

Newsletter of the AFL-CIO

Central New York Labor Council

Serving the Mohawk Valley since 1882

November 2013

Proud Partner of the United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica!



Labor Kicks off the 2013 United Way Campaign

Organized labor staged its annual United Way Kick-off on October 17th on the MVCC Utica campus. A goodly number of area locals were represented, including the MVCC Professional Association, Rome Teachers, Utica Teachers, United Food and Commercial Workers, Laborers United, United Mine Workers, United Auto Workers, Communication Workers of America, and the National Association of Letter Carriers. United Way of the Valley and Greater Utica Director Brenda Episcopo first thanked those in attendance and unionized workers throughout the region for their consistent generosity every year and highlighted two special gifts this year, \$25,000 from UFCW Local One and \$10,000 from IBEW Local 43. Beyond thanks, Brenda did three other things in her

brief presentation to the group. First, she stressed the central role area unions play in each year's campaign. Second, she pointed out that union members are grossly underrepresented in the official donor list because many do not indicate their union membership on their pledge forms. She urged our members to highlight their union affiliation when they donate to change that. Lastly, she showed this year's video that highlights the "I'm the chair; you're the chair; we're all the chair" campaign theme. **Now it's time to do our part.**



UCAN training set to begin.

The Labor Council is set to begin a Union Community Activist Network (UCAN) training at the Laborers International, Local 35, office at 112 South Street in Utica. This program of 15 to 20 hours provides both new and more seasoned union members with a skill set that will allow them to represent their unions more effectively and draw their fellow members into more active community participation. Locals are strongest when their members are visible in their communities. UCAN training positions individual members to take the lead in their local outreach activities and in coordinating activities with other locals and civic groups. UCAN connects union members to local support services and prepares them to actively participate in union building and community networking activities. UCAN is truly the embodiment of the union philosophy working at the community, grass-roots level. Although the normal registration period is passed, anyone interested should feel free to call Enesa at the Labor Council at 735-6101 to see if there are still spots available. The registration fee is \$50 and the first session is slated for Thursday, November 7. Most of the remaining sessions are scheduled for Wednesday evenings. This program is good stuff. What we all need is more engagement and involvement by union members in their locals and in their communities. This is a great first step in that direction.



MVCCPA Labor Film Series

The next film slated for the Professional Association Labor Film Series is the 1987 film *Matewan*. The film dramatizes the events of the Battle of Matewan, a coal miners' strike in 1920 in Matewan, West Virginia. It's a story about hard times and union organizing. It's a story about union busting and racial tension and violence. It's a story about labor history and personal agony. It's a story worth seeing. It will air at 6PM on Wednesday, November 6, in the Schafer Theater on the Utica campus. All film series events are open to the public and preceded by a brief talk about each film and its relevance. Join us.

The buying season is upon us... Support unionized businesses and local little guys.

The time of year when we in unions should most appreciate our good jobs and benefits is here. At a time like this, it's hard not to marvel (unfortunately not in a good way) at how poorly the collective Waltons (essentially the richest humans on the planet) treat most of their more than one million Walmart employees. If you're near a Walmart on Black Friday this year, you



may be witness to some sort of pro-worker demonstration or job action. If so, join in, lend your voice to the effort, and get involved. Walmart workers need our support. Sign the Black Friday pledge. To do so, go to <http://makingchangeatwalmart.org/>.

Maybe if enough people shopped elsewhere, Walmart might finally realize that treating employees well is more important than low prices. As can be seen in the graphic above, there are nearly a million Walmart workers making less than \$25,000 per year. Look toward the future. Wouldn't it be a great idea if, when communities or counties promise tax breaks to entice big box stores (not just Walmarts) to their areas, they also required the same big boxes to pay living wages and provide sufficient benefits so none of their employees need utilize local social services. It didn't happen years ago when Walmart first came to Oneida county. Hopefully something of that sort can happen in the future. In the meantime, spend your money where employees are protected by a union contract (Chanatry's, Topps) or where they are treated well.





American Heart Association - Local events

Jennifer Balog, Director of Development for the local AHA, was a guest at the October Council meeting and invited increasing union participation in upcoming events in Utica and Rome. In her words, "We would be thrilled to have a strong union presence at these events!" We should not disappoint. The major events are listed below.

February 8, 2014: Rome Indoor Run/Walk
February 9, 2014: Kids Walk and Educational Expo
February 28, 2014: My Heart. My Life. Expo
February 28 & March 1, 2014: WIBX Heart Radiothon
February 28 & March 1, 2014: WKTV Heart Telethon
March 1, 2014: America's Greatest Heart Run & Walk

Talk these events up to members of your local and field a team. Be sure to participate in the union category where there are special trophies for Highest Total Amount Donated, Highest Average Donation, and Most Team Members.

Fran Roy, Utica Teachers (Retired), does a great job every year coordinating union participation in the Greatest Heart Run/Walk.



Labor Council: 2013 candidate endorsements

These endorsements were included in the Sept-Oct Newsletter. With the election just days away, they are listed again below.

The officers of the Council urge union members to support these candidates.

For Utica Common Council:

At-large: Ed Bucciero
At-large: Jack LoMedico
At-large: Frank Meola
4th District: Joe Marino
6th District: Samantha Colosimo-Testa

For Utica Comptroller: Bill Morehouse

For Utica City Court Judge: Ralph Eannace

For Oneida County Legislature:

District 1: Ron Townsend
District 5: Mike Waterman
District 6: Les Porter
District 7: Jerry Fiorini
District 15: Jim D'Onofrio
District 16: Brian Miller
District 18: Maria Giglio
District 19: Ed Welsh
District 22: Rose Ann Convertino
District 23: Emil Paparella

For Herkimer County Legislature:

District 1: Marty Lupino
District 2: Tom Powers
District 3: Bob Schrader
District 4: Bob Wellington
District 5: Ray Johnson
District 6: John Stevens
District 11: Jim Bono
District 17: Bruce Weakly

For New York State Supreme Court: John Centra



Think you can be complacent? Not hardly.

Look at what's happening elsewhere.

In California: The mayor of San Jose is seeking a constitutional amendment to allow state and local governments to cut pension benefits to current employees.

In Michigan: Senate passed a bill to remove the requirement that a licensed electrician perform electrical work in manufacturing and mining operations. The House passed a bill that would fine workers who engage in mass pickets \$1000 per day and their union \$10,000 per day.

In Ohio: Right to work (for less) supporters have collected over 100,000 signatures to put Right to Work on the 2014 ballot.

In Tennessee: State Supreme Court upheld a 2011 law requiring photo ID in order to vote.

This is just a sample but you can see the attacks are everywhere and New York is not immune. The right to organize is under attack. Efforts to suppress the vote of workers, females, minorities are on-going and real.

We must stay informed and be vigilant. Get more involved with your local and be part of the solution.

But the news isn't all bad.

In Maryland: In some counties, efforts are afoot to raise the minimum wage to over \$11 per hour.

In Washington DC: Hearings are being held on minimum wage, paid sick leave, and living wage legislation.



Making NY Work

This is a new initiative of the NY AFL-CIO. There is a webpage (makingNYwork.org) currently under construction that will spell out this ambitious initiative in considerable detail. For now, here's a brief synopsis of the scope of the project. It centers on five main areas.

1. Develop strong, long-term industries with family sustaining jobs.
2. Invest in public services.
3. Lift low wage workers out of poverty.
4. Strengthen supports for working families, both on and off the job.
5. Empower working men and women.

Now that's an agenda working people can get behind!

Stay tuned...

Think about the Rescue Mission during this holiday season

If your local is looking for a community organization to support during the upcoming winter holidays, look no further than the Rescue Mission of Utica. Their mission states that the Mission is "a Christian ministry unconditionally endeavoring to assess and meet the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of people coming for assistance."

Each year the Mission does just that. It changes lives and replaces hopelessness and desperation with hope and possibility. That is certainly something any labor local could get behind and support. Think about it for this year.

With Thanksgiving meals first on the horizon, the Mission most urgently needs turkeys, potatoes, #10 canned vegetables, and bread for stuffing or the money to purchase these items.



Upcoming Events

Next Labor Council Meeting:

November 14 at 6pm, 287 Genesee Street, Utica
Join us if you are able.

Christmas Party &

December Council meeting

December 19 at 6pm at the Brewery

Check out the new Labor Council web page...
cnlyc.org

Think about contributing to the newsletter...

Got a labor quote to share? Got a photo, a cartoon, a story you'd like to share? Have a topic that interests you or an issue you'd like pursued in the Newsletter?

Just let me know. I'd love your input.

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