

UAW Local 2322 Working News

Volume I, Issue

GEO Fights for Contract - by Jed Murr

On Thursday, April 21st the bestselling writer/social critic Barbara Ehrenreich spoke at UMass in support of graduate employees and students, who walked out of their worksites and classes for the entire day to demand a fair contract. Students and supporters picketed various buildings throughout campus. Undergraduates took part in a general student boycott of classes in solidarity with the graduate employee walkout. This was done in response to administration attacks on support services for underrepresented students and independent student organizations. Over 200 professors signed a non-retaliation pledge in support of the student actions. Many prominent faculty members spoke during the day at a number of the teach-ins that were held outside the student union. Also featured were the letters of support from such notables as author and political activist, Howard Zinn and labor historian, David Montgomery.



The GEO/UAW Local 2322, comprised of more than 2,500 graduate employees, called for the one-day walkout in response to proposed real wage cuts, the loss of same-sex domestic partner-



Students and supporters gather outside the student union building at Umass during a March rally in support of a fair contract for employee students.

student costs in the areas of healthcare and childcare. The walk out was one of

ship benefits and increased Author Barbara Ehrenreich speaksing at UMass employee "walkout" on April 21, 2005.

the last demonstrations by the Graduate Employee Organization, which had been fighting for a fair contract for over 14 months.

Take Back UMass and other student groups called for a boycott of classes to protest Chancellor Lombardi's Action Plan, which would hinder student voice by placing the student newspaper and radio under the administration's control. "These proposals would hurt graduate student employees, hurt student organizations, and hurt the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, eroding the quality and accessibility of education for all" said GEO President Jen Turner.

At the time of printing GEO has acquired a tentative agreement and will be looking to ratify their new contract in the upcoming weeks. Congratulations to the GEO/UAW team!

Your rights in the workplace: Discipline, Termination & Just Cause

"Just Cause" may be the single biggest difference between working union and non-union. Without a union, you have very few legal protections. For the most part, you can be disciplined or terminated for almost any reason, or for no reason at all. With a union contract, on the other hand, your employer cannot discipline you without "just cause."

Through years of legal precedent seven criteria have been established that an employer must meet for a discipline to be considered "just cause."

NOTICE Management must give the employee warning or notice that the employee is violating a rule or policy, and must tell the employee what the rule or policy is. If **fair warning** was not provided, the discipline should not stand.

EQUAL TREATMENT The rules or policies must be applied equally. They cannot be applied in a disparate, discriminatory or

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Local 2322 UAW

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Victory!! - by Nancy Fish

The UAW Residential Counselors at Northeast Center for Youth and Families, Inc. (NCYF) have reached a settlement agreement for a two-year contract July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2006.

Some of you may not recognize the name. NCYF was, until very recently, referred to as New England Center for Change (NECfC) and prior to that it was called TRI–County Youth Programs. We suspect that the name changing may be over and we will not need to update the Rolodex for some time.

Gee, it must be expensive for management to throw out all the letterhead, brand new signs, nametags, etc. with the "old" name, including the Executive Officer. Yes that's right, Hal Gibber is no longer employed as the Executive Director. NCYF has not formally told the Union why. It appears that after an audit, the HCAC publicity, the outrageously expensive brand new administrative office that some have referred to as the "Taj Mahal", the embarrassment of yet another name change, and of course the hard work and public campaign of the UAW bargaining committee, Hal Gibber was asked, after twenty years, to leave by the Board of Directors.

NCYF give lip service to wanting improved relations with the Union. The fact remains that they continue to violate the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) and the Union has since filed additional Unfair Labor Charges (ULP) and grievances, respectively.

The residential counselors at NCYF told management that we would not accept their union busting proposals. We won this battle. But as every hard working Unionist knows, the labor fight for freedom to organize and have a voice at the table is far from over. Please know that we can make a difference but it requires participation. Contact your steward and/or your representative and tell them you want to get involved. There is room at the table for you.

A Note from the President

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to take a brief moment to thank all of you who participate in the many facets of union involvement available at the local.

Whether it is acting as a steward for your shop, being on your contract bargaining committee, or showing solidarity with other members by attending one of the Union pickets or job actions in support of our members' struggles, you help us remain effective in fighting for our members' rights.

We feel we are successful, but it is becoming more difficult. It often seems like just maintaining what we have and not giving up anything is a success. Therefore we need and intend to be more involved politically to help promote an agenda that will push our politicians to defend and protect workers' rights over special and corporate interests.

Your UAW Local 2322 staff and I are committed to providing the services and support our members need to get fair and equitable treatment and compensation, but we need your continued involvement to make that happen. So again thank you and if you would like to participate, talk with your steward or service representative to find out how to get involved.

Fraternally,

Ron Patenaude

Giving Back by Scott LaRochelle

Many of us are in positions that don't allow us to give to charity as much as we would like. But money isn't the only way you can help a local non-profit. From my own experiences I can tell you there are many ways to help. With AIDS CARE/Hampshire County (ACHC) I was able to help by asking local businesses and restaurants if they could donate items for our annual Choco-late Dessert Buffet & Silent Auction. I have postered for them as well as staffed their information tables. Yearly, I help with their volunteer garden, which supplements their clients' groceries and allows them to enjoy the garden themselves. They also have an ongoing volunteer group called "Bridges". Bridges donate a couple of hours out of their week to provide rides for clients so that they can get to a doctor's appointment, grocery store, etc.

For Big Brothers Big Sisters (BB/BS) of Hampshire County, I have also put up posters for their fundraising events. Last year when they had a book sale, I spent my free time getting new and used books from family, friends and local businesses. I can't tell you how appreciative they were when I dropped off five boxes of books for their sale. Also, for the last three years I pulled together fellow ACHC volunteers to form a bowling team for the annual BB/BS' Bowl for Kids Sake.

The last venture I took on was helping out the Food Bank Farm in Hadley. If you like hard work and being outside in the elements, this is a good one for you. I provided whatever help they needed; from washing the greens, planting, harvesting, crawling, stringing, staking, to just being there in case they needed help. It is a wonderful group to work with and I was lucky enough to be involved in building their earthen-clay oven from scratch last year.

It has been a series of great experiences. I learned a lot about the community around me and about myself. It is a great feeling to know that no matter how much or little I am able to give, that it has a big impact on helping others. So, take a moment and call a local agency and ask what you might do for them. You could help at their next event, volunteer to assist in a classroom, raise money for them, collect items or poster. Also, know that when you are looking to get rid of stuff to first check and see if a local agency can use it. There are places that give cars to low-income families, classrooms that can use paper and craft supplies, pantries that will take food, the list goes on. There are so many agencies in need during these times of budget cuts, please take the time to see what you can do to help them and therefore help your surrounding communities.

Dues Chatter - taken from the UAW website

It Doesn't Cost to Belong to the UAW, It Pays

The paycheck rewards for belonging to a union are well known. Even after dues are deducted, UAW members bring home far more money than most nonunion workers. Where we have the bargaining strength and the employers have been financially able, we have negotiated some of the best pensions in America and the premier health care plans in the country. Even with employers who can't afford top-of-the-line benefits, UAW negotiators have won pay and benefits far in excess of what workers would have received without a union.



But belonging to a union brings rewards greater than bigger paychecks and better benefits. Union members have the dignity of collective bargaining. In nonunion operations, workers have little voice in determining much of anything affecting their work. Nonunion employers have the right to arbitrarily change or end their health insurance, pension plans or any other benefit without negotiating with their employees. Work rules can be changed at the employer's whim. Company handbooks are carefully written to give employers nearly complete control.

But with a negotiated, union contract, workers have real input into the terms and conditions of their employment: everything from wages, hours, safety, pensions, job advancement. Actually the process of negotiation can force management to end inconsistencies, develop fair rules that apply to everyone, and structure benefits in the best way possible.

One page in a contract is worth a thousand promises. When you are part of the UAW, the personnel office must share its power with you. We UAW members get a great sense of accomplishment from working together, standing up together, and addressing our common problems in the workplace and the community. All things considered it pays to belong to the UAW

UAW Local Unions are on the Front Line with You

The largest share of your dues dollar remains in your local union where it plays a vital role in protecting your rights. The UAW has 1,064 local unions around the country ranging in size from less than a hundred members to locals with over 15,000 members.

The first job of local unions is to help negotiate and enforce our contracts. But UAW locals do much more. Many locals have committees committee to organizing new groups of workers. The most active members help in boycott efforts or on picket lines

Look for the Union Label (or worker) - by Ron Patenaude

As union members we should try to buy union-made products whenever possible and support businesses that employ our Union brothers and sisters.

We should also avoid using services that will reduce or eliminate jobs, union or otherwise. The "self check-out" registers at supermarkets (or Home Depot) is one example, using them helps eliminate a cashier's job. I'm sure you can find many examples of how "automation" is hurting workers and costing them jobs.

Shopping at stores such as WalMart can hurt us all, union and non-union alike because their competitors claim they have to eliminate benefits to be "competitive". WalMart has lowered the standards for benefits. Also, though their prices may seem to be "lower" we really all pay the difference when you figure in the costs to taxpayers when their employees wind up having to get their healthcare from state programs such as MassHealth. WalMart only pays 53% of their employees health insurance costs compared to the average employer contribution of 70%. The public cost for healthcare provided by the state of Massachusetts to Walmart employees and their dependents in 2004 was \$2.9 million or 5.5 % of the total cost of \$53 million.

Though it's often difficult to find union-made goods, especially for certain items like electronics, we should make the effort. When we can't find Union-made, many union members feel we should be at least buying American-made and when not possible seek foreign made only when we can find "Labor-friendly" goods from such union friendly countries as Switzerland, Germany and France. We should also avoid buying products from countries that routinely exploit workers, have poor (or non-existent) workplace safety standards, damage the environment or employ prisoner and slave labor (China, Vietnam, Burma, etc.).

The following is a list of some area businesses that employ our Union brothers and sisters and which Union represents them:

- Stop and Shop- United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1459 (UFCW)
- Punderson Oil- Teamsters Local 404
- United States Postal Service- National Association of Letters Carriers Branch 46 and American Postal Workers Union Springfield Area Local
- United Parcel Service- Teamsters Local 404
- Collective Copies– UE Local 264

Here are some sites to explore to find goods and services that are Union-made

Clothing	www.nosweatapparel.com	www.unionlabel.org	www.unionjeancompany.com
Checks	www.unionplus.org		
General	www.aflcio.org/aboutunions/allies		
Auto	www.uaw.org/uawmade/index.cfm		
Misc.	www.winpisinger.iamaw.org/buyunion/american.cfm		

This is not intended to be a comprehensive list, only a start for people who would like to help strengthen unions by supporting them and to stop the erosion of union density and workers' rights that has escalated in recent years under antiunion politicians like George W. Bush and Mitt Romney.

Not in Any Back Yard!

UAW Local 2322 was one of many groups that joined in solidarity with members of SHaRC (Statewide Harm Reduction Coalition) to protest the construction of a new women's prison in Chicopee, MA. SHaRC has been staging protests all around Chicopee, picking various high visibility areas where they set up a mock jail cell and handed out informational literature.

The following information was taken from the leaflets being handed out to the public at these rallies. A new jail in Chicopee will cost tax payers \$27 million to build and \$12 million to operate each year. Children of incarcerated mothers are often put into foster care which costs tax payers \$25,000 a year/per child. 90% of women in the Ludlow jail are drug addicted. 80% are in jail due to offense related to underlying and untreated addiction. Drug treatment is 15 times more effective at reducing serious crime and

Mistakes to avoid when you are hurt on the job - by Nancy Foley

The Alliance for Injured Workers provides support and advocacy for people who have been hurt on the job. We are a group of injured workers dedicated to helping others in the same situation. Part of this involves helping others avoid the mistakes many of us made in the early stages of our workers compensation cases. Here are three of the most common mistakes injured workers make:

Going to the company doctor for treatment.

Many workers are steered toward a particular doctor or clinic by their employer. We have heard from numerous workers who assumed they had to go where their employer sent them. In fact, in Massachusetts, you are required to see your employer's preferred provider only once. Then you can, and should, find another doctor! Preferred providers typically serve the interest of the employer, not the patient. They will provide medical treatment, but they may be reluctant to take an injured worker out of work. Do not trust the company doctor!

Using the services of a nurse case manager.

After being injured, you may receive a phone call from a nurse who is ready to "help" you arrange medical appointments and get the care that you need. Nurse case managers work for the insurance company and often are not concerned with your best interest. Again, many injured workers have told us that they did not realize they had a right to refuse the services of a nurse case manager. In some cases, nurse case managers have followed patients into the examining room with the doctor! Some injured workers do not understand why they *should* refuse these services when the nurse case manager seems so friendly and helpful. The nurses are friendly because that is part of the strategy of the insurance companies. They know that if their representatives are hostile and unfriendly to you during the initial contacts, you will probably get scared and find a lawyer. So, the insurance adjuster and nurse case manager pretend to be your friends.

The nurse case manager's real job is often to gather as much information about you as possible for the insurance company. If the nurse case manager visits your home, he or she may be looking around for information to pass along to a private investigator. When the nurse case manager calls offering services, say, "No, thank you."

Not getting a lawyer.

Often, injured workers are reluctant to get a lawyer in the early stages of their case. They do not think that they need one because everything seems to be going smoothly. Only after they are cut off from benefits or fired from their jobs do they scramble to find legal representation. Some injured workers are afraid that getting a lawyer means taking an adversarial stance that might anger their employer. Others are worried about the cost of hiring a lawyer.

It is a mistake to assume that your employer or an insurance company will be nicer to you if you do not assert your rights. Not knowing your rights leaves the door open for your employer and the insurer to take advantage of your ignorance. A lawyer can advise injured workers of their rights early in the case. You do not have to pay a lawyer for an initial consultation. If your case goes for a conference or hearing at the Department of Industrial Accidents, your lawyer will be paid a fee by the other side if you prevail, and you will owe nothing if you lose. If your case goes so far as a lump sum settlement, your

lawyer will take a percentage, and in some cases, injured workers have to pay the cost of appeals.

One word of caution: Be very careful in selecting a lawyer. Once you have hired a particular lawyer, switching to another lawyer may be difficult. Many lawyers do not want to take a case that another lawyer has started. Talk to other injured workers about their experiences with lawyers before making your choice. Do not turn to your family lawyer (the lawyer who wrote your will or handled a real estate transaction for you). This individual probably genuinely wants to help you, but may not be familiar with workers compensation law. Instead, find someone who handles workers compensation cases all the time.

For more information, contact the Alliance for Injured Workers at (413) 731-0760. We are part of the Western Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health. We meet at noon on the third Wednesday of each month at 640 Page Boulevard in Springfield.



Would you like to write an article for the *Working News*? Maybe you have an idea or suggestion for what you'd like to see in future issues of *Working News*? Drop us a line at uaw2322@uaw2322.org and let us know. We love to hear what our members have to say.

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ATTENTION LOCAL 2322 MEMBERS

You are entitled to a discount at the following local businesses by presenting your UAW Local 2322 Member Card:

Whalen's Office Supply - 59 Service Center Rd. 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.

The New UAW 2322 website is up!



We will be trying to make our site more interactive, informative and useful for all our members. Go online at http://www.uaw2322.org to get a look at the new site. Your feedback is always appreciated.

Dues Chatter

(Continued from page 3)

of other unions. Local union meetings are like old-fashioned town hall meetings where every member has a right to stand on the floor and be heard. It's real participatory democracy that seems to be lost in too much of America.

Some UAW members see their role as passive recipients of union "services." But in truth the UAW is a membership organization that works best when members participate, innovate and see the union as the vehicle that enables us to become activists who can shape our own destiny.

A union's bargaining strength depends on organizing new members. We educate our members and communities about the goals and accomplishments of unions. And we work to make sure that political changes help -- not hurt --workers and our families. We publish Solidarity magazine with its lively letters-to-the editor pages and reports on the issues and activities that matter to us. We fight in every arena -- at the bargaining table, in Congress and state legislatures, in the courts, and in community organizations -- to protect our rights to a job, decent retirement, and safe workplace. Dues supply the resources that keep our union financially able to defend our interests.

A Healthy Strike Fund Is Often the Best Way to Avoid a Strike

Our Strike Insurance Program backs us up in negotiations. For many years the UAW has maintained the largest strike fund of any union in the country. We believe UAW members must always be protected financially if they decide they have no choice but to strike. Today UAW strike benefits are \$200 (effective 8/1/02) a week plus medical-hospital and life insurance coverage. Some unions do not maintain strike funds. But a strong strike insurance program is important in convincing employers

(Continued on page 7)

DIRECTORY OF ORGANIZATIONS

This list includes organizations we are officially affiliated with, as well as ones we support and also a few that we just think are cool.

Labor Groups:

Union Voice www.unionvoice.org Jobs with Justice - www.jwj.org/localcoal/MA.org Labor Notes - <u>www.labornotes.org</u> Mass AFL-CIO www.massaflcio.org Labour Start www.labourstart.org LGBT Groups: Human Rights Campaign www.hrc.org Freedom to Marry Coalition www.equalmarriage.org Pride at Work www.prideatwork.org Anti-War & Socially Conscious Groups: United for Peace and Justice www.unitedforpeace.org US Labor Against the War www.uslaboragainstwar.org Solidarity <u>www.solidarity.igc.org</u> War Times <u>www.war-times.org</u> Traprock Peace Center www.traprockpeace.org The Valley War Bulletin www.westernmassafsc.org/vwb/

Democracy Groups:

People for the American Way www.pfaw.org Democracy Now <u>www.democracynow.org</u> Bill of Rights Defense Committee www.bordc.org **Community Groups**: Western Mass Neighbor to Neighbor www.n2n.org (413) 493-6666 American Friends Service Committee www.westernmassafsc.org (413) 584-8975 Arise for Social Justice www.angelfire.com/ma4/arise/index..html (413) 734-4948 Anti-Displacement Project www.a-dp.org (413) 739-7233 Organizes to empower low-income families in Western MA Social/ Political Commentary: Mother Jones www.motherjones.com ZNET www.zmag.org

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WORKING NEWS

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WORD SEARCH	R L N OR T H E A S T H C I C O T W T C R L I M K E
Can you find all of the words from the list	V C O I B I R Q U H S A U S A Y W E S H S A F T Y N
of UAW Local 2322 shops? (Note that	I E F N N O E C F B C U T C H I N S S I O B J C V T
where there are duplicate words, they will	C G H O U N S L I W H S O T I D L T J L M O S U I R
only appear once in the puzzle.)	E O E M R F I P Y S I P N A Z E A E U D H R T E D A
Cutchins – residence	N D N R S E D G T E L U O Z A N N R S C E A A R T P
Cutchins - school unit	E D O B E R E W E S T R N O T C O N T A R T E G H J
Goddard College	T A I S R N N O R B A C Y D H E I Y I R A I K U D N
Graduate Employee Organization	N R S L Y H T J U A W L O C A L T W C E C V L R S W
Hampshire Community Action	E D S T U R A V E R O E D U C A A T I O Y E A T E E
Commission	R L I T M A C O S H N I N G L O C S G R A D U A T E
Hampshire Educational Collaborative	A N M N A C E B T A R M N P A D U E N E D I V R E S
Mount Holyoke College	U S M E S T A N O I T I A S T U D E N O R E S I N T
Nonotuck Community Childcare	G T O C S I U P U C R Z C O L L E G E X A Y C N B E
Northeast Center for Youth & Families	I N C N E O T R R P U W A T J C A W Y T O U H T E R
Providence	T A G I M N H O S C H O O E R I R S P M A H O C S N
ServiceNet	E T Y V T K Q V E C F L E M P L O Y E E V L N J E V
Springfield Day Nursery	L S R W O T E I X E H N Z G Y O U T H L T E O F I I
Springfield Partners for Community	E I C A N S I D K M I O H L F W L S U H D R L E L K
Action / New Beginnings Childcare	C S L E C A R E D J V N O S O R G A N I Z A T I D
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Dues Chatter-taken from the UAW

(Continued from page 6)

that we are willing and able to strike. Often just being prepared to strike is the best way to avoid a strike. Because we're prepared, very few UAW negotiations end in a strike.

Our Family Education Center is Open to All UAW Members

The Walter and May Reuther UAW Family Education Center is located on Black Lake near Onaway, Michigan. It is funded from interest on the UAW strike fund. No union anywhere in the world offers an education center of this magnitude to its members. With its stunning design, beautiful location, and warm, open atmosphere it is the envy of labor educators. Each summer UAW families may apply to participate in the scholarship program. Members, spouses and older children learn about the union and have the opportunity to participate in supervised recreational programs. The education center also conducts conferences geared to the responsibilities of union officeholders. Classes are offered on leadership development, union involvement, health and safety, political action, civil rights, and many other topics.



Not in Any Back Yard!

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a fraction of the cost of incarceration. Over the past 3 years, 60% of the detox beds have been cut in Massachusetts.

This past year the Department of Correction's budget surpassed that of the Department of Education. Locally our towns and cities were forced to cut budgets for secondary education. Financial and social costs would be greatly reduced by supporting women and their children **prior** to crises of poverty.

Jail cell sits in a park near the Chicopee High School.

You can find more information, and ways to get involved, at http://www.stopchicopeejail.org/.



Mail to:

UAW Local 2322 4 Open Square Way Suite #406 Holyoke, MA 01040

Phone: 800-682-0269 Fax: 413-534-7611 Email: uaw2322@uaw2322.org

Just Cause (continued from page 1)

arbitrary manner. If the discipline is not based on a rule that applies to everyone at all times, then it should not stand.

PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE For most infractions employers must give warnings and provide the employee with a chance to improve his or her conduct before moving on to termination. If the discipline was termination or suspension and no warnings were given first, then it should not stand.

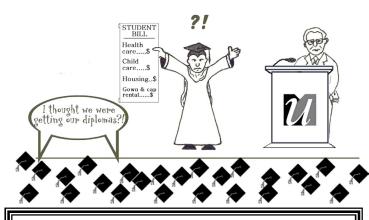
INVESTIGATION Did the employer **investigate** completely and fairly before imposing the discipline? Employers are obligated to do a proper investigation before deciding to discipline. If they did not look into the matter thoroughly, the discipline should not stand.

EVIDENCE Did the employer produce **substantial evidence** or proof of guilt? The burden of proof is on management to show that some infraction was committed. If they cannot provide clear and convincing evidence to justify the discipline, it should not stand.

REASONABLE. The rule or policy must be reasonable and related to the orderly, efficient and safe operation of the facility. A discipline not related to the actual work of the facility should not stand.

APPROPRIATE. The discipline must be appropriate and reasonably related to (a) the seriousness of the employee's proven offense and (b) the past record and length of service of the employee. The punishment must fit the crime. A discipline that is too severe, especially in light of a good overall work record for the employee, should not stand.

"Administration's Dream



WE NEED YOUR CONTACT INFO! Please help us reach you. Send us your phone number, home address and email address so we can update our database. (you can always ask your steward for a new card to fill out) Emails will do a lot to help us reach you quicker. It is a great paper-saving method and allows us to keep you informed in a timely manner. Whether you have moved recently or not, tell us anyway so we can verify our records. Thank you for your help :)

DIRECTIONS TO THE LOCAL 2322 OFFICE

From Interstate 91 heading South: Take exit 17. Take left at bottom of exit. Then follow directions below:

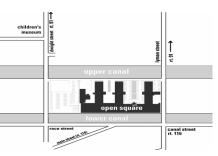
From Interstate 91 heading North: Take Exit 17 follow exit to right down hill, then follow directions below:

Continue onto Dwight Street through downtown Holyoke. The entrance to Open Square is on your left immediately after Heritage Park (contains the Children's Museum and the Volleyball Hall of Fame) on your right.

From the Amherst area: Go south on Route 116. In South Hadley, take Route 202 South, and cross the bridge into Holyoke. Exit the Rotary in Holyoke onto Lyman Street. Follow Lyman Street until the bridge over the first canal. The en-

trance to Open Square is immediately on the right.

From Interstate 391 going North: Take the Main Street Holyoke exit (exit 5). Go right at the lights onto Main Street. Take left onto Dwight Street.



The entrance to Open Square is on your right.