



SPIRIT OF 1776 NEWSLETTER



UMASS EMPLOYEE'S LOCAL 1776 - COUNCIL 93 / AFSCME, AFL-CIO - 545-2831
116 HAMPSHIRE HOUSE, AMHERST, MA 01003

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BARGAINING NEWS



DEALING WITH “LOOKING DOWN YOUR NOSE” ATTITUDE AGAIN

CAMPUS – Negotiations resumed in August for a new contract. Both management and AFSCME negotiators headed back to the table after the overwhelming rejection of a proposed contract by AFSCME members late this spring. Don't need a college degree to know that there's a simmering anger out there in UMass blue-collar land. Our members were disappointed but not shocked by the minimal pay raises in the tentative agreement. But many of our members were openly disgusted by the Whitmore stance on a new drug-testing policy. Whitmore singled us out for this nasty set of new regulations... as if we alone might be abusing drugs. You've got to be kidding. But, above all, it's the Whitmore *attitude* that stinks. It's that

“looking down your nose” bit that we thought we fought against when we gave George the III the boot, all those years ago. Guess not. Not much happened at the August bargaining session. No surprise. Whitmore tried to tell us how many negotiators we could bring to the table. We reminded them that suggestions of this sort violate state labor law. Speaking of that “looking down your nose” attitude... do you think Whitmore tried to tell the professors union how to construct their bargaining team? Now Whitmore is trying to slow bargaining to a snail's pace. No surprise. In addition, and in violation of state labor law, Whitmore has assigned a management bargaining team without authority to strike a deal. There's no manager at the table who can say “yes” or “no” to proposals. Everything needs to be run by higher ups on the third floor. No surprise. Clearly Whitmore believes that AFSCME members need to be taught a lesson... how unthinking of us to vote down a contract not in our best interests. Postscript, every union on campus except AFSCME ratified their contracts. But no news yet on when or if those contracts will be funded by the legislature.

UNION PICNIC

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18TH

HAMPSHIRE HOUSE – At the July 23 meeting of the Executive Board, the board voted to authorize our annual union picnic. The Picnic is scheduled for Friday, September 18th. First time ever we try a September get-together. At least the weather should be cooler. And less people are away on vacation. We tried for a Saturday date (when second shift people are more likely to attend) but none were still available. The extraordinary, recently retired Mark Snow will lead off with an acoustic set, followed by a plugged in set. Looking for volunteers!



AFSCME Advantage

For discounts and great deals of all types go to www.afscme.org/members/71.cfm Not on the Net? Take a Lab/Mgt Workplace Ed class, or call the union at 5-2831.

President's Report

by Francis Martin, Jr.

This has been a summer that started with a rejection of a tentative contract agreement and that ended with the passing of a political era. In the wake of Ted Kennedy's death much was made of his support of healthcare for all, of women's rights, of aid to elderly, and of protections for the disabled. In the blanket media coverage that ensued, less was made of Ted Kennedy's strong support for working people across the board. You and me. And no surprise that in a media increasingly under the thumb of big money (FOX News jumps immediately to mind), even less was made of Ted Kennedy's support for organized labor, the voice of working people. So, what would Teddy have thought of our contract rejection. I'd like to think, fighter that he was, Teddy would have been proud of our members sticking up for the right to be treated the same as others on campus. And, consummate deal maker that he was, I think Teddy would have been disappointed with the lack of finesse by the UMass management team. "They couldn't do better than that!" he might have thundered. Rich though he was, time and time again Teddy pulled for you and me. UMass, though you claim to honor Edward Kennedy, take a look in your own backyard. The 03's on campus without contractual rights to health insurance. The classified workers on campus with only a fraction of the education and training monies they deserve. The blue-collar workers who are treated as second-class citizens on this campus... just look at the management schemes for drug-testing. In the spirit of Ted Kennedy we will continue to struggle for our due. Look for more on the legacy of Ted Kennedy in our next newsletter.

A FEW RANDOM THOUGHTS PURSUANT TO THE MAY 27, 2009 CONTRACT VOTE RESULTS

By Kevin McCartney

This morning I was informed that the results of the May 27th contract vote were 380 against ratification of the proposed contract and 136 in favor of acceptance of that proposal. The rejection margin by a factor of approximately 74% would seem to indicate that the vast majority of the union membership were not necessarily overwhelmed in a positive sense by the contractual proposal on offer.

My thoughts on these voting results are predicated upon my employment cooking at Berkshire DC. I do not believe that my colleagues are blissfully unaware of the tenor of these difficult and unsettling economic conditions

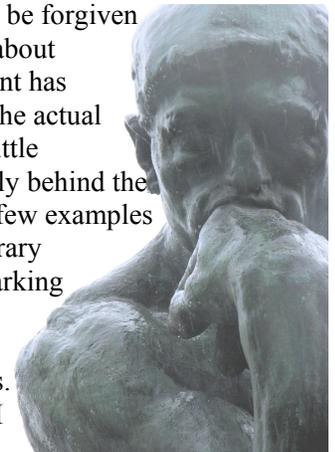
that have presently engulfed the entire nation in a period of uncertainty and deep foreboding. There is an abundant cognizance of the fact that the university does not exist in a vacuum which precludes its being materially and adversely impacted by the same economic pressures that are evident in the private corporate sector. The concerns pursuant to operational margins are just as daunting and relevant in the academic world as they are in the corporate one and just as important to the overall successful viability of the business model.

The difficult economic climate has lead to a reduction in the overall capability of many families being able to send their children on to higher education. Colleges and universities find themselves in the rather unusual position these days of having to address the dwindling pool of potential students by the employment of more aggressive and creative marketing strategies. One of the many facets of the academic institution that is utilized to differentiate itself from its competitors is the breadth and depth of its dining services operation. UMass has a decided advantage in this regard due to its ability to proudly proclaim having recently been presented the Ivy Award for the culinary excellence of its dining services department.

This award has as its foundation the diligent efforts of the dining services employees. The ladies and gentlemen that I work with have a sincere interest in trying to present the best possible dining experience for our student clients as is possible on a daily basis. There is a serious and tangible commitment to the concept of trying to implement and execute our daily responsibilities in as professional a manner as we can while at the same time recognizing that some days we will be more successful in this endeavor than other days. As a group I think that we tend to possess a pride of ownership in the net result of our efforts.

When businesses experience severe pressures on their profitability margins there is a tendency to think that outsourcing the operation to the cheapest offshore location will reduce costs and return profitability to the entity. The preparation and service of food is not an undertaking that readily lends itself to this problem solving approach. One has to have actual people on site to provide the dining service. The success or failure of the enterprise is dependent upon the commitment and dedication of the folks who actually provide the service in the first place.

I think that one could be forgiven for having a degree of doubt about whether or not the management has given any serious thought to the actual value and importance of the little people who labor anonymously behind the curtain as it were. Perhaps a few examples may suffice. As an 03 temporary employee I paid \$169 for a parking sticker for a job that was only about 32 weeks in length and provided no auxiliary benefits. As an 01 full-time employee I



pay \$86.71 for a parking pass for a 35 week position that does provide full benefits. Some 01s such as myself are laid off for 17 weeks per year without the ability to collect unemployment benefits or generate any university related revenue stream during the layoff period. My household bills do not magically suspend themselves for the time that I am laid off. Dining services employees have to work 3 semesters before being eligible for the so called annual step raise due to the summer layoff period and this extra semester also factors into retirement payout considerations.

It has been suggested that the employment by the university of students and 03s exclusively would provide the cheapest approach to addressing the thorny issue of both direct and indirect labor costs. I would respectfully submit that this employment paradigm would in fact produce less than satisfactory results. Students have the tendency to actually graduate from time to time and 03 classified employees could not afford to work sans benefits for an indefinite period of time. While this approach to staffing may seem to be attractive at first glance it has one glaring failure that is not addressed. A constant rate of staff turnover effectively precludes the university from enjoying the very real benefit of not having to constantly train a transitory work force and does not allow for the manufacture and sustenance of any form of institutional memory or experience which is critical to the department's ability to function in any degree of coherent manner.

I have spent approximately 23 years in corporate America in both management and senior technical positions and have experienced at first hand the results of trying to address the issues of cost containment via the cheapest common denominator school of management. My experience has validated the old axiom that one receives what they pay for in the business world. The university is fortunate to have a strong core group of people in the dining services department who possess a genuine belief in and commitment to the idea of being part of a high quality operation.

The results of this vote would appear to constitute an editorial comment by the union's membership regarding their thoughts on the value or lack thereof that the university seems to have in regard its employees. I am sure that management would debate this point but this may be a case where perception has in fact evolved into reality. No one can dispute the fact that from a fiduciary perspective these are indeed challenging times in which to live and try to effectively operate a business enterprise. It is my belief that the only sustainable long term business plan which has any real chance of success in today's climate is for the university to regard the union membership not as an intractable part of the overhead cost of doing business but rather as an important partner with which to explore and discover ways to both manage operational costs as well as meet the goals of economically viable excellence. I hope that the results of this contract proposal vote will lead the university to revisit the heartfelt concerns of the union's membership.

"Phantom"

There's a white phantom
Standing in place where you last
Rested on the side;
One more reminder
Of the Importance of Life,
When it's around us;
Never to take the
Moments for granted without
Living the fullest.
I said my goodbyes
In my own way... not to pass
White phantom again.



Catherine LeFebvre
June 7, 2009

Misty Bassi

Housing Residential area Southwest South employees and residents recently lost a bright light. I was fortunate to get to know Misty via the Housing Wellness Program. Two days a week (because of her weekend schedule) I would workout with Misty at the Washington Wellness Center. Her perspective on working at the University and on life in general was always humorous and something I looked forward to. It is difficult now to fathom what Southwest South will be like without her. I would like to imagine that somewhere she is riding her bike now.

Jim Wysocki

Goodbye Misty We'll miss you a lot.



The Southwest South Weekend Crew

In Memory of the Brother of Carol Taylor

THE "W.I.L.D." WOMEN OF LOCAL 1776

A NEW GENERATION OF LEADERS EMERGING

This past May Renee Fye, Deb Thornton, and Cathy Collins participated in the annual WILD (Women in Leadership Development) conference. WILD is a place where union women can gather and work together to develop skills intended to build the union movement. This year the WILD conference took place at UMass Dartmouth. Here are their thoughts about that experience...



second videoed speech. We were so horrible! So afraid. And then at the end of the course everyone on that class had to do a two minute speech. We watched the playback. What a change! We were great. The techniques that showed us really made a difference. They built up our confidence. I really liked that as a group we worked on case scenarios.

What was the atmosphere like at WILD? Great atmosphere. The College we stayed at was really nice; the rooms were cool.

Inspired? There was a great keynote speaker who encouraged us to continue to both educate ourselves and to grow our union. Because of that keynote I look at unions, at our union, differently.

What will bring back to the union and the campus? I'm more aware of unions and how they work. I know that every member should get involved. I know that we are a more powerful union when everyone pitches in. If you're down on the union, I'd encourage you to get involved.

Would you recommend WILD? For sure. Every woman in our local could benefit from WILD.

Other thoughts? I used to work at the Department of Mental Retardation (since changed to Department of Developmental Services). When working there I took a nine month course on leadership development. To be honest, I think I got more out of the two day WILD conference than I did from the nine-month DMR training. Why? I don't know. I also want to add that the two AFSCME members that I went with, Debbie Thornton and Cathy Collins, are phenomenal. I had a lot of fun with them. They're great new friends.

RENEE FYE

Renee Fye is union steward for Housing Services members in Southwest South. She has been steward for about a year. Renee has worked on campus since 2005. She and her husband, Roman Suski, have five children: Henry, Joanna, Tom, Allyn, and Hannah. Renee loves to travel. She's visited nearly every continent. Her next trip is to Africa.



What did you think of WILD? It was an awesome, awesome, awesome experience. I learned so much. I took a class on public speaking and a class called leadership development II (I loved that class). At the start of the weekend conference everybody in the public speaking class did a thirty

In Memory of the Father of Renee Fye

"My dad was a community father. He had four children but he was a father to many in the community. So many people loved him. Kids who didn't have fathers, he'd take them camping, to the Cape; he take them on trips, my father did good works... If I could be half of what he was, I'd be happy."

DEB THORNTON

Debbie Thornton has been working on campus for ten years. For the past four years Deb has served as union steward for Maintainers up at Orchard Hill/Central. Says Deb, "Being in the union has been a good experience."

What did you think of WILD? It was two days packed with valuable information. The guest speakers were fantastic. Meeting Dale [Melcher], of the Labor Center, was great. Tina Clarke inspired us all to think GREEN.

What did you get out of it? Women united for a common purpose are powerful and really do make things happen..

What was the atmosphere like? Empowering! Supportive, and the improv group was great..

Were there moments of inspiration for you? Yes. The economics class I took showed a breakdown of the economy and how we got to this financial crisis we're in... and logical ideas for turning it around. Small changes can have a big impact.

What will you bring back to the union and the campus? We all make a difference and all members should get involved on some level. Learn the contract and don't hesitate to ask questions. Be informed. Stay informed.

Would you recommend to co-workers here on campus? Yes, definitely. WILD gives women an opportunity to be part of something very powerful. The workshops are focused on information that inspires women to go out and make a difference in their union/community.

Other thoughts? I'd like to thank Local 1776 for giving me the opportunity to attend WILD. Cathy, Renee, and I had so



much fun. After the Wild weekend Cathy and I attended Tina Clarke's open house in Turners Falls. Tina won first prize from WMECO (Western Mass Electric), \$25,000, for energy efficiency using the latest in green technologies. Tina doesn't have an electric bill anymore!!!
%&#*@! Go, Tina!

CATHY COLLINS

Cathy has been working on campus for about fifteen years. In various ways she has been active with the union, for example, helping out with the union picnic, being active on Labor/Management Workplace Education advisory committee. Cathy's great interest is horticulture, "To be in the dirt with the flowers is therapeutic for me."

What did you think of WILD? A good experience. I have a new awareness of the things involved in leadership.

What did you get out of WILD? Actually, the WILD weekend rekindle some dreams for me.

What was the atmosphere like? Very friendly and supportive. I was amazed at the diversity of people there.



Inspired? I was inspired about the opportunities. The focus for me was to do more to make even a small difference in the world. I'm not sure what that will look like.

What will you bring back to the union and the campus? Well, the renewal of a dream. I am refreshed because of WILD. Renewed too. During the weekend there was a lot of talk about green technology. I really liked that. It was chance to look into the future, and ask ourselves questions like, "What could we be doing, each one of us, to make this a healthier, saner planet."

Would you recommend WILD to other 1776 members? Definitely. It's a chance to grow and expand your mind.

Other thoughts? To be honest I was a little reluctant to go. I really didn't know what WILD was all about, I was afraid of the unknown. But it's a really good thing to get out of your comfort zone and stretch a bit. By the way, right after the conference Deb (Thornton), her son, and I took a tour of the new house designed by the keynote speaker at WILD, Tina Clarke. The house is up in Turners Falls. It's green house... by that I mean it's really energy efficient. Solar panels generate electricity, so much electricity, in fact, that each month not only does Tina pay zero in electric bills, but each month she gets a check from the electric company! I really want to do something like that.

Respect

means . . .

Having your supervisor honor your doctor's medical note...

Administrators and professors return simple greetings as you pass in the corridor...

A UMass drug policy that treats everyone on campus the same...

All cultures and all differences among us are valued on campus...

Freedom from abusive language from bosses...

Managers acting to ensure workplaces free of harassment...

No control-freak bosses who stalk and single out workers for harassment...

Meaningful, positive feedback from supervisors...

Whitmore acknowledgment of our education and training efforts during promotions...

Whitmore acknowledgment of the importance of organized labor on campus...

UMass Worcester proudly displays union bulletin boards in its main visitor corridor.

No Whitmore administrators patronizing our bargaining team...

A UMass maternity leave policy that treats all employees the same...

Grievances heard on time. Grievances answered. Arbitrations scheduled sooner rather than later.

Whitmore is setting the tone here. And it's nothing to be proud of.

True Dialogue: Not phony efforts pretending to address abuses...

Recently UMass unions offered to partner with UMass to dialogue on issues like classism, racism, sexism. Denied! Dialogue? The thoughtlessness of the UMass approach boggles the mind.

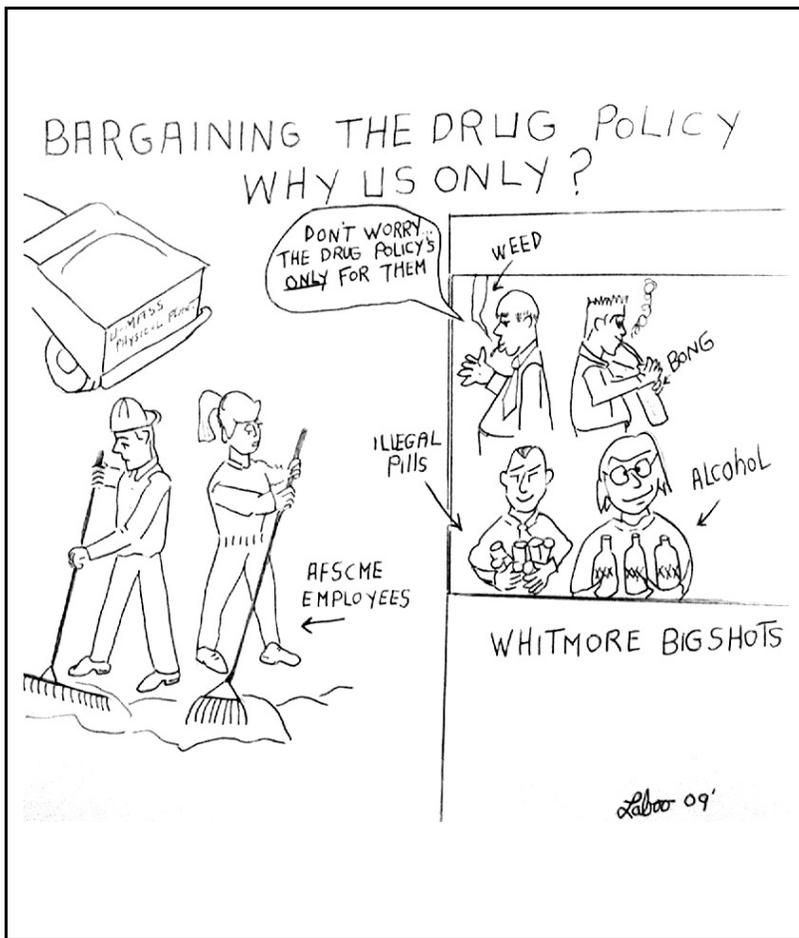
Fair wages...

Recognizing the rights of 03 workers to organize...



Nicola Sacco

In Memory of the
Great **Gerry Ouimette**



REMEMBER!

AFTER 30 DAYS EMPLOYMENT, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING EITHER UNION DUES OR AN AGENCY SERVICE FEE. TO AVOID BACK PAYMENTS, CONTACT YOUR STEWARD OR THE LOCAL OFFICE 545-2831.

OFFICE HOURS

MON, TUES, WED, THURS, and FRIDAY from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Grievance News

Grievance Officer

At any one time the Local has dozens of grievances and reallocations going. Since a number of these are class-actions with more than one unit member involved, a lot of us have a direct stake in filed by other members. What follows are some recent grievance/reallocation developments.

A Number of Housing Cases Resolved

HOUSING SERVICES – Chief Steward Mike Soja reports that a number of grievances have been settled concerning Maintainers who work in Housing Services. A grievance concerning arbitrarily targeting of a member for sick leave documentation has been settled in Southwest North. Six grievances (some individual, some class action) ranging from topics such as unfair workloads, unfair equipment distribution, exposure to a deadly chemical, to harassment/intimidation all coming out of Orchard Hill/Central have been favorably resolved. Two grievances concerning work overload have been settled favorably at first step.

The Rights of Members Who Work Saturdays Overlooked

GROUNDS – Steward Brian Coffey reports that the University is violating our holiday observance contract article. “It’s puzzling why a matter so clearly stated in our contract is meeting such opposition but I’m confident if management chooses to read the contract this can all be remedied.” This related to the failing of July 4 on a Saturday this year. Our contract clearly stipulates that employees who regularly work Saturdays are entitled to the holiday that day. The problem occurred when managers began insisting that these workers take vacation time to cover time off on Saturday, July 4th.

In Memory of the Mother of Dick Coach

In Memory of the Son-in-Law of Charlotte Chandler-LaRoe

NEWS AROUND THE LOCAL

ART GOODHIND SENIOR In 1948 Arthur Goodhind Sr., father of Local 1776 Vice-president Art Goodhind, Jr., enlisted with his brothers to fight in the Korean Conflict. He enlisted during his senior year, just months shy of receiving his high school diploma. This past June, more than sixty years later, during graduation ceremonies for Amherst Regional, Principal Mark Jackson presented Arthur Goodhind Sr. with his high school diploma. Several thousand people stood and applauded the presentation. Says Art Goodhind, Jr., “My father was very proud to receive his high school diploma; he says that education is very important in someone’s life. He waited a very long time to receive his diploma. He was very honored to graduate with the Amherst Regional class of 2009. I’ve always looked up to my father for the many things he has done in his life and I’m particularly proud of this latest accomplishment.”

Look for some great upcoming courses from our joint Labor/Management Workplace Education program!

AFSCME Local 1776
116 Hampshire House, UMass
Amherst, MA 01003

The Spirit of 1776 is a publication of AFSCME Local 1776. We aim to be a voice of the membership. Moreover, our goal is to advocate for the membership. We believe that communication between members is a means to that end. To be effective, we need your participation. How can you participate? Send us ideas for stories. Angry? Write us. Someone deserves congratulations? Write us. Read something of interest to members in a magazine or newspaper? Clip it, and send it in. Original articles, editorials, news items, cartoons, criticism, and praise are always welcome. All materials should be forwarded to the Union office. We strive to publish four times per year. If you are interested in writing, reporting, cartooning, editing, typing, or layout, please contact us. Empower yourself. Empower us.

NEW STEWARDS. Congratulations to the our new stewards: **Jim Delarond** (Projects/Alterations), **Brian Coffey** (Zone 2 Grounds), **Renee Fye** (Housing Maintainers in Southwest South), **Isheka Hackett** (Housing Maintainers in Central) **Jonathan Grant** (Housing Maintainers in Sylvan) and **Albert Spady** (Housing Maintainers in Southwest North). Says Albert, “I’m looking forward to addressing issues of classism. Like that new contract they tried to get us to agree to smacked of classism. That was one of the big issues about how our union got singled out for the drug policy. Like we were going to go wild or abuse drugs more that other people on campus. That’s the way a lot of us took it. They wouldn’t be as near as strict on other people on campus. And if it passed with us maybe they would go after others on campus. I got into being a union steward to be an activist. In the group that I work with I feel that I was the most eligible, considering my time and my experience and my job assignments, I have more flexibility.”