



WHITE COLLAR

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

No. 506



Issue 2, Summer/Fall 2009

President Obama Tells AFL-CIO Convention Delegates: “We Cannot Afford to Go Back – We Must Move Forward”

On September 15, 2009 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, President Barack Obama addressed the AFL-CIO Convention. The following are excerpts from President Obama’s speech:

Being here with all of you is a reminder of what we’re trying to do in Washington and why I’m there in the first place. Because one of the fundamental reasons I ran for President was to stand up for hardworking families; to ease the struggles, lift the hopes, and make possible the dreams of middle-class Americans.

Brothers and sisters, when hardworking Americans succeed — that’s when organized labor succeeds. And when organized labor succeeds — that’s when our middle class succeeds. And when our middle class succeeds — that’s when the United States of America succeeds.

And the fundamental test of our time is whether we will heed this lesson; whether we will let America become a nation of the very rich and the very poor, of the haves and the have-nots; or whether we will remain

(Continued on page 12)



Photo credit: Bill Burke/Page One

President Barack Obama addresses the AFL-CIO Convention on September 15, 2009.

OPEIU Mourns Loss of Ed Darcy Sr.

OPEIU is mourning the loss of Ed Darcy Sr. who passed away on July 8, 2009 while on International union business in New York. Brother Darcy served as Regional Director of OPEIU for the State of Florida and as Senior International Representative.

Ed Darcy Sr. came from a strong labor family with both his mother and father

serving as union activists during the 1940s. After serving in the U.S. Air Force, Darcy worked for Pan American World Airways and in a short period of time became a shop steward in TWU, Local 500, representing employees at Miami International Airport. In the late 1970s, he was employed as a supervisor for Metro Dade County.

(Continued on page 4)



Ed Darcy Sr.

INSIDE



3
5

Trumka Elected
AFL-CIO President

GHPA Certified

8
16

Area Educational
Conferences

Local 2 Victory

Editorial



A Salute to the NAACP on Its 100th Anniversary of Fighting for All of Us!

By Michael Goodwin, International President

Happy birthday to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)! This extraordinary organization is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, and we are proud to say that the head of its New York chapter, Dr. Annie B. Martin, is an OPEIU member.

The NAACP was founded in 1909, after a thwarted lynching in Springfield, Illinois. A wealthy liberal, William English Walling, was stunned this kind of activity could take place in the very town that was the home of Abraham Lincoln. Walling contacted a multi-racial “Who’s Who” of reformers, including W.E. DuBois, Lincoln Steffens, Jane Addams and Ida Wells, and the new civil rights organization was founded in New York on Lincoln’s birthday, February 12, 1909.

The first meeting of the organization was also held in New York, at Cooper Union. Its immediate goal was to stop the lynchings. But its long-reaching goal was to have federal law and society itself recognize the equality of all people.

The NAACP had its first major victory in 1918, when, after it engaged in a relentless campaign, it convinced President Woodrow Wilson to make a public statement against lynching. Two years later, the NAACP took a bold step and held its national convention in Atlanta, Georgia, a stronghold of the Ku Klux Klan. At the same time, the NAACP raised money to take out large ads in major U.S. newspapers to educate the public about discrimination in schools, the workplace, and public establishments.

One of the proudest moments in the NAACP’s history took place 70 years ago, in 1939. Black opera and spirituals singer Marian Anderson was barred from singing at Washington, D.C.’s Constitution Hall by the venue’s owner, a conservative civic organization called the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). The DAR banned Anderson because she was black, but the move backfired, spawning outrage among many in the entertainment community like conductor Arturo Toscanini and violinist Isaac Stern, as well as people in the political arena such as Eleanor Roosevelt, the nation’s First Lady. Mrs. Roosevelt resigned from the DAR and, with the help of the NAACP, the Anderson concert was moved to the

Lincoln Memorial. It drew a live audience of 75,000 and millions more on the radio.

In the 1940s, the NAACP began using the courts to seek redress for the discrimination suffered by blacks. In 1946, the NAACP was the winning plaintiff in the case *Morgan v. Virginia*. In a historic ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down all states’ laws that sanctioned segregation in facilities involved in interstate travel by train or bus. Although the decision did not address all forms of segregation, it was a major step in the civil rights struggle.

Every high school student in the U.S. knows the significance of the 1954 Supreme Court ruling called *Brown v. Board of Education*. The case was brought to the courts by the NAACP and its lead attorney, Thurgood Marshall, who was later appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court by President Lyndon Johnson. This decision dealt with segregation in public schools, which many officials explained away as “separate but equal.” But in the Supreme Court’s majority decision Chief Justice Earl Warren wrote, “We conclude that the doctrine of ‘separate but equal’ has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal.”

And, as many of you know, the NAACP was at the forefront of the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s. The organization’s first field director, Medgar Evers, paid the ultimate price for his involvement with the NAACP when he was gunned down in the driveway of his home in 1963. It took more than three decades to bring his assassin to justice.

There are obviously many other examples of the contributions made by the NAACP in the fight for justice and equality, including its strong and inspiring leadership in the successful effort to end apartheid in South Africa.

We proudly salute the NAACP on its 100th anniversary. It is an organization with a glorious history of accomplishment. More than any other group, the NAACP helped bring America from a country that treated African Americans as second-class citizens, to a nation that has elected its first African-American President. While there are still forms of discrimination evident in the U.S., it is encouraging to know this extraordinary organization is still here to fight for equality.

Trumka Elected AFL-CIO President

**Goodwin, Wohlforth
Re-Elected Vice Presidents
of Executive Council**

Delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention unanimously elected Richard Trumka to serve as President of the AFL-CIO, following the retirement of current President John Sweeney. Also elected at the Convention held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in September 2009 were incumbent Arlene Holt Baker for Executive Vice President and Liz Shuler for Secretary-Treasurer. All three were endorsed by the OPEIU.

OPEIU President Michael Goodwin and Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth were also re-elected Vice Presidents of the Executive Council. Goodwin has served on the Council since 1995, and Wohlforth since 2005.

“We are pleased that the delegates have elected our candidate, Richard Trumka, for the AFL-CIO’s top leadership post,” said President Goodwin. “His track record as head of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and as Secretary-Treasurer of the AFL-CIO is clear evidence of his ability to lead America’s labor movement.”

Goodwin added that Trumka has long been a friend of OPEIU and its members. “We have called on Rich in the past to assist us in initiatives involving OPEIU or one of its Local Unions, and he has answered that call every time! He has proven repeatedly that he understands the needs of working families. He appreciates the strong tradition of union solidarity, while at the same time he strives to bring innovation to the labor movement. Workers could not ask for a more determined advocate.

“We believe Richard Trumka is the best person to lead America’s labor unions. OPEIU looks forward to working with Rich to further the interests of our nation’s working families,” Goodwin concluded.

Trumka, who served four terms as AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer, has been a strong and powerful voice for workers all over North America. He was first elected to the position in 1995 as part of an insurgent campaign to reinvigorate the American labor movement and has continued that level of energy ever since.

AFL-CIO Convention Focuses on Key Issues

In addition to the elections, the AFL-CIO Convention focused on some key issues facing the labor movement today, including health insurance reform and the Employee Free Choice Act, as well as the importance of diversity within our leadership. The Convention also featured some high-profile speakers, including President Barack Obama and Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA).

Committees, staffed by leadership of the AFL-CIO Unions, also considered important resolutions and constitutional amendments that will guide the policies and direction of the federation in the coming years, including three resolutions submitted by OPEIU. President Michael Goodwin served as Vice Chair of the important Finance Committee and Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth served as a member of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Important OPEIU Resolutions Passed

Three resolutions submitted to the Convention by OPEIU were unanimously passed by the delegates, which called for significant improvements for podiatrists and helicopter pilots.

OPEIU Resolution 37 to Prevent Discrimination called on the AFL-CIO and its member Unions to support the efforts of Doctors of Podiatric Medicine to be defined as physicians in Title XIX of the Social Security Act. Currently, they are defined as physicians in Title XVIII of the Social Security Act governing Medicare, but not similarly defined in Title XIX in the section of the Act governing Medicaid. The failure to recognize them as physicians allows states to prevent podiatrists from treating patients under Medicaid, thereby causing unnecessary interruption of ongoing care, resulting in potential harm and injury to patients.

In a recent victory for Podiatrists, the House Energy and Commerce Committee passed H.R. 1625 in June to amend Title XIX to ensure that podiatrists are defined as physicians. The measure has been referred to the full House.

Resolution 38 on Fairness for Specialty Medical Providers addresses the issue of capitation, wherein the stipulated amount for each patient paid to participating podiatrists from insurance companies is not sufficient to cover the financial risk of the patient’s care. The Resolution calls on the AFL-CIO and its member Unions to oppose any insurance plan that compensates doctors using a capitation system.

Region IV Vice President Becky Turner addressed the convention in support of Resolutions 37 and 38, saying, in part, that failure to recognize doctors of podiatry as physicians in Title XIX allows states to prevent podiatrists from treating patients under Medicaid, thus eliminating “the sole unionized providers of these medical services from a government created, supported and financed national medical program serving the underprivileged.”

President Goodwin addressed the delegates in support of Resolution 39 on Helicopter Safety, calling on the AFL-CIO and its Transportation Trades Department to continue to monitor the FAA’s progress in establishing increased minimum safety standards in regards to training, maintenance, weather and rest periods for helicopter pilots and flight crews. He also told delegates of the FAA’s establishment of a new satellite-based Air Traffic Control (ATC) system that will go into effect in December, significantly improving safety, capacity and efficiency in tracking aircraft flying over the Gulf of Mexico.



Photo credit: Steve Dietz/Sharp Image

President Michael Goodwin addresses the Convention in support of Resolution 39 on Helicopter Safety.

Letters to the Editor



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:

www.opeiu.org

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC
<http://www.opeiu.org>

MICHAEL GOODWIN
President

NANCY WOHLFORTH
Secretary-Treasurer



CALM
ACPS

WHITE COLLAR (ISSN 0043-4876) is published quarterly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Reproduction by the Labor Press of any or all material herein contained is not only permitted, but wholly desirable in the interest of workers' education.

Subscription Price \$1 a Year

Dear President Goodwin:

It has been my privilege to serve with you as shop steward at Local 802 AFM for over 20 years. I've been a member of three unions in my lifetime and worked for one and I can say with pride there is no union like Local 153. You have been a wonderful leader — I never had to worry about where my dues were going; never had to be ashamed of my union; your members were always your first concern and you were always open to speaking to us. You always made me want to be a better, well-informed union member and steward. God bless Pat and the family. I'll always be a member.

In solidarity, and love always,
Leslie J. Wilkins
Member, Local 153

Dear President Goodwin:

I just wanted to thank you for making it possible for us to have the opportunity to be a part of the Health Insurance Reform rally in Washington, D.C. It was awesome to be able to stand outside the Capitol Building of this great country and be a part of history. It was amazing to see all the different unions represented there; I am especially proud of ours. I love wearing my OPEIU shirts and having people ask me what that stands for. I tell them that it stands for a great union that's dedicated to representing and serving its members and families.

Please keep us in mind if you need anything in the future.

In Solidarity,
Duane W. Spencer
Vice President, Local 42

OPEIU Mourns Loss of Ed Darcy Sr.

(Continued from page 1)

He immediately became involved with establishing a supervisors' union, knowing full well that a union contract gives employees a strong voice in the workplace and job security.

At services held on July 15, 2009 in Newberry, Florida, President Michael Goodwin extended condolences on behalf of the Executive Board and the entire OPEIU.

He stated that "it was a pleasure to know and work with Ed, not only as an employee, but as a friend. Ed would say, 'I'd walk through a wall for that man,' but he really was also saying he'd walk through a wall for everyone he cared about and loved — his family, his work and his friends. But Ed was more than just a friend. He was a 'true blue' friend. In life, we all have friends, but very few of them are 'true blue' friends that stay with you through thick and thin, joy and hardship, victory and disappointment. Ed was that type of friend.

"He became President of the Government Supervisors Association of Florida in 1983 and later led the union into OPEIU. It was his vision for the union that made it possible for his successors, Richard

Ellis and Greg Blackman, to make the union stronger, now exceeding well over 2,000 members. He paved the way for the union to be stronger, respected by the employers and more effective," Goodwin continued.

"Ed toyed with the idea of retirement, but preferred instead to continue to work even though he was sick, and sometimes in pain. But he never complained. And he died doing what he wanted to do most — organizing and trying to bring better conditions for workers in the workplace.

"His legacy is his love of family, his great contributions to the union and the 'true blue' friendship he extended to everyone he met. We will miss him dearly," Goodwin concluded.

His wife, Veronica, made a beautiful closing statement thanking everyone for their love and support.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by his children, Ed Darcy Jr., Michael Darcy, Denise Herfurth and Kristine Knowles and six grandchildren. Ed Darcy Jr. works for the OPEIU as a Senior International Representative based in Florida.

Ed Darcy Sr. was one of the finest men you'd ever want to meet. He will be sorely missed throughout the OPEIU.

Global Helicopter Pilots' Association Certified

The Canadian Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) has certified the Global Helicopter Pilots' Association (GHPA) as the bargaining agent for a unit of more than 300 pilots employed by CHC Global Operations Inc. The company, based in Vancouver, B.C., employs pilots that fly in more than twenty countries in Europe and Asia.

GHPA will serve as the bargaining unit for "all pilots employed by CHC Global Operations Inc., excluding full-time managers, pilots whose primary

duty is non-flying base manager, and foreign national pilots employed by CHC partner companies," according to the CIRB's decision.

"OPEIU entered into an affiliation agreement with GHPA that provided, upon certification by the CIRB, the affiliation with OPEIU would become effective," said Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler. "Despite CHC's repeated failed attempts to appeal, however, the company has once again filed an appeal in federal court asking for a judicial review of

the decision."

According to the appeal, CHC Global is arguing the language used in the originating application filed in December 2008 is inaccurate. "This is just a vain attempt by the company to slow down the certification process. We are confident the CIRB will throw this appeal out the same way they have thrown out the company's previous appeals, and then GHPA will become part of OPEIU. We will work with them to commence bargaining for the pilots as soon as possible," Kistler concluded.

The Fight for Employee Free Choice Act Continues

As the fight for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act continues in the halls of Congress, OPEIU members are working locally to stir up support among their legislators for the measure that will protect workers who want to form a union, free from harassment and intimidation from their employers.

"In my opinion, no one should be afraid to join a union. It should be a choice," said Local 39 Business Agent Debi Eveland. Local 39 represents approximately 1,100 professional, technical and office workers at employers in the Madison, Wisconsin area, such as CUNA Mutual Group, Madison

Gas and Electric and Middleton Cross Plains School District.

Local 39 members showed their support for the Employee Free Choice Act by writing letters and making phone calls to Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI), thanking him for his continuing support of labor law

reform.

"I recently attended OPEIU's Area Educational Conference in Washington, D.C.," Eveland said. "The Employee Free Choice Act was the number one issue that we talked about. It is our top legislative priority."

Al Franken Sworn in as Senator of Minnesota

Democrat Al Franken was sworn in as Senator of Minnesota on July 7, after more than eight months of legal wrangling by his defeated opponent, Republican Norm Coleman. With Franken's election confirmation, the Democrats have a strong majority in the Senate.

Local 393 Uses Card Check to Organize Credit Union

Local 393 has ratified a first contract for 31 new members at the Lapeer Unit of Security Credit Union, formerly known as Lapeer County Community Credit Union (LCCCU).

On October 1, 2008 Security Federal Credit Union merged with LCCCU to become Security Credit Union. In September 2008, Senior International Representative Gary Nuber and Local 393 President Lynda Eckstrom met with the employer and their legal counsel to discuss organizing the former employees of LCCCU. The meeting resulted in the employer agreeing to remain neutral (no negative communication to its employees regarding unions in general, or OPEIU and Local 393, in particular) during the union's organizing drive. Further, the Credit Union agreed to recognize a card check process

to confirm the union's majority status.

The union then met with the newest employees of Security Credit Union (former employees of LCCCU) and obtained signed membership cards from 92 percent of these employees. In November 2008, the employer and Local 393 met with a former Federal Mediator to validate the authorization cards and the majority status of the union. Negotiations for the initial contract began in January 2009. After several months of negotiations, a tentative agreement was reached, and on June 30, 2009, the contract was ratified by 88 percent of the union's membership in the unit. It was subsequently ratified by Security's Board of Directors in July 2009.

The three-year contract has brought improvements in wages, pension, health care and working conditions. Local 393 is

currently in the process of coordinating steward training with the Federal Mediation & Conciliation Services for the three new stewards of this unit. The 31 new sisters and brothers join 96 existing union members at Security Credit Union already covered under an existing contract. Local 393 welcomes these newest members to a Local Union of approximately 330 members.

The organizing efforts and subsequent negotiations were challenging at times, but it ultimately was a very rewarding and positive experience. Local 393 looks forward to the passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, so they may utilize the very effective card check process for future organizing efforts. The collective bargaining committee included Tessa Maasch, Sandy Phelps, N. Sue Scramlin, Eckstrom and Nuber.

Local 153 Members Join Thousands at D.C. Rally to Demand Health Insurance Reform Now!

Emmy-Winning Actress Edie Falco Demands Congress Fix Health Care Now!

Arriving by bus, dozens of OPEIU members joined nearly 10,000 supporters of health insurance reform gathered on Capitol Hill on June 25, 2009, to send a strong message: We demand affordable, high-quality health care for all, and we aren't waiting any longer.

Every corner of the Upper Senate Park on Capitol Hill was filled with hundreds of OPEIU activists, union members, health care advocates and community activists from across the country, and they heard from not only members of Congress and union leaders, but also from nurses, small business owners, workers and parents who told compelling stories about why we need health insurance reform.

The rally was sponsored by Health Care for America Now (HCAN), the largest health care campaign in the country, and was followed by lobbying visits and several town hall meetings in the largest lobbying day ever held.

"We need to fix health care right now so our members can preserve their medical ben-

efits and gain a living wage," said Rebecca Pomares, Local 153 Hotel Representative. "We are here to join the fight shoulder to shoulder with President Obama, OPEIU, and the entire labor movement to ensure that all Americans can obtain health insurance."

Actress Edie Falco told the rally participants of her own personal struggle for affordable health care, "I work in a business where they take great care of you if you are working," Falco told thousands of health care advocates. "It's bad enough the emotional impact of not having a job," she said. "But to get sick on top of that, and worry every day that your symptoms are not getting better, figuring out what you're gonna have to do without so you can afford a doctor's visit — I am far more familiar with that than I am with my situation these last number of years."

Other rally speakers included Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), former Gov. Howard Dean and leaders of a wide variety of grassroots organizations.

"Our Union supports President Obama's call for real health insurance reform legislation," said OPEIU President Michael Goodwin. "Despite opposition from the insurance companies that control our health care now, with the election of a Democratic

Congress, we now have an opportunity to fix this broken health care system."

Pennsylvania Representative Allyson Schwartz told the crowd that we need health insurance reform that controls costs to recover from today's economic crisis.

New York State Senator Chuck Schumer, also speaking at the rally, noted that passing health care legislation will not be easy. He stated that there have been powerful interests fighting against health insurance reform for decades. Yet Senator Schumer pointed out the national support for health care is a sign that the time is right for reform. "We cannot do this alone," Schumer said. "You being here, we'll make sure you hold everybody in that building's feet to the fire," he added, motioning to the Capitol Building in view behind the podium.

In addition to the rally, supporters attended eleven town hall meetings on Capitol Hill where they heard from Senator Arlen Specter (D-PA), Representatives Joe Sestak (D-PA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Governor Dean, House Majority Whip James E. Clyburn (D-SC), Senators Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Harry Reid (D-NV), among many others.



Photo credit: Allison Shelley/Washington Times

OPEIU members join thousands of supporters for a rally for health insurance reform on Capitol Hill on June 25, 2009.

MEG Members Ratify Four-Year Contract

Local 42 in Farmington Hills, Michigan and Local 459 in Lansing, Michigan, represent 75 clerical and maintenance employees and 80 retirees at 41 United Auto Workers (UAW) locals across the state. The Multiple Employer Group (MEG) bargaining committee began negotiations in August 2008, and after ten grueling months of heated conversation and healthy debate, the negotiating process finally concluded in June 2009.

The four-year contract includes health care without co-pays, a \$1,500 signing bonus, a pension increase, maintained tuition reimbursement program, sick days, and a holiday bonus for active members and retirees.

“With a strong desire and phenomenal amount of passion and strength for the idea of unionism and equality, the bargaining committee ultimately reached its objectives,” said Blake.

“We maintained the benefits that previous bargaining committees fought so hard to obtain, and ensured a comfortable future for current and upcoming retirees.”

As a strong showing of support, the contract was ratified by 97 percent of the membership on June 11. “With the full support of our membership standing strongly behind the bargaining committee, we were able to reach an agreement, even though employer issues regarding the taking away of benefits for their members greatly affected us at the bargaining table,” said Local 42 President and bargaining chair Lisa Blake.

Costly health care and plant closings were at the forefront of issues concerning the UAW Local Union Council of Michigan. During negotiations, there were frequent updates on plant and local closings, which affected the Council’s general demeanor and heightened disagreements. With these plant and local closings, the bargaining committee became more concerned about job security for the active members and pension benefits for the retirees.

The bargaining committee began negotiations with an understanding of the prevailing problems and uncertain conditions of the Local Unions. And although there were times when empathy was exhibited between both parties, the bargaining committee knew it had to hold fast regarding those benefits that only a strong union could provide to its members.

“With a strong desire and phenomenal amount of passion and strength for the idea of unionism and equality, the bargaining committee ultimately reached its objectives,” said Blake. “We maintained the benefits that previous bargaining committees fought so hard to obtain, and ensured a comfortable future for current and upcoming retirees.”

The bargaining committee included Blake, Local 42 Vice President and Co-Chair Duane Spencer, Lillian Hardy, Ann Hunt, Mary Gavette, and Virgie Presley.

Maria Landa-Rios Memorial Scholarship Winners



Local 537 congratulates the recipients of the 2009 Maria Landa-Rios Memorial Scholarship. Pictured are (left to right) Megan Feldmeth, daughter of Suzanne Feldmeth of Air Conditioning and Refrigeration JJATC; Arthur Niavez, son of Laura Lee Niavez of Sheet Metal Local 105 in San Bernardino, and grandson of retired member Helen Coy; and Rosella DeAlva, daughter of Rosa Rodriguez of Carpenters Southwest Apprenticeship Trust.

Diversity Is Our Strength!

A Diversity Summit Conference was held on Sunday, September 13, 2009 preceding the AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. OPEIU stood out as many delegates identified themselves as members of OPEIU. The theme of OPEIU was “Diversity Is Our Strength,” which was well received by those who attended.

Region III Vice President Green Lewis made a powerful address on the progress within OPEIU on diversity. Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth served as a panelist and a strong advocate for achieving civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.

OPEIU President Michael Goodwin was also honored at a reception following the conference for his work in support of LGBT issues.

Area Educational Conferences Stress Political Action, Membership Communication

Southeast-Southwest Area Educational Conference (June 11-14, 2009, Nashville, Tennessee)



Paul McCarthy, Union Organizational Specialist, leads a workshop on Bargaining Strategy.



Michael Miller, Development Manager, PerksGroup, discusses the Perks Membership Benefits Program.

North Central-Erie/Northeast Area Educational Conference (May 28-31, 2009, Washington, D.C.)



Local 2 President and Region II Vice President Dan Dyer welcomes participants to the North Central-Erie/Northeast Area Educational Conference.



U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY) pictured with President Michael Goodwin and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler.



Jason Harlow, President, Harlow Media, leads the workshop, Integrating Membership Communications.



Delegates hear a presentation by Gerald M. Shea, AFL-CIO, Assistant to the President for External Affairs, on Health Insurance Reform.



Local 459 Service Representative Joe Marutiak (right), pictured with President Michael Goodwin and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler.



Larry Cohen, President, Communications Workers of America, pictured with Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler.



Michigan Local Union members pictured with President Michael Goodwin.



Midwest Local Union members pictured with Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), fourth from right.



Participants enjoy the North Central-Erie/Northeast Area Educational Conference.



West/Northwest Area Educational Conference (May 15-17, 2009, Universal City, California)



Bill Samuel, AFL-CIO Legislative Director, gives the Capitol Hill Report, including an update on the Employee Free Choice Act. The measure tops OPEIU's legislative agenda.



Fred Azcarate, AFL-CIO, discusses the Employee Free Choice Act.



Michael Noonan, AFL-CIO, leads a discussion on the Labor Action Network.

Local 2001 Arbitration Victories Continue!

Another \$1.3 Million for Members at TVA... \$4 Million in Past Nine Months

After three arbitration decisions and a U.S. District Court decision, Local 2001 has prevailed in winning \$1.3 million for its members at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). OPEIU members enjoyed a benefit of \$500 to be applied toward flexible benefits each year. In 2004, TVA wanted to cancel the benefit. Local 2001 objected, claiming the benefit ran concurrent with the five-year contract. A panel of arbitrators ruled for the OPEIU and TVA re-implemented the \$500 payment for only one year, 2005. The Local sued in U.S. District Court to enforce the arbitrators' ruling. The court ruled the arbitrators' decision was not clear and the arbitrators should issue a "clarification" of the 2005 decision. The arbitrators issued a clarification saying yet another arbitrator should make the decision whether or not the contract expired in 2004.

In July 2009, the third arbitration decision came in favor of Local 2001. TVA will have to pay each employee on the payroll \$500 retroactively for January 1 of 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. This brings a total of \$4 million won by Local 2001 for the 600 represented employees at TVA in the previous nine months. According to Local 2001 President and Region III Vice President Phillip Pope, Local 2001 has pending grievances that could bring additional millions of dollars to its members if successful in arbitration.

Arbitrator Imposes Compounded Interest "Incentive" for Employer to Implement Award on a Timely Basis

In a February 2009 arbitration decision, an arbitrator ordered the employer to implement his "make whole remedy" in 60 days. After failing to comply with the 60-day requirement and after not giving Local 2001 a timeframe or date in the future for implementation, the issue of non-compliance was brought back before the arbitrator.

In May 2009, the arbitrator provided an "incentive" for the employer to take his decision seriously. The incentive for the employer to implement his decision timely is: (a) 10 percent compounded interest added to all monetary awards paid effective from April 2, 2009 until 60 days thereafter (through June 1, 2009); (b) 20 percent compounded interest added to all monetary awards paid between June 2, 2009 and July 1, 2009; (c) 30 percent compounded interest added to all monetary awards paid between July 2, 2009 and July 31, 2009; and (d) 2 times monetary award if payout is made August 1, 2009 or later.

Pope suggests all Local Unions begin asking arbitrators to retain jurisdiction and to consider providing incentives for timely implementation of an award.

100 Years of Union Membership

Jackie Curry, Executive Board member and Chief Steward of Local 277, presented a 45-year OPEIU membership pin to Nedra Sims on July 8, 2009. Combined, Sims and Curry have 100 years of membership in Local 277.

Sims' co-workers celebrated her 45 years of service at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company (LM Aero) with a recognition luncheon. Sims said it was appropriate for Curry to present her pin since Curry was her first union steward when she started at then-General Dynamics in 1964 at 40 years of age. Sims is very quick to remind everyone that she has been a member since her first day of employment.

Sims was a full-time Air Force wife and mother until her first husband retired in 1964. She started her second career at General Dynamics when she was 40. In 1978, when her husband died, Sims said she could either "stay home and cry or go to the bars and drink and neither one sounded good to her so she went back to school." She earned a Bachelor of Arts and a Master of Arts degree from Texas Christian University while working full-time. She had two sons (deceased) and has two grandsons and four step-grandchildren.

"It is a testament to her character that at age 85, Nedra still comes to work every day and does her job efficiently and cheerfully," said Local 277 President and Region IV Vice President Becky Turner. "We could certainly use more members like Nedra."

Sims said she is "thinking" about retirement sometime in late 2009.



Jackie Curry and Nedra Sims.

How to Use Your PerksCard

Many members have asked *White Collar* to print the instructions for getting onto the PerksCard website. It's really quite easy to start the process of saving hundreds of dollars.

Instructions for PerksCard Registration for New Card Members:

1. Go to www.perkscard.com and, under "New Card Member?" go to Step 2: Register Your Card.

2. Locate the "Card Number" that is listed on the front of your PerksCard and enter it in that field.

3. Locate the "Activation Code" that is listed on the back of your card and enter it in that field.

4. Click "Register" and a screen will appear with fields for your personal information. You must enter a valid email address, select a password and your zip code. Please complete all requested information. Your email address, password and zip code are required.

5. When all these fields have been filled, click on "Register" and a "Thank You" screen will appear. Click on the link labeled, "CLICK HERE." This will return you to the web page you saw when you entered the site.

6. Under "Returning Card Member?" re-enter your email address and password that you chose.

7. Click the "SIGN IN" button and you are in!

Instructions for Making a Purchase:

1. Click on the category of interest to you on the left-hand side of the page or you can click on one of the "featured merchants" on the right-hand side. For example, when you click on restaurant.com on the right-hand side it will bring you to the "offer" page. Click again on the white box in the restaurant.com

center panel. This will bring you to the PerksCard platform informing you in the header that a \$25 restaurant gift certificate is available for only \$7.

2. Enter a zip code for the area or select a state where you would like to use the gift certificate and click on "go." This will bring you to the "find restaurants" page. The number of available restaurants will be listed to the left under the picture. You can also select a radius of 1 to 30 miles by clicking on the arrow to the right of the miles and then click "refine." This will bring you to the list of restaurants with options to purchase gift certificates.

Please note that your 30 percent OPEIU/PerksCard discount will not be shown until you process your purchase to check out.

When you check out, the discount will be applied to your purchase. For example, although the \$25 gift certificate is listed at a

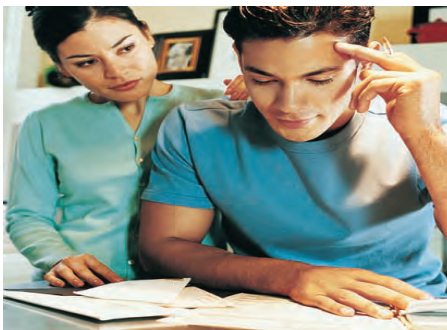
cost of \$10, you will pay only \$7 upon check out.

3. You can print your certificate at any time, even if it's minutes before you are leaving for dinner! Also, please note that most of the offers are for dinner only, so please check the restrictions listed on the certificate offer carefully.

You can use the PerksCard platform in four ways based on an icon indicating each way as follows:

- In Store
- Printable Coupon
- Online
- Gift Card

Please use your PerksCard often to save hundreds of dollars for you and your family. Enjoy!



Falling behind financially?

Union SAFE may be able to help.

If you're having trouble making ends meet in this economy, Union SAFE may be able to help. We offer valuable benefits for members who participate in Union Plus programs including Union Plus Credit Card, Mortgage and Union Secure Insurance and who are facing economic hardship.

To find out how Union SAFE may be able to help, visit:

www.UnionPlus.org/UnionSAFE.

**union
SAFE**

Security. Assistance. Financial Education.



President Obama Tells AFL-CIO Convention Delegates: **“We Cannot Afford to Go Back – We Must Move Forward”**

(Continued from page 1)

true to the promise of this country and build a future where the success of all of us is built on the success of each of us.

That’s the future I want to build. That’s the future the AFL-CIO wants to build. That’s the future the American people want to build. And that’s the future we’ve been working to build from the moment I took office.

At the time, folks were fearing the collapse of our entire financial system. Our economy was shedding about 700,000 jobs a month. Our credit market was frozen and folks couldn’t get the home loans, car loans, and student loans they needed. What was a deep recession threatened to become a Great Depression.

That’s why we acted boldly and swiftly to pass an unprecedented economic Recovery Act. It’s a plan that didn’t include any of the usual Washington earmarks or pork-barrel spending. But what it did include was a guarantee to uphold Davis Bacon and pay prevailing wages.

We cannot afford to go back — we must move forward. That’s why we need to build a new foundation for lasting prosperity. By creating the jobs of the future. By reforming our health care system. By laying down tough rules of the road to protect consumers from abuse; let markets function fairly and freely; and ensure that we never experience another crisis like this again.

Because of the Recovery Act, we’re keeping a campaign promise I made by giving 95 percent of working Americans a tax cut. We increased and extended unemployment insurance to 12 million Americans. And we are putting Americans to work across this country rebuilding our crumbling roads, bridges, and waterways with the largest investment in our infrastructure since Eisenhower created the Interstate Highway System in the 1950s. All in all, many middle class families will see their incomes go up by about \$3,000 because of the Recovery Act, helping them get back much of what they may have lost due to this recession.

So, while I know times are still tough for working people, while I know too many folks

are still looking for work or worried they’ll be the next ones let go, the Recovery Act is making a difference. We have stopped our economic freefall. That is something everyone can agree on.

But the fact is, the problems in our economy preceded this economic crisis. Just last week, a Census report came out showing that in 2008, before this downturn, family income fell to its lowest point in over a decade; and more families slid into poverty. That is unacceptable. And I refuse to let America go back to the culture of irresponsibility that made it possible; back to an economy with soaring CEO salaries and shrinking middle class incomes; back to the days when banks made reckless decisions that hurt Wall Street and Main Street alike. Going back to those days would be bad for unions, bad for the middle class, and bad for the United States of America.

We cannot afford to go back – we must move forward. That’s why we need to build a new foundation for lasting prosperity. By creating the jobs of the future. By reforming our health care system. By laying down tough rules of the road to protect consumers from abuse; let markets function fairly and freely; and ensure that we never experience another crisis like this again.

That’s how we’ll build an economy that works for working Americans. That’s how we’ll help our children climb higher than we did. And that’s how we’ll grow our great American middle class.

We’ll grow our middle class with policies that benefit you, the American worker – and I’ve set up a Middle Class Task Force to do just that, run by my outstanding Vice President, that scrappy kid from Scranton, Joe Biden.

We’ll grow our middle class by building a strong labor movement. That’s why I named Hilda Solis, the daughter of union members, as our new Labor Secretary. Hilda and I know that whether we’re in good economic times or bad, labor is not the problem – labor is part of the solution.

That’s why we’ve begun reversing and replacing old anti-labor Executive Orders and policies with ones that protect your benefits; protect your safety; and protect your rights to organizing and collective bargaining. That’s why the very first bill I signed into law was

the Lilly Ledbetter Act to uphold the basic principle of equal pay for equal work. And that’s why I stand behind the Employee Free Choice Act – because if a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union.

We’ll grow our middle class by creating jobs for Americans who want one – not just any jobs, but jobs with good wages, jobs with good benefits. Jobs that give a person the satisfaction of knowing they’ll meet their responsibilities to themselves and their families. Jobs that are not just a source of income, but a source of self-respect. Every American deserves that much.

And we’ll grow our middle class by finally providing quality, affordable health insurance in this country. Few have fought for this cause harder, and few have championed it longer than you, our brothers and sisters in organized labor. You’re making phone calls, knocking on doors, and showing up at rallies – because you know why this is so important. You know this isn’t just about the millions of Americans who don’t have health insurance, it’s about the hundreds of millions more who do; Americans who worry that they’ll lose their insurance if they lose their job; who fear their coverage will be denied because of a pre-existing condition; who know that one accident or illness could mean financial ruin.

In fact, a new report from the Kaiser Family Foundation was released today showing that family premiums rose more than 130 percent over the last ten years, and now average over \$13,000 a year – the highest amount on record.

When are we going to stop this? When are we going to say enough is enough? How many more workers have to lose their coverage? How many more families have to go into the red for a sick loved one? We have talked this issue to death year after year, decade after decade. And I am here to say the time for bickering is over. The time for games has passed. Now is the time for action. Now is the time to deliver on health insurance reform.

The plan I announced will offer more security and stability to Americans who have insurance. It will offer insurance to Americans who don’t. And it will slow the growth of health care costs for our families, our businesses, and our government.

(Continued on page 17)

Work and Health

Skin Creams and Gels for Pain — Real Medicine or Just a Balm?

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**

Skin warming balms that are used by millions of people for muscle and joint pain are ineffective in the treatment of acute pain and less effective than topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (like ibuprofen) for chronic pain, researchers have found.

Little evidence exists that topical rubefacients — skin creams and gels containing salicylates (aspirin-like compounds) or nicotinamides (nicotine-like compounds) that cause increased blood flow to the skin — work to reduce acute pain from injuries such as sprains and strains.

The review of 14 high quality previous studies found there was no difference in pain relief between rubefacients and placebo (creams without medication). According to this study there is little evidence that rubefacients are effective at treating acute musculoskeletal pain.

Note that the study found that topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like ibuprofen appear more effective at relieving chronic muscle and joint pain. For chronic musculoskeletal pain, one in six patients benefited from the use of rubefacients, which compares poorly to treatment with topical NSAIDs, which help one in three people.

“The evidence does not support the use of topical rubefacients containing salicylates for acute injuries and suggests that in chronic conditions their efficacy compares poorly with topical nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs,” said Andrew Moore, Ph.D., of the Nuffield Department of Anesthetics at the University of Oxford after studying these problems.

It has long been thought that rubefacients reduce pain in muscles, tendons, and joints by “counterirritation,” distraction from mus-

culoskeletal pain through soothing warmth caused by dilation of blood vessels in the skin. Topical NSAIDs, however, such as those containing aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen, penetrate the skin and underlying tissues and diminish the development of inflammation and pain.

Rubefacients often contain salicylates, which are related to aspirin, and enjoy widespread use as over-the-counter and prescription formulations. Studies found that millions of prescriptions were written for rubefacients in 2008, about half of which were for salicylates, gels, and creams.

The studies focused on topical rubefacients that included salicylates and nicotine-like compounds. The formulation of the products varied widely and they contained additional components such as adrenal extract, the local anesthetic myrtecamine, and capsaicin, the compound that gives chili peppers their spiciness and which is often considered a rubefacient.

In addition to finding little or no evidence that the rubefacients should be used to treat acute or chronic pain, they found no evidence that creams and rubs containing additional compounds provided any relief.

We can now conclude that there is no evidence supporting the prescribing of topical rubefacients containing salicylates for either acute or chronic musculoskeletal pain, and there is no evidence at all to support the use of topical rubefacients in combination with other components.

When it comes to acute or chronic muscle or joint pain, there is insufficient data of adequate quality to recommend these “balms” for acute injuries, and the evidence for chronic conditions suggests that topical or oral NSAIDs are much more efficacious for this problem.

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

Work and Health Special Report

Obese Americans Spend More on Health Care

The facts are in — obese Americans spend about 42 percent more on health care than normal-weight Americans, according to a new study based on 2006 figures.

The New York Times reported, “medical spending on obesity-related conditions is estimated to have reached \$147 billion a year in 2008, according to a new study published online in the journal *Health Affairs*. That figure represents almost 10 percent of all medical spending, the study found.

“Obese Americans spend about \$1,429 more on health care each year than the roughly \$3,400 spent by normal-weight Americans,” reported the *Times*.

Studies like this confirm that preventative medicine and education must be part of any health insurance reform package.

Local 277 Members Ratify Agreement with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company

Local 277 members overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year agreement with Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company (LM Aero). The wage and benefit package contained the largest increase in the pension plan in the history of negotiations with LM Aero, according to Local 277 President and Region IV Vice President Becky Turner. “In this economy, the Local 277 negotiating team is very pleased with this contract,” she said.

The agreement includes: a ratification bonus of \$2,000; a 10 percent wage increase over the life of the agreement; a 14 percent increase in the supplemental cost-of-living payment as well as quarterly COLA adjustments to the hourly wage of employees; a 16 percent increase in the defined benefit pension plan for all employees that retire after January 2009; and major improvements in the savings and basic benefit plans.

It also includes 37 paid holidays over the three-year agreement. The company will continue to pay 87 percent of health insurance premiums and the new agreement provides caps that protect employees from catastrophic inflation for the life of the agreement. There is a newly added continuation of benefits for surviving spouse and dependents upon the death of active employees for six months at no cost to the survivors. Yearly maximums for the dental benefit were also improved. Retiree medical plans will still be offered to future retirees and the company contribution ceiling has been increased. There were also improvements in the life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment benefits and the short-term disability benefit.

Several key job descriptions were improved to ensure they protect and more clearly define the work that Local 277-repre-



Local 277 members at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company prior to the ratification meeting.

sented LM Aero employees perform. The negotiating team secured written assurances concerning replacing employees when vacancies are created by retirement, promotions, etc. “With these, we can better ensure that work is not shifted to non-represented employees,” Turner said.

Members of the negotiating committee were Ramona Alexander, Jackie Curry, Gene Patton, Margo Peel, Sandy Smith and Turner.



The Local 277 negotiating committee. Pictured from left to right are Gene Patton, Margo Peel, Becky Turner (standing), Ramona Alexander, Jackie Curry and Sandy Smith.

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

Changes for a Stronger Union Democracy at Local 8

Nearly 150 members of Local 8 participated in the Voice of the Membership Vote to fundamentally change the Local's Constitution and Bylaws, and overwhelmingly passed the new governance on July 28. "These changes now give members a better way to mobilize and organize for economic justice in their workplaces and local communities and to build a stronger union overall," said Local 8 Business Manager Suzanne Mode.

Local 8 represents more than 5,000 members in nearly every county of the state of Washington, but membership meetings have only been held in Seattle, limiting participation. The new model establishes 16 "Chapters" all over the state so members can gather closer to home to make decisions that impact their union and local community.



Members participate in the Voice of the Membership Vote to change the Local 8's Constitution and Bylaws.

"We'll also be convening two Membership Assemblies each year in different parts of the state so members can join together as a state-wide organization to conduct union business, to mobilize for actions and to socialize," Mode said.

The Local 8 Executive Board has been expanded to include more statewide representation. With this new model, the members won't feel left out; they'll have a voice, according to member Laurel Coalwell, Providence Hospital, and Regional Executive Board Member Audrey Gunderson. The Executive Board composition will now be based on a formula of one Board member for every 300 members.

The full text of the Constitution and Bylaws changes and the Voice of the Membership Voter Guide can be viewed at www.opeiu8.org.



Members give a thumbs up to the changes.

It Really Does Take A Village

By **Katie Doyle, U.B.T. Specialist**

Diane Doyle, D.A., and her 'Rainforest' Unit based-team co-lead Emily Moreno, R.N., were leading a discussion around the need for Wii game systems on the pediatric unit as they had only two. While some children are hospitalized for a short period of time, others stay longer for chronic illness or even chemotherapy. Visits are difficult and children miss home, parents, siblings and pets. The Wii systems allow for some family activity and lessen the burdens of illness, if only for a little while.

The discussion of the needs of the unit was reported to the Local 30 Executive Board, which passed a motion to begin a campaign to raise funds for the Wii systems. Walter Allen Jr., Executive Director/CFO of Local 30, suggested that if approved by the Board, the Local would match dollar for dollar all donations received. The motion passed and it was decided to present the Wii systems to Doyle at the March 29 Awards and Recognition Banquet. There were only approximately 45 days to raise funds.

The response from the Kaiser "village" was overwhelming. We can only give credit to a few when there were so many donations. We received donations from the La Mesa Primary Care department, Zion Ultrasound, MRI, EVS, the Radiology Service Representatives at Riverdale, as well as the Courier department. Many sent individual checks and one individual donated a brand new system.

On March 29 at the Banquet, Doyle was presented with a total

of 14 Wii systems as well as the bundle packages! The bundle packs included an extra remote and two games for each system. Local 30 members and Kaiser employees had donated \$1,500 and that amount was matched by the union, allowing the purchase of the Wii's. Those Wii's have been mounted in rooms in the unit. "Once again, Local 30, along with the support of our members, finds new ways to do great things for not only our members, but our patients as well," said Cathy Young, Vice President of Local 30.

Members of Local 30 thank everyone for all their donations and efforts because "It Really Does Take a Village" to do great things.



Local 30 Executive Director/CFO Walter Allen Jr., and Diane Doyle, Department Administrator, Pediatric Dept.

Pharmacists' Victory Marks Another Milestone for Local 2

Pharmacists employed at Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States scored a solid victory in their long campaign to make real improvements in the workplace. In a stunning Labor Board election, pharmacists registered an 82 percent margin of victory and made the choice to become members of Local 2.

The pharmacists' concerns included scheduling, guaranteed wage increases and respect for their judgment and expertise in their area of specialization.

"Congratulations to the hardworking professional pharmacists who came together to make this happen," said Local 2 President and Region II Vice President Dan Dyer.

The victory enables pharmacists to join with optometrists at Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States in a contract covering professional employees.

In February, a small group of pharmacists took the first steps to make improvements in their work-life and contacted Local 2, whose organizers met with the pharmacists over the next several months. The 164 pharmacists are located at 26 medical centers spread over a large geographic area stretching from northeastern Maryland through the District of Columbia to Northern Virginia.

In the past there had been a showing of

interest among this group of professionals, but Local 2 was never able to get a campaign started. This time was different. "Very simply, the pharmacists are unprotected," said one early supporter, "we are in open water. And nothing changes if nothing changes."

According to Dyer, the campaign began as a whisper and swelled to an open discussion. The skeptics predicted they would never organize, saying the pharmacists were divided by too many different backgrounds and cultures, that the geographic separation was too great and they would be afraid to stand up to protect their interests. "The skeptics were wrong and the pharmacists voted overwhelmingly to be represented by Local 2," Dyer reported. "Throughout the organizing drive, Kaiser and Local 2 both conducted a fair and positive campaign.

"Kaiser Permanente and Local 2 have a long and mutually beneficial relationship and both parties believe in a cooperative relationship with the guiding principle that Kaiser will be the employer of choice in the health care industry," Dyer said. This campaign underscores that principle. In June 2009, the pharmacists unanimously ratified their first contract that provided for wage increases ranging from 4 percent to 14 percent, depending on length of service and

current salary. In addition to good wages, the contract provides benefit improvements and work rules that provide workforce engagement, training and leadership development and more flexible schedules.

Local 2 has been actively pursuing a strategic goal of organizing healthcare professionals over the last few years. The pharmacists' win comes after other solid victories, as Local 2 recently broke new ground organizing 85 optometrists and opticians. Shortly after that campaign, Local 2 organized the professional nurse practitioners, medical assistants and pharmacists at Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington. "Our current targets include the pharmacists employed by the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan Area Drug Store Chains of CVS, Rite Aid and Giant Food. We are also seeking to represent 45 physical therapists employed at Kaiser Permanente Mid-Atlantic States," Dyer said.

This campaign could not have been successful without the strong support by the officers, the executive board and members of Local 2. "Especially helpful were the many shop stewards and members at our Kaiser shops who were absolutely essential to victory. They came early and stayed late. Our heartfelt thanks to each and every one of them for their contributions," Dyer concluded.

Update on Warner Brothers Outsourcing Local 174 Union Jobs Overseas

Local 174, the Hollywood union representing the Motion Picture Industry administration workers, has completed its first day of hearings against Warner Brothers Theatrical for outsourcing a major portion of the bargaining unit's work to India and Poland. Capgemini is the outsourcing company that contracted with Warner Brothers Studios to eliminate jobs of union workers and send them to other countries.

"Warner Brothers has given no assurances they will not continue to eliminate the livelihoods of other members," said Local 174 Business Representative and Region V Vice President Christine Page. "No prior notice was given to Local 174 and workers were being called into meetings on Inauguration Day at the exact time the union was being informed of

the outsourcing. Many of these union workers had given decades of loyal service to Warner Brothers and were rewarded by being told to train those who would come to take their work, and to be diplomatic while doing so!

"The training — or 'knowledge transference,' as the Studio called it — required that under no circumstances were union workers to discuss, ask or answer any inquires regarding wages or benefits with those who would come to take their jobs," continued Page.

Warner Brothers has reaped a worldwide record in box office numbers, with more than \$397.2 million on *Harry Potter; the Half-Blood Prince* in the first five days of the movie's opening. "There is no question the billion dollar mark is within close reach for this movie," said Page. "Sales of DVDs and marketing

items have yet to be factored in, but will certainly add a significant amount of revenue to the overall project. The percentage of cost to the Studio of the affected members outsourced by Warner Brothers diminishes by the second by every ticket sold on just this picture alone! But it was simply beyond the scope of yet another American corporation to value a worker's contribution to the job and to the tax base of the United States," Page continued.

Local 174 has more days scheduled for hearings on this important issue and is fighting to stop further erosion of union jobs by the studio. "We continue to appreciate the support of our members and other OPEIU Locals, as well as the International, in this fight and will keep you updated as events progress," Page said.

President Obama Tells AFL-CIO Convention Delegates: “We Cannot Afford to Go Back – We Must Move Forward”

(Continued from page 12)

Here is what you need to know. If you already have health insurance through your job, nothing in this plan will require you or your employer to change your coverage or your doctor. Let me repeat: Nothing in this plan will require you to change your coverage or your doctor.

What this plan will do is make your insurance work better for you. It will be against the law for insurance companies to deny you coverage because of a pre-existing condition. It will be against the law for insurance companies to drop your coverage when you get sick, or water it down when you need it most. They will no longer be able to place some arbitrary cap on how much coverage you can receive in a given year or a lifetime. We will place a limit on how much you can be charged for out-of-pocket expenses – because in the United States of America, nobody should go broke because they got sick.

And insurance companies will be required to cover, at no extra charge, routine checkups and preventive care, like mammograms and colonoscopies – because there’s no reason we shouldn’t be catching diseases like breast cancer or colon cancer before they get worse. That makes sense, it saves money, it saves lives.

So, that’s what we’ll offer folks who already have health insurance – more stability and more security. For the tens of millions of American citizens who don’t have health insurance, the second part of this plan will finally offer you affordable choices. We’ll do this with a new insurance exchange – a marketplace

where individuals and small businesses can shop for an affordable health insurance plan that works for them.

Because there will be one big group, these uninsured Americans will have the leverage to drive down costs and get a better deal than they get right now. That’s how large companies and government employees get affordable insurance. It’s how everyone in Congress gets affordable insurance. And it’s time to give every American the same opportunity.

I’ve also said that one of the options in this exchange should be a public option. Let me be clear: it would just be an option. No one would be forced to choose it. No one with insurance would be affected by it. But what it would do is offer Americans more choices, promote real competition, and put pressure on private insurers to make their policies affordable and treat their customers better.

Now, when you’re talking with your friends and neighbors, they might say, Well, that all sounds pretty good, but how are you going to pay for it? And that’s a legitimate question. So, let me try and answer it. The plan I’m proposing will cost around \$900 billion over ten years. That’s less than we’ve spent on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and less than the tax cuts for the wealthiest few Americans that Congress passed during the previous administration; wars and tax cuts that were not paid for and ballooned our deficits to record levels.

We will not make that mistake again. We will not pay for health insurance reform by adding to our deficits — I will not sign a bill that adds a dime to our deficits, either now or in the future.

We will pay for it by eliminating hundreds of billions of dollars of waste, fraud, and abuse, including subsidies for insurance companies that pad their profits but don’t improve care. We’ll also set up a commission of doctors and medical experts to encourage the adoption of common sense best practices that can further reduce costs and raise quality in the years ahead. That’s how we’ll pay for most of this plan — by using money that’s already being spent, but spent badly.

So, don’t pay attention to those scary stories about how your benefits will be cut. That will never happen on my watch. We will protect Medicare so it’s a safety net our seniors can

count on – today, tomorrow, and forever. Not a dollar from the Medicare Trust Fund will be used to pay for this plan – not a dollar.

These are the reforms I’m proposing. These are the reforms labor has been championing. These are the reforms the American people need. And these are the reforms I intend to sign into law.

Quality, affordable health insurance. A world-class education. Good jobs that pay well and can’t be outsourced. A strong labor movement. That’s how we’ll lift up hardworking families. That’s how we’ll grow our middle class. That’s how we’ll put opportunity within reach in the United States of America.



Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth leads the debate on civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people.



President Obama greets AFL-CIO Executive Council members, including OPEIU President Michael Goodwin.



Region IV Vice President Becky Turner speaks in support of Title XIX legislation and against capitation systems affecting podiatrists.

Member Honored at Labor College Graduation

On June 27, Cathy Merkel of Local 2 in Washington, D.C., was among the 103 union members who received their college degrees in ceremonies at the National Labor College (NLC).

Merkel was also singled out for special recognition and was honored with the President's Award for Outstanding Scholarship for her contribution to labor education and exemplary service to her union, the NLC and the union movement.

The members of the NLC's 11th graduating class represented 23 unions and earned 101 bachelor's and two master's degrees.

U.S. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis delivered the commencement address, and other speakers included then-AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka and NLC President William Scheuerman.

The Labor College enables adults working full-time with families and other commitments to pursue higher education.



Cathy Merkel with National Labor College President William Scheuerman (left) and President of the Alumni Association, Roger Ramjug (right).

Member and Family Member Awarded Union Plus Scholarships

A OPEIU member and a family member have both received scholarship awards as part of the 18th annual Union Plus Scholarship Awards.

Cynthia Manning of Amherst, Ohio and a member of Local 502, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship. Alejandro Sills of Austin, Texas, whose father is Ed Sills of Local 298, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

This year, \$200,000 in Union Plus scholarships has been awarded to 133 students representing 41 unions. Their accomplishments are impressive, their stories are inspiring and their backgrounds are incredibly diverse, however, all are united by their connection to the union movement.

Manning has watched proudly as her children excelled in school, achieving grad-

uate degrees and other honors. Now, she says, "it's my turn." After putting her education on hold for many years, she is studying to earn a degree in public administration at Lorain County Community College. Manning has worked hard all of her life as both a mother and a professional. Having grown up in a household in which both parents were members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), and now with 17 years as an OPEIU member herself, she understands full well how much those hard-fought union wages and health care benefits have helped make all her accomplishments and future success possible.

Sills wants to become a composer. As he looks ahead at what he hopes will be a successful career in music, he points to one

milestone he's particularly looking forward to. It's not his first published work or his first recording, as exciting as those will be; instead, he says, "I know I will have arrived when I earn a union card. I know that a union card is a sign of the highest quality and a pathway to a true livelihood." In a young life of exceptional achievement, Sills has earned the rank of Eagle Scout, achieved excellent grades and test scores and proudly embraced politics and union activism as a young voter. He understands, he says, that "growing up in a union family has provided me some amazing opportunities. I intend to live up to those ideals in seeking a more just society."

Visit www.UnionPlus.org/Scholarships for information on eligibility and to apply for next year's scholarships.

Local 6 Member Wins Union Plus Union Leaders of the Future Scholarship

Local 6 member Christine Long of Boston, Massachusetts has been awarded a 2009 Union Plus Union Leaders of the Future Scholarship. Long was awarded a \$3,000 cash award to help with the cost of continuing her education at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass. She is pursuing a Leadership and Administration Master's Degree.

In these difficult economic times, Long says she wants people to look to the labor movement and remember the many good things it has done on behalf of working people. In addition to her work as a Political and Legislative Coordinator for the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, she is also deeply involved in community service. She hopes to incite real change in the world by fighting for economic justice.

Twelve scholarships were awarded to deserving students for the 2009-10 school year. Applicants were evaluated according to leadership potential, career goals, social awareness and financial need. Each submitted information on their activities and awards, employment and academic backgrounds, a letter of recommendation from a union leader, and a 500-word essay.

Education Grants Now Available to OPEIU Members

We reported in the Spring/Summer 2009 issue of *White Collar* that Union Plus was offering \$500 education grants for OPEIU members. Union Plus has extended the due date and expanded the availability of the

grants to all OPEIU members and retirees. You do not have to participate in a Union Plus program to apply for a grant. All OPEIU members or retirees who open a new tax-free "529" college savings or pre-paid tuition plan after January 1, 2009 can

apply for a grant.

To apply for this year's grant, deposit \$1,000 into your college savings or pre-paid account by November 30, 2009 and submit your application. For more information or to apply, please visit www.UnionPlus.org/CollegeSavings.

OPEIU Spearheads Use of Health Discount Card: Adding Value to Membership Boosts Organizing

When organizer Tom Krueger approaches a Las Vegas taxi or limousine driver about joining OPEIU/ITPE Local 4873, pitching the value of a particular members-only benefit is especially easy for him.

"I can show them my own health savings card and how much money it has been saving me," the former taxi driver explained.

There's no question that the Union Plus Health Savings Program has been a significant part of a package of benefits that has helped triple the Las Vegas membership to more than 1,300 in just four years.

When Union Plus unveiled its new group medical discount program three years ago, one union was quick to see its potential as an internal organizing tool in right-to-work states. That union was OPEIU.

"President Michael Goodwin quickly recognized how attractive this benefit would be to potential members," noted Union Plus President Leslie Tolf.

"He helped Union Plus shape the program and put together the first two local group programs," she continued. "The success in Las Vegas is trailblazing."

President Goodwin also worked with the United Stealworkers to form an Alliance for taxi and limousine drivers providing membership benefits. The Alliance was a great success resulting in a membership gain

from 831 members 48 months ago to more than 3,000 members today. The Alliance membership benefit program and the Union Plus Program are run jointly in Las Vegas through the Alliance.

When drivers join the union they can call and get free discount cards for every relative living in their households—including spouses, children (even adults) and parents.

Then, when the need arises and they use providers in the vast network, provided by Careington International, the savings can be substantial.

"The cost for dealing with my daughter's impacted molar was going to be \$480, but it was discounted to \$340 thanks to my Union Plus Health Savings card," Krueger recounted. And his own root canal and crown: \$422 instead of \$800.

"It's easy to show how much value this adds to membership and how they can easily save much more than they pay in dues," he added.

Thus, it helps overcome what can be a common social disease in right-to-work states: freeloading by employees who know they'll get contractual benefits whether they join or not (ignoring the fact that increased membership leads to a better contract).

In addition to the dental discounts, the program also offers physician, vision, hearing care and prescription discounts (both mail order and retail), savings on diabetic supplies and access to a 24-hour nurse hotline.

Krueger pointed out how the program complements health insurance benefits negotiated with the employers. "Health insurance coverage doesn't kick in until a driver has been working for nine months.



Tom Krueger

With the discount card, savings kick in as soon as—but only when—the driver joins," Krueger stressed.

He also pointed out that where there are benefit limits—as in dental—the discounts stretch the coverage.

The Union Plus Health Savings card doesn't just help in internal organizing. Currently, 10 of the 16 taxi/limousine companies in Las Vegas are unionized between OPEIU and USW. The Alliance's goal is to organize the other six.

For more information about group plans visit www.UnionPlus.org/GroupPlans or call 1-877-570-4845 and say you're a leader interested in group plans.

OPEIU members can also sign up for individual plans by visiting the website, www.UnionPlus.org/HealthSavings or by calling 1-877-570-4845. To learn about the more than 40 Union Plus benefits available to all OPEIU members, visit www.UnionPlus.org.

Local 453's New President



President Michael Goodwin pictured with the newly elected President of Local 453 Mark McLaughlin.

Much Accomplished at Executive Board and Retirement Committee Meetings

Executive Board Meeting



United Farm Workers President Arturo Rodriguez addresses the Executive Board.

Participants of the April 2009 Meeting of the Retirement Committee of the OPEIU Pension Plan



OPEIU General Counsel Melvin Schwarzwald, pictured with Director of OPEIU Benefit Plans George Bueno.



Christian Hains of Local 35, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



Peter Bernstein, Senior VP and Diane Gleave, Senior VP and Actuary for The Segal Company, address the retirement committee meeting.

