

YWCA OF WESTERN MASS JOINS LOCAL 2322

On October 17, the direct service employees of the YWCA of Western MA voted to join UAW Local 2322.

The YWCA of Western MA is a social service agency with over 135 years of helping people in the Springfield area. The mission of the organization clearly emphasizes its commitment to the empowerment of women and girls and the elimination of racism. The YWCA works to further this mission by its direct service work – primarily focusing on battered women, teen parents and adolescents.

The YWCA has seven sites scattered through Hampden and Hampshire Counties. These include four residential program homes. The sixty-two direct service employees believe in what they are doing and really care for their clients and the program participants. The work they do is often challenging. Despite the challenges, the employees are committed to their work.

The employees at different sites had different issues that inspired them to support the Union. Some issues were: a desire to have management “walk their talk” about empowering women by including the staff in the decision making process about staffing policies and benefits, the need for raises that were fair and regular (as opposed to arbitrarily and secretly given) and grievance procedures that involved a neutral third party. Employees felt unheard when they had stated their perspectives and at times, after speaking up, felt unfairly targeted by management.

Organizing the Union drive was challenging as the seven sites were, in many cases, distinct with few staff people having any relationship with people at sites other than their “home” site. Once contact was made, however, most



NEWS FROM AROUND THE MEMBERSHIP

employees were very encouraging about the possibility of unionizing the agency. Many employees had a lot to say about their jobs and their frustrations. It was an exciting process that brought people who have worked for years at the YWCA together.

Despite the YWCA’s history of supporting labor drives (dating back to the 1800’s) and its progressive mission, the management at the YWCA of Western MA fought the Union drive with high priced lawyers, mandatory anti-union meetings, and a steady stream of anti-union mailings. These tactics had a divisive affect, pitting a small group of anti-union employees and management against the other direct service staff. Many employees, loving their jobs, felt torn. Up until the actual ballot count by the National Labor Relations Board on October 17, no one was sure how the election would turn out.

Ninety percent of employees voted in the election. Nearly seventy percent voted for the union – a clear mandate and a huge success for the direct service employees of the YWCA. Next step – contract negotiations.

By Tracey Levy, YWCA Employee

BARGAINING UPDATE:



The union and management have had a first meeting at which proposals were exchanged; they also set several more dates for bargaining in February & March. With the membership staying strong and supporting the work that the bargaining committee is doing, we will win a good contract for all YWCA workers at the conclusion of negotiations.

For more information contact Henry Fijalkowski at the Local office (413)534-7600

Upcoming Bargaining Dates (location TBA):
Thursday, February 26th & Thursday, March 11th

UAW LOCAL 2322

HAS CHANGED LOCATION!

**Our new address is: 252 Open Square Way
4th Floor, #406 Holyoke, MA 01040
(800) 682-0269 (413) 534-7600 Fax (413) 534-7611**

Open Square runs between Dwight & Lyman Streets in Holyoke’s canal district. At 383 Dwight St (just after the children’s museum/ volleyball hall of fame) turn onto Open Square Way; there is a long U-Shaped driveway that takes you to the main doors; use the blue door, #252.

UMASS RAS VOTE TO RATIFY FIRST CONTRACT IN NATION FOR STUDENT ADVISORS

On December 11th, 2003, Resident Assistants at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst voted [96-1] to ratify the first-ever union contract for RAs.

This marks the first time in the country that RAs have negotiated a union contract. The settlement is especially significant given the university’s fierce opposition while RAs were organizing. This unit of RAs had already made history by becoming the first RAs in the country to form a union.

“This is a truly historic agreement,” said James A.W. Shaw, president of UAW Local 2322. “Student workers, just like all workers, have important workplace concerns that are best addressed through collective bargaining. This is a great contract that improves and protects the working conditions of RAs. This contract proves the value of a union not just for RAs, but for all workers.”

(con’t on page 3)

**Western Mass Labor Against the War presents
“War and the Economy”—A workshop led by
Mike Prokosch of United for a Fair Economy**

Saturday, February 28th at 3:00pm

Mr. Prokosch’s visit to the area is being sponsored by Western Mass U.S. Labor Against the War, an affiliate of Local 2322. The presentation will be held outside of the UAW office on the 4th floor of Open Square in Holyoke. Please call if you need directions.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

2004 SPRING ELECTIONS & J.C. UPDATE	2
UPDATES FROM AROUND THE LOCAL	2
HAMPSHIRE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE SEEKS TO FORM UNION WITH LOCAL 2322	3
GODDARD COLLEGE FACULTY JOIN LOCAL 2322	3
DISCOUNT LIST FOR ALL UAW MEMBERS	3
2004 BLACK LAKE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE	4
SHARE GROUP SOLIDARITY	4



UAW Local 2322 Stewards Trainings:

*** Saturday, February 28, 11AM-1PM ***

*** Wednesday, March 24, 6-8PM ***

Both at Open Square in Holyoke

These trainings are designed for:

Stewards, Activists, Officers, Staff, and Anyone Else interested in learning more about representing our co-workers and ourselves in the workplace. We will talk about how to file and fight for grievances; discuss our rights; how to deal with tricky situations & other topics. Food and Drink will be provided at both sessions. A minimum of 5 trainees is required for the training to take place.

R.S.V.P. to the Local office (800)682-0269, (413) 534-7600, or by email at uaw2322@uaw2322.org

UPDATE: Joint Council Schedule

February: Thursday the 19th at 6 pm

UMASS (Campus Ctr. 804-08)

March: Tuesday the 16th at 6pm

PVCLC in Springfield

April: Wednesday the 14th at 6pm

UMASS Campus Center, Room TBA

May: Monday the 17th at 6 pm

Open Square, Holyoke

June: Thursday the 17th at 6 pm

UMASS Campus Center, room TBA

July: No JC Meeting

August: Tuesday the 17th at 6 pm

Open Square in Holyoke.

SPRING 2004 ELECTIONS— LOCAL 2322 OFFICERS & JOINT COUNCIL REPS

In spring of 2004, the membership of UAW Local 2322 will vote to determine the type & dates of our election for the Local 2322 Executive Board & Joint Council. Executive Board positions include: President, Vice President, Sergeant at Arms, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Guide, and three Trustee positions. Each shop is entitled to two (2) seats on the Joint Council. For shops with over one hundred (100) members, an additional seat is allowed for each additional fifty (50) members or substantial portion thereof. At the last Joint Council an Elections Committee was formed; stay tuned for updates after their February meeting.

This union belongs to its members!

Are you interested in helping to shape the future of Local 2322? This is your opportunity to do so. There will be a mailing to all members with information on the initial vote and subsequent nominations.

UPDATE FROM THE JOINT COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Joint Council recently began meeting to discuss long-term goals for the Local. While there is no end to the everyday business of grievances, contract negotiations, arbitrations & other events, time must be put aside to discuss and plan for the future of the Local. The committee has met a few times since December and came up with a proposal to hold an all day event on a **Saturday in early April (Exact time and location TBA)**.

Their goal was outlined as follows: *To begin the process of reinvigorating and renewing the Joint Council and the Local, the JC sanctioned a committee to research and establish a Strategic Planning Meeting/Retreat. This will allow representatives from every shop and every industry to come together and spend the day thinking and talking, planning and strategizing on the future of the Local and how to get there, together. How do we involve everyone in the Local's business, how do we train leaders to carry forth the responsibility, and how and who should we be organizing? The meeting will be facilitated by an outside expert free of direct personal involvement in the Local and who possesses a keen understanding of the labor movement. A trained facilitator will also have experience in group dynamics and strategic planning. The facilitator's role is not to give us answers, but help the union solve its own problems and find its own path to success.*

While there are always a few members who are noticeably quite active in the Local, there is a tendency to expect that those folks will always be there to represent the membership in meetings, events, etc. When a wide array of members is directly involved in the business of the Local, there is less pressure on others to carry the weight of decision making, there is a greater depth to the outlook of the governing bodies such as the Executive Board and the Joint Council, and the membership is truly running the show. Stay tuned for a mailing about the Strategic Planning Meeting/ Retreat in early April. Please contact Erik Hostetter at esh1212@hotmail.com or 413-695-5527 to get more info.

UPDATES FROM AROUND THE LOCAL

PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL

Providence Hospital has begun negotiating a new contract. Members of the negotiating committee include: Ron Patenaude, John McGrath, Vicki Delacruz, Scott Hayden, Corissa Colon, Marcia Oulette, & MaryAnn Algire. Management's first economic counter-proposal was insulting to members with a wage increase at only 1.9%. Members are hard at work to show management — and their highly paid lawyer Roger Gilson — that we are determined to fight for a fair contract.

MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE

Mount Holyoke members recently held elections for the negotiating committee. Congratulations to Cheryl Lane, Eunice Coutinho, Mary Roco, Celia Leclerc, Rhea Hastings & Lana Guz. Their contract is due to expire June 30th, 2004. The membership has already identified many issues the committee will address at the negotiating table. The group will elect a new union steward in March.

CUTCHINS PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Update on wage re-opener: An unfair labor charge was filed against Cutchins Programs. In response to the charge being filed, Cutchins finally agreed to open all the financial records. The UAW Research Department will analyze the budget and to ascertain whether or not Cutchins can in fact afford raises for members proposed for the 2003-04 wage re-opener.

NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR CHANGE - NOW IS THE TIME TO GET INVOLVED!

New England Center for Change (formerly Tri-County Youth Programs) has recently agreed to schedule **Labor Management meetings** with members. The contract allows for a monthly Labor-Management meeting for the purpose of discussing workplace issues. Attending these meetings will be a committee of management staff, NECC bargaining unit members, and Nancy Fish, UAW Local 2322 Servicing Representative. Meetings will be held on Mondays at 6pm in the Northampton Administration Building; first date TBA. This is an excellent opportunity to address concerns and open up communications between management and employees. **Calling all interested members** to sit on the Labor Management Committee.

The New England Center for Change contract is due to expire at the end of June, 2004. Members are needed to be on the **negotiating committee**. There are currently several issues at NEC's various sites. *Members need to keep in touch with their stewards and/or their servicing representative to keep them up to date on any and all violations of the contract.* KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! STAND UP FOR YOURSELF AND YOUR CO-WORKERS! LEARN MORE ABOUT HAVING A VOICE IN THE WORKPLACE! **CONTACT NANCY FISH, SERVICING REPRESENTATIVE AT LOCAL 2322: 800-682-0269 OR 413-534-7600**

HAMPSHIRE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE WORKERS TAKE STEPS TO FORM UNION WITH LOCAL 2322

On Monday, January 26, 2004, a group of workers employed at the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC) hand delivered a letter to the Executive Director of HEC, Joan Schuman, notifying her that a MAJORITY of the special education instructors and assistant teachers have taken steps to form a union with UAW Local 2322.

Since HEC management can choose to recognize the union immediately, the letter delivered stated "we are prepared to prove this majority status in an appropriate forum, which would include verification by an impartial third party." Management has chosen to not take this route, and is pursuing a union election to be conducted by the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission (MLRC) in the coming months. In the meantime HEC management has started an anti-union campaign in an attempt to "persuade" HEC employees to not support the union so they can maintain status quo. Regardless, HEC employees continue to build a strong and positive campaign, staying focused on the workplace issues which they want to address through a union.

If 50% plus one or more people VOTE YES for the union, they will have won recognition as a union and join us as members of UAW Local 2322. Then management is legally required to recognize their union and prepare to bargain with HEC instructors and assistant teachers, as a union, for a fair contract concerning wages, benefits, hours of work and working conditions.

Instructors and assistant teachers are at the educational front lines of HEC. They are the primary special education teachers of students at multiple sites in Hampshire and Franklin counties.

Some of the issues they are seeking to address through a union include: poor pay; understaffing; unaffordable health insurance; lack of a sick time bank; lack of breaks (including lunch); no job description; lack of job security; and being required to work over time without compensation. *By Tim D. Scott, Organizer*

GODDARD COLLEGE FACULTY JOINS LOCAL 2322

The reach of UAW Local 2322 has become global. In December, the faculty at Goddard College became the newest members of UAW Local 2322. Goddard, located 160 miles away in Plainfield, VT, is a unique college in that it provides a progressive education. Coursework is individualized, and students work with their instructors primarily over the Internet, and then meet up with the professor in person for one week each semester. Because so much of the work is online, faculty live all over the country, and indeed the world. Only one of the 80 faculty members lives in Massachusetts (Montague, in fact). This will provide a unique challenge in bargaining and servicing, but this is an important area to address, and we are ready to go there. *By James A. W. Shaw, President*

NEW BENEFIT FOR ALL UAW LOCAL 2322 MEMBERS!

Effective immediately: You are entitled to a discount at the following local businesses by presenting your UAW Local 2322 Member Card: **Whalen's Office Supply** — Both the Main St. & Damon Rd. locations in Northampton. **Collective Copies** — both 71 S. Pleasant St. in Amherst & 93 Main St. in Florence. (10% discount for individuals only, not for organizations or businesses). **Broadside Books**, 247 Main St, Northampton **Food for Thought Books** — 106 N. Pleasant St., Amherst **The Book Mill**, Greenfield Road, Montague **Guild Art Centre**, Main St Northampton

Supporting locally owned, community-minded businesses is an easy way to protest the labor practices (as well as the political & environmental policies) of corporate giants such as Staples, Barnes & Noble, etc. These discounts provide an opportunity to get a good deal and support your community. If you never received a laminated member card, or the information on your card is incorrect, please contact the local so that you may get a new one as soon as possible. (800)682-0269, (413)534-7600, uaw2322@uaw2322.org

RA CONTRACT RATIFIED... *con't from p. 1*

"We are excited to reach this point. This has been a long and hard campaign," said Nick Demas, an RA who helped bargain the tentative agreement. "It is truly rewarding to see our long campaign pay off with real improvements to the RA position."

Recently, a committee of RAs working with UAW Local 2322 settled a tentative contract with university negotiators that calls for wage increases of about 31% over the life of the two-year contract. RAs currently earn \$50.29 per week; for the 2003-2004 academic year, that will be raised to \$61.76 per week and raised again in 2004-2005 to \$64.71 for first-year RAs and \$66.18 for returning RAs. The compensation package also includes free housing and some fee waivers.

"This is a strong and fair compensation package that better reflects the value of the work we do," said Mike Salamone, an RA who also served on the bargaining committee.

The contract also includes a binding grievance/arbitration procedure, improved parking privileges, guaranteed quality working conditions, as well as mechanisms to raise and resolve problems. The con-

tract will expire on June 30, 2005.

"When we formed a union, the university threatened to take away many things from RAs," said Bill Knaus, an RA and bargaining team member, "but we were able to at least preserve our working conditions, and improve on many. It is important for us to know that we are working under a contract that is legally binding. We encourage RAs across the country to follow our lead. Joining a union is worth it." The campaign to unionize RAs began in February 2001, and by April 2001, RAs had petitioned the Massachusetts Labor Relations Commission for a union election. The university opposed the RAs' efforts, and forced hearings to determine whether RAs are employees with the right to organize. The MLRC determined in January 2002 that RAs indeed have the right to organize. On March 5, 2002 RAs voted to form a union, but the university refused to bargain, leading to a rancorous spring of union demonstrations, including one sit-in that led to 35 arrests. By summer of 2002, however, the parties had agreed to bargain. Negotiations began in November, and concluded recently.

By James A. W. Shaw, Local 2322 President

BLACK LAKE 2004

LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

*** Worker-to-Worker ***

March 21-26, Eng./ Span.

Register by February 25, 2004

Members may attend one Leadership Institute within a three year cycle (the current cycle runs from 2003-2005). *All interested members are encouraged to apply to any one of these week-long sessions.*

- ★ **Attention All UAW Local 2322 Members:**
- ★ You're invited to an ★ Open House/PARTY in our new building!
- ★ Sat. 4/3/04
- Invitations with further details to follow under separate cover.

Have suggestions for the next newsletter? The next issue will go out after our spring elections. Contact the local if you're interested in contributing articles and/or artwork. (800)682-0269; (413)534-7600; uaw2322@uaw2322.net

SHARE GROUP SOLIDARITY

Although it can't be quite appreciated in black and white, the T-shirts worn by this group of workers at the Share Group in Amherst are all red. The red shirts, worn weekly, signify SOLIDARITY with our sisters and brothers in the Communication Workers of America who work at Share's two other locations. This show of SOLIDARITY is necessitated by the fact that the company has retained the slimmest union-busting law firm in the country, Jackson Lewis, to negotiate Share's contracts and otherwise serve as their labor relations arm. Unfortunately, the CWA local in Washington, DC, subsequently agreed to a new contract that significantly eroded many of their rights and will ultimately threaten their very existence as a unionized shop. CWA Local 1400 in Somerville, MA, however, is hanging tough in protracted negotiations. They are determined to hold the line, and we are determined to hold it with them. Contract bargaining with the Amherst unit, represented by our local, will begin in 2004. Our expectation is that CWA will be at our side then as we are at theirs now. We have cooperated in a number of actions already, and more are planned. A joint strategy session and possible strike vote are planned for January 30th. **SOLIDARITY now means SOLIDARITY later.** *By Bob Lipton, Share Group Steward*

UPDATE — As we went to press, CWA 1400 in Somerville had just voted down a tentative agreement and authorized their committee to seek strike authorization from the International Union. CWA 1400 will be back at the table soon trying to hammer out an agreement while they work without a contract. Just days ago,



Share workers in Amherst voted 56-3 in favor of respecting any picket lines set up by the CWA in Amherst. This is a ubiquitous struggle--the Harvard Business School MBA's against the little local unions that could. Stay tuned...

By Leslie Edwards, UAW Local 2322 Servicing Representative