crosby
Local Union 89
Region IV
Winner



Ashley N. Kidd
Local Union 459
Region VII
Winner at Large



Maura McPeak
Local Union 153
Region II

John Kelly Labor Scholarship Winners



Mamadou Sy
Local Union 32
Region II



Maura McPeak
Local Union 153
Region II

Apply Now for OPEIU Scholarships!

In the last issue of *White Collar*, the scholarship application form did not result in readable faxed copies. If you applied for a scholarship application using the form printed in the Fall edition of *White Collar*, please fill out this form and reapply immediately. You will then be sent an application. We apologize for the inconvenience.

It's time again for all members, associate members and their dependents to apply for OPEIU scholarships! Applications are now available for the John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund, the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund and the Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Scholarship Fund. The application deadline is March 31, 2007, so don't delay!

Applications can be obtained by visiting OPEIU's web-

site, www.opeiu.org or by returning this coupon to: Nancy Wohlforth, Secretary-Treasurer, OPEIU Scholarship Applications, 1660 L Street, NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036, or **via fax at (202) 347-0649**. For more information about the scholarships, please visit our website at www.opeiu.org.



Name of Member _____ Local Union No. _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email _____

Fax _____ Phone (H) _____ (W) _____

Please send me the following applications:

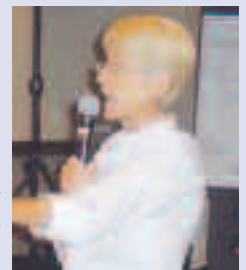
- John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Fund
- Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund
- Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Scholarship Fund



Union Educational Specialist Paul F. McCarthy leads instruction at OPEIU Area Educational Conferences held in the various Regions in 2006.

OPEIU Educational Conferences Held

OPEIU members throughout the country attended Area Educational Conferences to discuss "Building Local Union Power," facilitated by Union Educational Specialist Paul F. McCarthy. Members also learned to improve their skills on "Contract Language Interpretation" along with presentations by OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth on Secretary-Treasurer training, which included new Department of Labor reporting requirements.



Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth addresses the conference.

Notice To Employees Subject To Union Security Clauses

This Notice is for all employees working in the United States under an OPEIU contract containing a union security clause which requires, as a condition of employment, that an employee pay dues or fees to the Union. The obligation stated in this Notice is the only obligation under such clause regardless of the wording of the clause. Individuals who are members pay dues, while individuals who are non-members pay equivalent fees. These dues or fees, which are authorized by law, are your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your coworkers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process and thereby be obligated to pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process.

Only if you are not a member of the Union or if you resign your membership, and in either case, file an objection to the funding of expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process, may you pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. However, if you resign your membership, the many rights and opportunities available to Union members will not be open to you. For example, if you resign your membership you will no longer be able to:

- Vote on the terms of your contract;
- Participate in strike votes;
- Participate in the development of contract proposals;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as an officer of your Local Union;
- Nominate, vote for, or serve as a delegate to the International Convention; and
- Enjoy discounts and other benefits available only to members, including eligibility for OPEIU scholarships for you and your family.

Individuals who are employed by public employers in the states of New Jersey and Minnesota are covered by the demand and return system applicable to them and are not covered by this procedure. Other individuals who elect to be nonmembers may object to funding expenditures which are not germane to the collective bargaining

process. Expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process ("chargeable" expenditures) represent that portion of the Union's expenditures devoted to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievances, arbitration, and other matters affecting wages, hours and other conditions of employment. Examples of "chargeable" expenditures include: the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers in regard to work-related issues; handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure; and Union administration.

Examples of expenditures not germane to the collective bargaining process ("non-chargeable" expenditures) include: expenses made for community services; for political purposes; for certain affiliation fees; and for benefits available only to members and their families. The fee reduction will represent these non-chargeable expenditures. The International Union's Voice Of The Electorate fund ("VOTE"), is an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations and contributes to political candidates who support the needs of working men and women. No money received from dues or fees goes to the VOTE fund. Accordingly, the VOTE fund is not considered in the calculation of the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses.

Individuals who choose to file an objection will receive a rebate of their fees equal to the percentage of the Local Union's expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses. The Local Union's expenditures include those amounts it remits to the International Union as per capita payments. In determining the Local Union's percentage of non-chargeable expenses, the percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union is applied only to the Local Union's per capita payments to the International Union. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective starting with the month of October 2006, and continuing until a new percentage is issued, is 17.17%. The major portion of a Local Union's expenditures is for items other than per capita to the OPEIU. Studies

show that the final percentage of rebate for non-chargeable Local Union expenditures ranges between 0% and 8%.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are not germane to the collective bargaining process must file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L Street, N. W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, Attention: Nancy Wohlforth, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include the objector's name, home address, Social Security number, employer, job title, department, work location, local union number, and business telephone number.

In order for an objection to be recognized at this time, it must be postmarked during the month of June, except that new hires who choose not to join the union may also submit their objection postmarked within thirty (30) days of being compelled to pay dues or fees to the Union or within thirty (30) days of the new hire's receipt of a new employee letter from a Local Union, and except that newly resigned members may also submit their objections postmarked within thirty (30) days from the receipt by the Union of the resigning member's letter of resignation. All objections must be renewed each year in writing and all renewed objections must be postmarked during the month of June. All objections will be effective on the first day of the month following the month in which the objection was received by the Union.

In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, an objector may challenge the International Union's and/or the Local Union's classification or calculation of expenditures before a neutral arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Any challenge a nonmember makes may be coordinated or consolidated with other challenges to the Local Union or International Union determinations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenges may also be coordinated or consolidated with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union classifications or calculations.

Challengers must notify Nancy
(Continued on next page)

Notice To Employees Subject To Union Security Clauses

(Continued from previous page)

Wohlforth, Secretary-Treasurer, Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, in writing, of any challenge he or she wishes to make through this arbitration procedure. Such notification must be received by the Secretary-Treasurer within thirty (30) days of the challenger's receipt of a letter from the Local Union informing the challenger of the amount of the rebate, the basis for the calculation, and the internal procedures for filing a challenge. That challenge should specify which classifications and/or calculations of the International Union and/or Local

Union are being challenged.

The Unions shall bear the burden of justifying their classifications and calculations. If a hearing at which the parties or witnesses may be present is held by the arbitrator, it will be held at a location most convenient to the largest number of involved challengers. The cost of any arbitration proceedings will be paid for by the Unions. However, a challenger will have to pay his or her own lost time and travel expenses, and the fees, costs, and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once a written challenge is received from an objector, the Local Union will place an amount equal to the challenged

portion of the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. It shall remain in that account until the arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures, the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned by that portion while in the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All objectors in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay the adjusted fee amount determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves the Unions' classifications and/or calculations, the escrowed money and interest will revert to the Local and International Unions.

Local 108 Helicopter Pilots Continue to Struggle

(Continued from page 3)

refused to relinquish its preconditions, and the union was forced to sue in federal court, concurrently making a motion for a preliminary injunction for the court to order PHI to comply with the law and return striking pilots to work in open positions for which they are qualified, in order of seniority.

In response to the union's motion for a preliminary injunction, the court ordered "supervised mediation" between the parties, facilitated by Magistrate Judge C. Michael Hill, which was held on December 14 and 15, 2006 in Lafayette, Louisiana. The court supervised mediation did not produce any positive results. Therefore, the motion for a preliminary injunction will go forward to a formal hearing scheduled for January 17 and 18, 2007 before Federal District Court Judge Rebecca F. Doherty in Lafayette.

The strike has had a negative financial

effect on the company. In government filings, the company reported nearly \$4 million in expenses during the first ten days of the strike for the period ending September 30, 2006. Additional financial information on the effects of the strike will be made public when the company files its fourth quarter report for the period ending December 31, 2006, expected in early February 2007.

Local 108 President Capt. Steve Ragin said: "We remain optimistic that justice will prevail and that the rights afforded to striking pilots under the RLA will be complied with by PHI through a court order. Despite the many challenges faced by the pilots, they remain strong and clearly recognize the need to continue to fight for renewal of the contract."

International President Michael Goodwin said: "We will continue to fully support Local 108 members in their struggle for justice and pursue their cause

through the courts as expeditiously as possible. We will be at their side at every moment, until a collective bargaining agreement is achieved."

Director of Organization and Field Services, Kevin Kistler, monitored the negotiations and strike, and participated in Local 108 membership meetings.

Working with the pilots throughout this ordeal is Senior International Representative Paul Bohelski, who has worked tirelessly to ensure that the strike lines were maintained and regular communications were established among the pilots to fully inform them every step of the way.

The Local 108 Executive Board consists of Steve Ragin (President), Mike Dorsett (Vice President), Jack Bower (Secretary-Treasurer), and Trustees Mel Saylor, Mark Hardeman, and Larry Getchell.

Further details on this struggle will be reported in the next issue of *White Collar*.

NLRB Declares Workers Could Be Supervisors

By a party-line 3-2 vote, the Bush-named GOP majority on the National Labor Relations Board ruled October 3, 2006 that workers could be supervisors, with no labor rights. It did so by broadening the definition of "supervisor." The immediate impact was on nurses, where up to 843,000 of them could be arbitrarily declared supervisors and deprived of workers' rights. Overall, between 8 million and 34 million workers

could be affected. Union leaders blasted the ruling as outrageous.

International President Michael Goodwin said many OPEIU local unions took preemptive action by negotiating contract language in anticipation of the ruling. He cited Local 112 in Pennsylvania and Local 22 in Arkansas as examples. He also stated that OPEIU will work with other unions to do everything possible to reverse this ruling.

Members at HIP Win Good Wages and Benefits

(Continued from page 1)

\$7.50 per month (single), \$16.25 (employee and child), \$18 (employee and spouse), and \$21.25 (family) will receive 16 percent in general wage increases as follows:

Effective 12/1/06—5%

Effective 12/1/07—5%

Effective 12/1/08—5%

Effective 10/1/09—1%

The additional 2 percent in general wage increases for employees who elect to pay employee contributions for health care more than compensates for the amount of the employee contributions referred to above. The average employee at HIP earns \$962 per week.

The exchange of three holidays to bring HIP in line with GHI—Election Day, Columbus Day, and Veterans Day—for two “special days” and a 5 percent general wage increase in the first year settled the holiday issue.

The employees also won an improved employer-provided fully paid dental plan, “GHI Preferred” with an option to buy up to a better plan.

Finally, the three-year contract was a huge victory for the employees who will now have the time to study the effects of the merger and get prepared for the 2009 negotiations.

None of these good wages and conditions would have been possible without the full support of the negotiating committee and membership. Senior Representative Patricia Hoffman led the effort to activate the members and join in collective activity to send the message to the employer that

the employees were united. She also organized letter-writing and message-sending activities to the president of the company and the Board of Trustees. The highlight of these activities was a rally outside the windows of HIP where hundreds of members visibly demonstrated their support for a strike if negotiations failed.

Local 153 counsel Bruce Leder joined Hoffman in the negotiations and played a critical role in its success. There were nearly 50 negotiating sessions culminating in a session, which started on Tuesday, December 12 and ended on Wednesday, December 13, followed by a membership meeting after work on the 13th with none

of the negotiators getting any sleep for 33 hours. The parties were assisted in negotiations by Federal mediators provided by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The negotiating committee consisted of Chief Shop Steward Donna Zappasodi (Marketing unit) and Aura Almonte (Clerical unit), both of whom are members of the Local 153 Executive Board, and Beverly Blanco, Maribel Lopez, Ruben Ortiz Jr., Zenobia White, Tasheba Petgrave, Thijuana Booth, Lisa Smith, David Ettenberg, Aida L. Pagan, Nancy Flores, Wanda Jackson and Suzette Vierra-Peele.

The contract expires on November 30, 2009.



Members at HIP vote to approve new contract.

Printed in USA



AFL-CIO-CLC