

UAW Local 2322

# Working News

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Summer 2007

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## Anti-Union Tactics -

When I talk to friends who teach at other colleges about having taken on the job of president of the faculty union at Goddard College, their first reaction, even before offering encouragement or congratulations is, "The UAW? Why the UAW???" They don't make a connection between the UAW and workers in education. After a few months of serving as the union president, I am pleased to say that I have a deeper appreciation for "Why the UAW?" Our servicing reps, legal support, and negotiation support have all been extraordinary. But, deeper than that, there is a vision of shared progressive, democratic values that make the UAW a great choice for Goddard's faculty.

In the late 1990s, Goddard's board of trustees bravely voted to allow the formation of a faculty union, including both the low residency part-time faculty and the full-time residential faculty. Then, in 2002, the trustees voted to close the on campus program and phase out the full-time faculty. The faculty was represented by another union during this tumultuous time. What remained of Goddard was a vibrant but geographically scattered faculty of mostly part-time, piecework employees. The faculty members were, and continue to be, dispersed through a wide variety of programs. Thus the faculty from the various programs rarely meet each other, unless they happen to share a residency, where the students come for a week of workshops and

*(Continued on page 6)*

## One Union, One Contract:

**GEO Fights for a Contract that Benefits all of its Members Equitably** – Aaron Winslow, GEO

GEO has been bargaining with the University of Massachusetts for over 8 months, with very little to show for it. Our contract campaign, though not limited to or by them, has been shaped by a distinct set of core issues:

- 1) A process for the transparent and accountable distribution of diversity funds across the graduate school;
- 2) Rolling back exorbitant and crippling student fees. The average graduate employee pays an average of \$1100 in 'service fees,' giving what is roughly equivalent to 10% of their yearly stipend *back* to the university. This is nothing less than a form of the 'company store';

*(Continued on page 5)*



*The bargaining committee for GEO pose during a break in their strategizing meeting. - Photo by Eesha Williams*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

News articles keep reporting that the Labor movement is dead or dying and that American workers don't need or want Unions. If that were true then I don't think in an independent poll 53% of American workers would say they would join a Union if they could.

Personally, I think that number would be higher if our nonunion sisters and brothers fully realized the benefits of having a Union card and job. Even many Union members don't realize or remember what it was like to not have a Union and the associated benefits or the "Union advantage".

Many of our members were not at our worksites before we organized and don't have a starting point to measure the improvements to the workplace their Union has brought them.

We need to remind them. Those of us who have worked without the advantages of a Union need to remind our newer sisters and brothers that having a Union might not solve all workplace problems but they will help improve conditions. Unions aren't perfect organizations, democracies rarely are, but the dictatorial conditions of the nonunion workplace where workers have no voice or vote is vastly improved by the presence of a Union.

We need to spread the good word that:

- Union workers wages are on average 30% higher then nonunion workers. That figures increases to 36% for African American workers and 46% for Latino workers.
- Union members are also more likely to have health insurance and pension benefits, 80% for Union members compared to 47% for nonunion workers.
- Unions are also better for employers and statistics show that productivity averages 10% higher in Union workplaces versus nonunion.

So when you hear people criticize Unions, show your Union pride and set them straight. Unions are good for workers and business.

*In Solidarity,*  
*Ronald Patenaude*  
*President, UAW Local 2322*

# Happy Halloween

Yes, it's getting to be that time of the year and everyone here at the Local 2322 office wants to wish all our members and their families a happy and safe holiday. We have collected some tips for parents, children, & homeowners alike to read and use in making this night a safe one. Please view them on our website at: [www.uaw2322.org/halloween1.htm](http://www.uaw2322.org/halloween1.htm)



*(Send us photos of you or your children in*

## 2007 V-CAP Drive Starting

The UAW Region 9A V-CAP drive is underway and UAW Local 2322 will be contacting members to sign them up.

V-CAP is the Voluntary Community Action Program and it is the vehicle by which the UAW raises funds to support the political work we do for the benefit of our members and their issues.

Unions are prohibited from using members' dues for most political purposes so the money that members contribute to the V-CAP fund is vital to getting us access to the political process and getting our message to our elected officials.

Please be advised UAW leadership, stewards and staff will be contacting members to solicit members to participate in both the upcoming V-CAP raffle sale and to sign up members who have V-CAP check-off in their contracts for contribution.

For more info please contact UAW 2322 President Ron Patenaude @ 413-534-7600 or Boone Shear at the GEO office @ 413-545-0705



*Workers at Northeast Center for Youth & Families show their union colors by having a T-shirt day at work.*



DVDen is our newest members' discount offer. To see what they are offering and who else is rewarding Local 2322 union members visit our website at:

[http://uaw2322.org/member\\_discounts.htm](http://uaw2322.org/member_discounts.htm)

## **Labor Day-A Poor Cousin to May Day? - Tula Connell**

Labor Day is more than just a Monday holiday marking the end of summer. At least it should be. For many of us in the union movement, it's a time to hold Labor Day picnics and rallies and often, as this election year, move full-speed ahead in political action on the way to the November elections. It's also a time to reflect on the sacrifices of those U.S. workers who came before us-especially those who lost their lives in the fight for justice at the workplace.

While the radical origins of May Day are not contested, as labor historian David Montgomery notes: Labor Day is more a complicated affair. Only the United States celebrates Labor Day in September. Elsewhere around the globe, nations honor workers on May 1-May Day.

And that historical quirk is no accident. Ironically, "May Day" was founded by U.S. workers-and taken away from them as a day to celebrate by a federal government fearful of the wave of large demonstrations for the eight-hour day and massive strikes for justice on the railroads, in the mines and factories that had begun in 1877.

Such an action may seem quaint now. But the symbolism of May Day-working people challenging corporate power-still causes fear among the top elite.

Just ask George W. Bush and the Republican extremists in Congress. In 2003, Bush proclaimed May 1 as "Loyalty Day" when U.S. citizens should express allegiance to our nation and its founding ideals, we resolve to ensure that the blessings of liberty endure and extend for generations to come. That same year, Congress, designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day."

And while hundreds of thousands of immigrant workers and their supporters took to the streets for justice May 1, 2006-as did their symbolic forbearers in the 18th century-Bush again proclaimed May 1st Loyalty Day.

Just when you think historical events are just that-they come back stronger than ever.

May Day was officially founded in 1886, during a Chicago strike for the eight-hour workday. In 1889, the American Federation of Labor (AFL) delegate to the International Labor Congress in Paris proposed May 1 as international Labor Day. Workers were to march for an eight-hour day, democracy and the right of workers to organize. Delegates approved the request and chose May 1, 1890, as a day of demonstrations in favor of the eight-hour day.

On a separate track, U.S. labor leaders had agitated for creation of a labor holiday years before the Chicago rally. Among them, Peter J. McGuire, a carpenter and labor union leader, had proposed his idea for a holiday honoring America's workers at a New York labor meeting in early 1882. (Others say the "founder" of Labor Day was Matthew Maguire, a machinist who served as secretary of the Central Labor Union in New York.)

*(Continued on page 8)*

## Legislative News Update – Ronald Patenaude

The UAW has a long and proud history of leading the way on Civil and Human rights. With that in mind we have been involved with several legislative issues that affect our members and we believe need to be addressed in order to reach our goals of Social and Economic justice.

The UAW and Local 2322 have been involved in the fight for equality for our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters long before marriage equality became an issue in Massachusetts. As early as 2000 we opposed DOMA (Defense of Marriage Act) legislation that would have stripped LGBT individuals not only of any future right to marriage, but to any form of domestic partner benefits at all.

When the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that same sex couples had the right to marry we supported that decision and when a ballot initiative was created to try to strip those rights, we opposed it. We worked with numerous groups including Mass Marriage Equality and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force to protect the rights of same sex couples to marry. Unions fight for, and have stood for, social and economic justice, and that is what the battle over Marriage Equality was about. No one should be denied benefits because of who they are.

Additionally we have continued to be involved in the fight to reform Massachusetts CORI laws (Criminal Offender Reporting Information). Over 80% of employers now use this to screen potential hires.

Chief among the problems with the CORI system is that wrong information is provided to employers and too much information being provided (including dismissed cases and not guilty findings and decades old convictions). If someone has committed a crime and served their debt to society how long should they be punished for that crime?

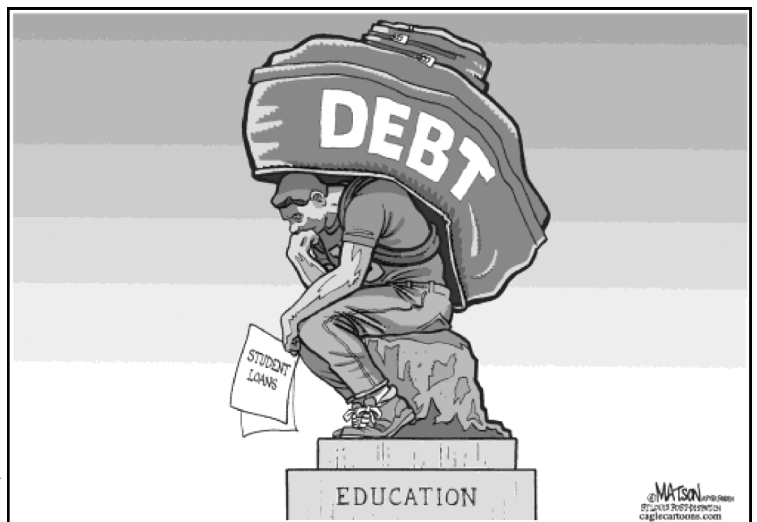
Some of the reforms include: 1) Withholding records of crimes not pertinent to the job being applied for (i.e., if you were convicted of robbing a bank you might not be the best fit for a bank teller job). 2) Sealing records after a reasonable time. Among the organizations that have taken up CORI reform are The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and Mass Legal Help. Both have useful information on their websites [www.mlri.org/cori\\_project](http://www.mlri.org/cori_project) and [www.masslegalhelp.org/cori](http://www.masslegalhelp.org/cori).

The UAW has also long been a proponent for National Single Payer Universal Healthcare coverage. The disadvantages of the current system of employer-provided coverage are numerous including: it lacks portability or continuous coverage if workers change jobs (great for employers who might retain workers who might otherwise leave, but for their insurance), and it also does not cover everyone.

Additionally, American companies are put at a disadvantage against companies from other countries that have a universal health insurance plan. For example the additional cost of a car made in the US is an estimated \$1,800 more than the same car made in Canada because Canada has a National Healthcare plan.

Finally, it's estimated that costs due to "fraud, misuse and administrative waste" under the current system exceed 25% of the total annual costs.

Anyone interested in participating in our political activities is invited to join our Citizens and Legislative Committee, which will be meeting the week before our Mass State CAP meeting which is the second Tuesday of the month. Interested members should contact UAW Local President Ron Patenaude at 413-534-7600 or [ronpatenaude@hotmail.com](mailto:ronpatenaude@hotmail.com) or Boone Shear the GEO Political Advocate at 413-545-0705 or [politicaladvocate@geouaw.org](mailto:politicaladvocate@geouaw.org).



## One Union, One Contract *(Continued from page 1)*

The allocation by the university of \$70,000 per year for child care, as well as the creation of Family Issues Committee to ensure oversight of the distribution of these funds, and the construction of a new childcare center;

4) The protection of our health coverage. The university administration has aggressively and regressively sought to take this from us by refusing to negotiate co-pay caps with our provider, Chickering. With the variable on insurance removed, our pockets would be suddenly exposed to the whims of the insurance companies.

The University has consistently backed away from our demands, and it is entirely accurate to say that their package proposals have been nothing less than insulting. The university claims to have made ‘movement’ by offering us packages consisting primarily of 3.5% wage increases. These proposals are all made within the constraints of a 1 year contract, as opposed to our traditional 3 year contracts, a union-busting tactic that would ensure we spend all of our resources negotiating contracts. All the while the administration remains inflexible on our core issues, claiming that we are the ones making unreasonable demands, that we are the ones acting in ‘bad faith.’ If offering us packages with fifty cent raises as the highlight is the administration’s definition of good faith bargaining, we would like to suggest a more accurate definition: hoax. It is truly a hoax to suggest that the university has done anything other than waste our time. We have seen absolutely nothing viable from the university, and we cannot fall for their fraudulent claim that they are dealing fairly with us. We demand victory, and this can only come by making the university be attentive to the actual needs of its academic workers.



*Supporters of the GEO struggle for a fair contract rally outside Chancellor “Ratbardi’s” campus house to discuss their important issues.*

One of the most immediate of these needs is improved diversity funding, known in our contract as Memorandum of Understanding 6 (MOU6). The current distribution of diversity funds is wildly uneven across campus, with the vast bulk of diversity fellowships being awarded to graduate students in the hard sciences, such as engineering, computer science, and chemistry. Funding was cut completely from programs in the humanities and social sciences, programs where the stipends for graduate students are also at their lowest. Now, against the written dissent of graduate students, Graduate Dean Mullin will implement a new program that shifts the burden of diversity funding onto academic departments without giving them the monetary or institutional support that would make this sustainable--it is a plan doomed to fail, and the students will be the ones who shoulder the cost of that failure.

At best, UMass’ position on diversity funding reveals their inattention to the realities of promoting and sustaining a diverse graduate student body, while at worst, it is an institutionalized method of racial discrimination. This is not surprising, reflecting as it does an educational trend in the United States that attempts to rollback affirmative action policies that are critical and crucial legacies of the US Civil Rights movement. Our fight to improve diversity funding within our contract marks a resistance to the deeply conservative and deeply racist trends that mar the recent history of education in the US.

It is largely in response to such reactionary trends that we have placed progressive issues such as diversity funding and childcare at the center of our campaign. Forefronting non-economic issues make our contract campaign not just unique, but also much more powerful by creating a space for all of our members to participate. A victory on an issue such as MOU6 will radically alter the limitations that UMass has imposed on discussions of affirmative action. We must take for ourselves the right to set the terms of debate, and of the needs of our own membership. With the summer coming to a close, and the bulk of our membership returning from summer vacation, we are preparing to escalate our tactics. We do not simply need a progressive contract that benefits all of our members equally, this is what we deserve, and is what we will struggle for.

study planning before returning home and beginning their semester.

## Why the UAW?

The Goddard faculty voted to leave the former union and join the UAW, in part, because of the UAW's willingness to work in the creative ways that are required in such a nontraditional context. With the help of the UAW, countless hours of dedicated work from faculty working without compensation, and not a little bravery on the part of management, we have negotiated a contract that moves faculty from piecework to 50% salaried positions after three years and provides health insurance and retirement benefits, along with many other improvements in working conditions and job protection.

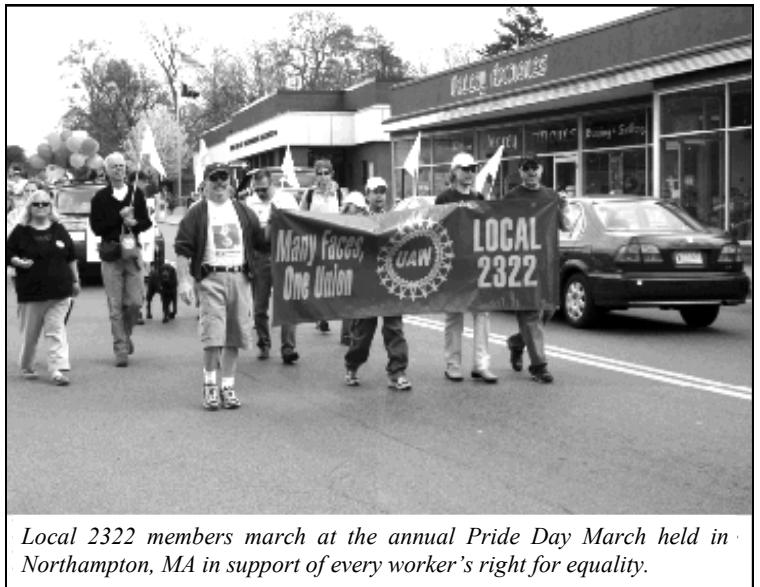
Democracy is at times a difficult and challenging way to do business. In the U.S., it sometimes seems we are trained to be cultural spectators cheering if our side wins and despairing if our side loses, but feeling there is little we can do to alter the outcome because of the huge economic forces that seek to control political change. Now, more than ever, I realize that no one can do democracy for me. The UAW has embraced the spirit of Goddard which seeks not just to protect the status quo or even create better learning models for students, or work models for faculty, but ultimately better communities where we all have a voice and a role and are each valued in the work that we have to do.

As we approach a compensation re-opener this year, and a re-opener of the whole collective bargaining agreement next year, it is tempting to cheer for "what the union can get us," losing sight of the reality that "the union" is really just each of us working together, raising concerns, problem solving, and negotiating with both reason and resolve, taking collective action, if necessary. At this stage, the negotiating teams and union reps need input from each of us about hopes, problems, and priorities, and we have been collecting that information during the residencies. Certainly, concerns related to wages and uncompensated work hours are at the top of the list. As negotiations progress, and we communicate about proposals, it is crucial to hear from all our members about what may be acceptable, and what may be unacceptable so as to prompt us to collective thoughtful action. Through this dialogue, and disagreement, we can build a consensus of thinking that strengthens the faculty

## Elections at the Local 2322

Every three years the Executive Board of the UAW Local 2322 holds an election for a new Board. This year we have had an unusual occurrence. We didn't need to run the scheduled balloted election. Each of the nine positions ran unchallenged.\*

Members got to meet and question the newly elected Executive Board at the May 24th membership meeting held at the Local office. The elected officers talked about what they saw for the future of the Local and how each member could be a part of that.



*Local 2322 members march at the annual Pride Day March held in Northampton, MA in support of every worker's right for equality.*

**President** - Ronald Patenaude (Sisters of Providence Behavioral Health)

**Financial Secretary** - Eunice Couthino (Mount Holyoke College)

**Sergeant at Arms** - Jeremy Wolf (Graduate Employee Organization)

**Guide** - Srinivas Lankala (Graduate Employee Organization)

**Trustee** - Mary Roco (Mount Holyoke College)

**Trustee** - Nate Johnson (Graduate Employee Organization)

There are three positions still unfilled (Vice President, Recording Secretary & Trustee). If you are interested in joining the Executive Board contact the Local 2322 office with a letter of interest, make sure you include all your contact information and what position you would like to fill.

\* There was an election appeal brought forth at the membership meeting. Attending membership voted and opposed the appeal.

## Just Cause for RAs - Neil Alper

The Resident Assistants (RA) Union is a labor union representing approximately 360 undergraduate student employees at UMass Amherst. RA members work in each of the housing areas at the University. If you are an RA at UMass Amherst, you're automatically covered by the contract, stipends, and benefits.

RA's became members of the UAW Local 2322 following a long drawn out campaign over many months to win both union recognition and a first contract! The initial activists who formed the RA Union engaged in an arduous, nearly two year process to win recognition as workers who have a right to unionize and engage in concerted activity. While the earliest conversations to form the union began in September 2000, it wasn't until the following summer, in August 2001, that UMass formally recognized the overwhelming desire of RA's to form a union in order to improve their wages and working conditions.

That UMass took nearly two years in order to even sit at the table with RAs clearly shows the disdain they have for the legitimate concerns felt by many RAs regarding their work experiences and conditions in the UMass dorms. It's only through the hard work of members themselves that the RA Union has managed to, nonetheless, win significant gains at the bargaining table in its last few contracts.

This next round of contract negotiations is of vital importance for all RAs. Key amongst our demands will be a fair and transparent disciplinary process for all RAs, known as 'just cause'. The basic point behind the just cause idea is that employees who have violated any work or university policy, and are facing some sort of disciplinary action, are treated in a fair and equitable way, not at the whim of Resident and Area Directors. As many RA's know all too well, RA's can be disciplined severely for even minor infractions with little or no recourse.

It's important to remember however, that the only way RAs will be able to make such gains for themselves is through active involvement in the bargaining process, and by extension through our union itself. After all, the RA Union is *for and by RAs themselves*, and improved wages and working conditions only come through collective action on our part. There are a number of ways to contribute to the vitality and effectiveness of the RA Union and our upcoming contract campaign, so please don't hesitate to contact us (RA office 413.577.2629) and get involved!

### Word Jumble

Unscramble the words below on the left. Once you have all your words use the circled letters to form words and solve the puzzle below right

LCIPSNE

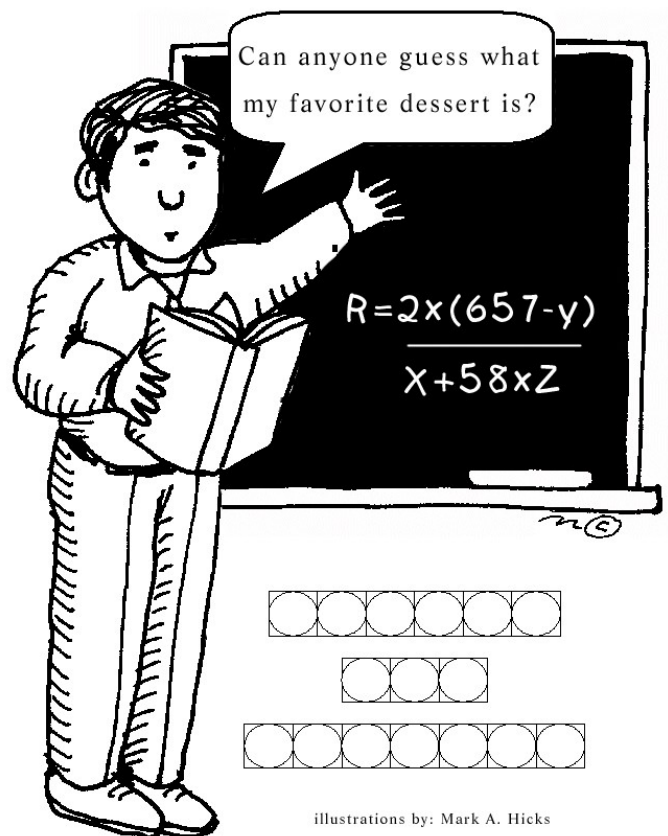
RCAHEET

OAKRBLHADC

EESRCS

ULSRRE

SIRDSAAQUTVY



illustrations by: Mark A. Hicks

## Labor Day (Continued from page 2)

Either way, New York's Central Labor Union began planning Labor Day events for the second Tuesday in September. McGuire (one of them) had suggested a September date to provide a break during the long stretch between Independence Day and Thanksgiving.

Today, the union movement marks Sept. 5, 1882, as the first Labor Day, when 20,000 working people marched in New York City to demand an eight-hour workday and other labor law reforms. In the parade up Broadway, they carried banners reading, "Labor Creates All Wealth." About a quarter million New Yorkers turned out to watch.

In 1887, Oregon became the first state to establish Labor Day as a holiday, which it put on the first Saturday in June. Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York observed Labor Day on the first Monday in September that year.

The remainder of that decade and the early 1890s saw massive strikes, often put down with brutal violence by government troops. In the 1894 Pullman strike, led by the American Railway Union leader Eugene Debs, workers demanded lower rents (Pullman was a company town) and higher pay after massive wage cuts and layoffs. Railroad workers across the nation boycotted trains carrying Pullman cars. President Grover Cleveland declared the strike a federal crime and deployed 12,000 troops to break the strike. Two men were killed when U.S. deputy marshals fired on protesters in Kensington, Ill., and the strike was crushed.

But 1894 was an election year. As workers protested Cleveland's harsh methods, legislation was rushed unanimously through both houses of Congress to create a holiday for workers. Yet the symbolism of May Day was too strong for U.S. politicians. In creating an annual Labor Day holiday in September, Congress at the same time declared May 1 to be "Law Day"-paving the way for the Bush administration's Loyalty Day. Cleveland signed the bill creating Labor Day six days after his troops had broken the Pullman strike.

Writing of this year's May Day protests by immigrant workers, historian Nelson Lichtenstein says: These May Day demonstrations and boycotts return the American protest tradition to its turn-of-the-20th-century ethnic proletarian origins-a time when, in the United States as well as in much of Europe, the quest for citizenship and equal rights was inherent in the fight for higher wages, stronger unions, and more political power for the working class.

Meanwhile, Montgomery points out that the day created in September to honor America's workers was established precisely because of workers' demands. First state governments and then the federal government adopted the day in response to workers' demands. The government did not create the holiday. Some call May Day the real Labor Day. But workers in this nation shed their blood for a day of honor. And no matter what the date, they deserve our memory.

Would you like to write an article for the *Working News*? Maybe you have an idea, photo, joke puzzle or suggestion you'd like to see in future issues? Drop us a line and share it with us. We are always interested in hearing from our members.



## Mount Holyoke College Workers Stand Firm

The UAW Housekeepers at Mount Holyoke College told their employers loud and clear this past summer that they were not going to walk away from their union of choice, UAW Local 2322.

MHC hired the consultant group Sightlines which recommended that MHC reorganize the cleaning “programs” on campus. The different “programs” are in fact two unique and separate unionized departments with current and active contracts.

Sightlines recommended MHC use the same model used at Amherst College. Amherst College does not have organized labor in the cleaning department. MHC must recognize that the Housekeepers and the Custodians are different units with different work and are represented by two different Unions. Housekeepers primarily clean dorms and the SEIU primarily cleans offices and classrooms. The College cannot just combine the groups. This union-busting plan would have the SEIU Custodians and the UAW Housekeepers become one group. Well, we said no!

The College tried to then sell their restructuring plan to the housekeepers, as a great way to improve the working conditions. Well, the Housekeepers didn’t buy it. We believed that the college’s plan to “restructure” would not help our department, but more likely had the potential of eliminating it.

The Housekeepers asked the community to support the protected right to choose which union workers want to be affiliated with and the legal right the college had to recognize our agreement and signed contract. Soon after the UAW initiated outreach; President Creighton received numerous letters and emails from members, alumni, professors and the labor community asking her to stop the restructuring plan.

With your help and support the UAW Housekeepers are proud to report that we were able to STOP the restructuring plan for now. Thank you to all of you who helped. The Housekeepers current contract expires 6/30/2008. We may need the labor community to help again with the coming contract campaign. Call Nancy Fish, Organizer/Representative for the Housekeepers at the Local 413-534-7600 for details.

*"When you impact the rich man's ability to make money, anything is negotiable".*

- Martin Luther King

## YWCA Victory

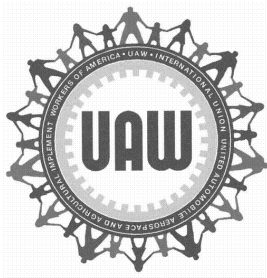
The YWCA of Western Massachusetts has paid \$4,483.29 in back dues to UAW 2322 as part of a compliance order issued by the National Labor Relations Board for the period the YWCA illegally withdrew recognition of the Union.

That money was part of the original recommendation by an Administrative Law Judge who had found that the YWCA had illegally withdrawn recognition of the UAW as the sole representative and bargaining agent for covered employees at the YWCA. Though the YWCA did not comply with that recommendation, the YWCA did comply when the UAW again prevailed in a decision issued by the NLRB in Washington DC. That decision was issued in response to an appeal by the YWCA to that higher body.

The YWCA has also been ordered to process any outstanding grievances and arbitrations which they had previously asked to be put into abeyance while their appeal was pending.



Steve Schapiro/Black Star  
UAW President Walter Reuther stands with Dr. King as he addresses the crowd prior to the march from Selma.



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## Stay in Touch!

Make sure we can get important news and information to you. Update your contact information with our office - don't forget to notify us anytime your name, phone number, address or email changes. For your convenience you can do this on our website [www.uaw2322.org](http://www.uaw2322.org), just click on the member contact update form.

*UAW Local 2322 welcome our members to stop by the office for a visit anytime. Regular office hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Our staff is here to help you. If you want to see someone specific, please call first to make sure scheduling will permit time to meet with you (413.534.7600).*

*You can find directions online at [http://uaw2322.org/how\\_to\\_get\\_here.htm](http://uaw2322.org/how_to_get_here.htm) or visit [www.opensquare.com/map\\_directions.php](http://www.opensquare.com/map_directions.php)*

## UAW Local 2322 Newsletter

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