

Newsletter of the AFL-CIO

Central New York Labor Council

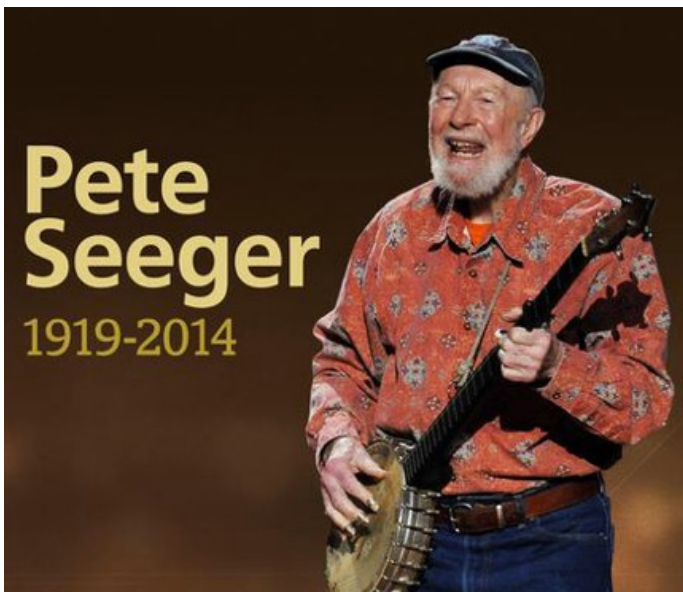
Serving the Mohawk Valley since 1882

January/February 2014



It's a new year with new challenges ahead. Let's all devote ourselves to union activism and solidarity. Certainly the threats to organized labor remain and will not disappear.

A Life Well Lived: Pete Seeger, an American Icon, Passes at 94



On Monday, January 27, Pete Seeger quietly faded off to sleep, marking the end of a marvelous life of 94 years. He was a joyous champion for the ages and his voice will be missed but never forgotten. He has been called many things, among them singer, songwriter, folk revivalist, anti-war protestor, union activist, environmentalist, mentor, and American hero. The list goes on and on. The labels fit but don't fully define who Pete was or what he did or what he meant/means to America and to common folk everywhere. Most of all, Pete Seeger was an individual who cared about people and fairness, justice, and mother

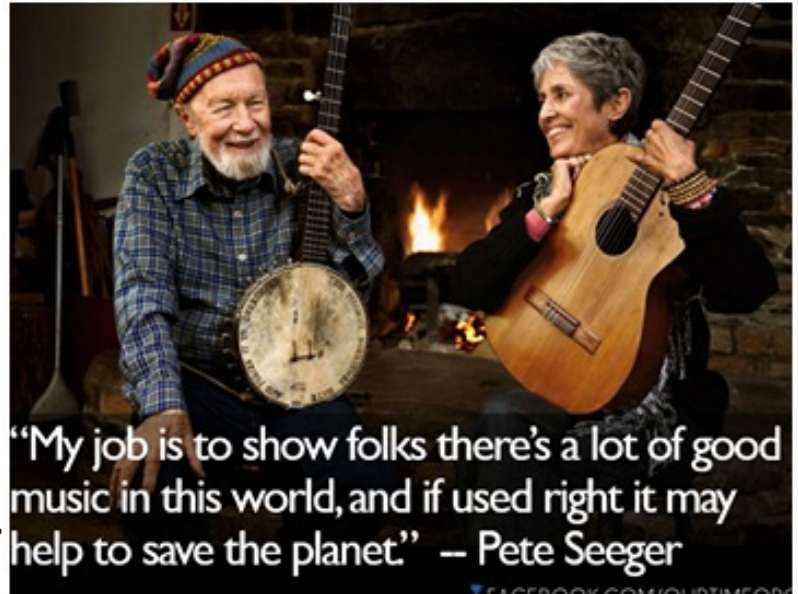


earth. He was an idealist who wore his idealism on his sleeve, or more correctly, proclaimed it with his banjo and guitar. He loved to sing but he loved more to hear people joined together in song with him. He was an unapologetic liberal who believed in the dignity of work, unionism, justice, equality, and the importance of preserving this planet we live on. His sense of community was strong and stemmed from his core values and beliefs. And it was his sense of community that fueled his political activism. In the photo below, Pete is seen doing at the age of 92 what he did best... walking the walk, in this case as part of the Occupy Wall Street movement... with 2 canes!!



Just about 65 years ago he built with his own hands a simple log cabin on the shore of the Hudson River in Beacon, NY. That's where he lived for the rest of his life, as a citizen of his community who worked hard to bring about the reclamation of the Hudson. To do that he raised money to build the 106-foot sloop Clearwater that was modeled after riverboats of the 19th century when the Hudson was a life-line of commerce. From it he sang and educated and lobbied. Eventually he was instrumental in the passage of the Clean Water Act of 1972. During his lifetime, the Hudson River went from a grossly polluted and nearly lifeless waterway to the fishable and swimmable river of today. At one time back in the mid-1900s, the river was so polluted that wooden boats from the Caribbean were sailed up it to kill the worms that infested their hulls. In this and so many aspects of his life, he lived by the motto he adopted, "Think globally but act locally". That's a model that all of us would be well advised to follow.

The sixth grade. That's when I learned there was a difference in money, whether you came from money or you were poor. That's when



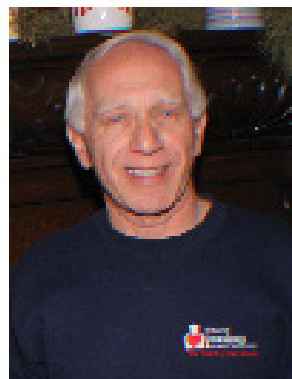
March 1 is approaching: Is your UNION team ready? Team Sam is.

Don't forget that there are three trophies up for grabs each year in the Greatest Heart Run/Walk - Union category. Those awards (and trophies) are for the most team members, the highest total amount of money raised, and for the highest average contribution. There's no reason that every local affiliate is not represented in the list of union teams com-



**AMERICA'S GREATEST
HEART RUN
& WALK 2014**

peting for these awards. IBEW Local 43 is always there. So is Laborers Local 35 and CWA Local 1126. The Rome Teachers Association generally do themselves proud as do members of UMWA from Remington Arms. Well, this year the MVCCPA's Team Sam is planning to be out there walking in force. Every local has someone special who has been lost to a heart-related disease. Forming a team and honoring the memory of that lost member is just one reason to get out and Francis trying to



in the union category. If your local is considering **troy@msn.com**. It is a great time and a great cause. we'll need a photo for the Newsletter. Send us your post that as well. Also, the Labor Council will be if you're a delegate or union member and would like Enesa Sabanagic at 735-6101. Let's face it, the more

there with your local members raise money for a great cause. Roy has been the go-to guy increase the number of teams this, contact him at **francis-** And if your local has a team, logo if you have one and we'll walking together as a team so to be a part of a group, contact the merrier.

Labor Council Hosts Holiday Party at the Brewery

On December 19th, delegates and guests from many of our affiliate locals were on hand at the Brewery to celebrate the end of the year with a bit of fellowship. Part was our traditional year-end meeting/gathering and part was a brief ceremony to recognize the members who had just completed the UCAN training. And part was just spending a little time with friends. It is certainly encouraging to welcome a group of new activists into the Council. Among the invited guests in attendance were US Representative Richard Hanna, NY Assemblyman Anthony Brindisi, County Executive Anthony Picente, Oneida



Fred Monaco joined us from the north country.



The MVCC Professional Association showed up.



The United Way, our partner, was there



County Sheriff Rob Maciol, and Utica Councilman Bob Marino. Their basic message to delegates is that the input of labor is important and the doors are open to working people to express their needs and explain their issues. It's up to us to follow through on that and take advantage of every opportunity offered to put our agenda up front before our representatives. Never forget that they work for us.



President Costello talked a bit



UMWA Remington was there.



CWA Local 1126 was in the house.



Laborers from LiUNA Local 35 were there.

The Council leadership and guest lined up for a photo op.



Holiday Party: In addition to the locals already mentioned, the UFCW was represented. Add to these the teamsters and printers, the letter carriers, the nurses, and the auto workers from Revere in Rome. As usual, there were members of the Rome Teachers at the party and members of the plumbers and pipefitters. All in all, it was quite a varied group and that's a primary strength of the Council. There is just something special when union members from different types of locals get together and get to know each other's issues.



The holiday celebration was bigger this year than in the recent past. It's probably an indication of increasing engagement of affiliate locals with the Council as evidenced by the increasing attendance at our monthly meetings.



A basket of cheer...
all union-made.

Lastly, a special thank you to the FX Matt Brewing Company for making the tavern and visitor center available to us at such a reasonable cost. It's a small but clear example to all of what good labor relations can and should be. And as always the food provided by Chanatry's was terrific.



Pride of Utica...
Comets tickets go to Brian at UAW

Finally, for all of us who've been involved in the Council and Labor Agency over the years, it was good to see Tom Slocum who's been struggling with a stubborn foot infection. All our best wishes to brother Slocum.

Council meetings for 2014

The Labor Council generally meets on the 4th Thursday of the month at 6pm. The Council office is located at 287 Genesee Street, Utica. The dates of meetings are included below.

February 27	July 24	December - TBD
March 27	August 28	
April 24	September 25	
May 22	October 23	
June 26	November 20	

Union members are always welcome to attend Council meetings. The more the merrier.

Congressman Hanna visits the Council

Congressman Richard Hanna was a guest at the January Labor Council meeting. Pat Costello took the opportunity to pass on info about labor's positions on some important legislation. Tops on that agenda is the expansion of unemployment insurance to workers who've been unable to find work and would be without a safety net without this assistance. Every day Congress waits, more working families suffer.

An estimated 37% of unemployed workers have been unable to find work for more than 6 months. It is Mr. Hanna's party that has stood in the way of expanded benefits and we want him to break with the Republican's obstructionist and mean-spirited stance. Their stance makes no sense. Clearly every penny a jobless worker receives while trying to find work is immediately put back into the local economy to buy food, pay rent or a mortgage, and generally just to live.

Labor also opposes the "Fast Track" legislation that is now before Congress. It stifles legitimate debate and puts the process out of sight, something that



never works in favor of working people. From the perspective of labor, "fast track" acts to increase our trade deficit, damage our already struggling manufacturing sector, forces the wages of working people down, all the while increasing the hold of the richest on economic policy and the

distribution of wealth. Because “fast track” simply does not level the playing field for American workers, organized labor opposes it. President Costello challenged Mr. Hanna to introduce him to even one local worker who has benefitted from current trade policy such as NAFTA while at the same time offering to bring him into contact with many in our area who have been hurt. 564 organizations, including organized labor, environmental groups, fair trade organizations, health advocacy groups and others, have delivered a letter to Congress strongly opposing this legislation. Go

to www.citizenstrade.org to read the letter and see the impressive list of signatory organizations. The Republican, big business-friendly position simply doesn't help working Americans.

Labor's position on immigration is that the policy simply be fair and provide a roadmap to citizenship that will protect working families and help to keep families together. Republican

approaches that seem mostly punitive and intent on keeping guest workers in low paying jobs works against all working families. Mr. Hanna appears much more amenable to such sane approaches than many in his party who can only be described as holding extreme positions on immigration.

Imagine yourself living in poverty in a country where you've given up hope on ever having the ability to provide food, shelter, and security for your family. Think about what you'd do if you had a way to get to a country with more opportunity and then think about sensible immigration policy that includes worker rights and a pathway to citizenship you could earn.

Fast Track Facts

Congress is considering legislation right now that would “Fast Track” the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

The Fast Track bill would:

- ✓ Enforce the secrecy of trade negotiations and keep the public, journalists, and even Congress out of the debate.
- ✓ Destroy jobs, the environment, access to medicine, and Internet freedom.
- ✓ Decrease privacy and allow for more corporate and government surveillance.
- ✓ Violate the constitution - Congress is intended to oversee trade decisions that affect all of us.

Share this to spread the word. Call your reps!



Go Red for Women Day

is this Friday, February 7.

Try to remember to wear something red to work to show support for efforts of the AHA to fight heart disease in women. Take a photo and send it in to Enesa so we can show it off in the next newsletter.



And we can't let our representatives forget about the minimum wage. Let's start with the fact that over 70% of Americans believe the minimum wage should be increased. Approximately 30 million Americans would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage and that money would go directly back into the economy to stimulate growth and more jobs. Republicans must stop holding this legislation hostage by linking its passage to cuts in food stamps needed by those with the least. America can do better.

Mr. Hanna recognizes that some positions held by his party are extreme but asserts he is working to moderate them. He asserts he has never voted against any legislation that tries to subvert the Davis-Bacon legislation that requires prevailing wages be paid on public works projects. He is proud of his 100% voting record protecting women's rights. In fact he recently voted **No** on H.R. 7, the No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act. He voted **Yes** on H.R. 2642, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act (Farm Bill) because it benefits upstate NY. He also points out that he is alone in Congress in posting on his website a detailed explanation of why he voted as he did on any piece of legislation. Whether you agree with his positions or not, it is worth visiting his website to read these.

While the discussion was at times vigorous, all in attendance were thankful that the congressman agreed to join us and speak frankly. Members and delegates alike should be sure to contact his office about any pending legislation or issue impacting labor. His contact information follows.

Washington Office

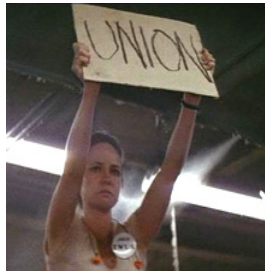
319 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
P: 202-225-3665
F: 202-225-1891

Utica Office

258 Genesee St.
Utica, NY 13502
P: 315-724-9740
F: 315-724-9746

MVCC Professional Association Labor Film Series

On Tuesday, February 3rd, The PA film series will air the 1979 film *Norma Rae* starring Sally Field. The story is based on Crystal Lee Sutton's life as a textile worker in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina, where the battle for the workers' union took place against a J.P Stevens Textiles mill. This film relives an important bit of labor history that is especially relevant today given the attacks being waged in different states on the right of workers to organize and also given the fact that the issue of increasing the minimum wage is swirling around congress. As always, there will be a brief (not more than 15 minutes) presentation about the film and the issues it addresses immediately before the film. This is an excellent film that deserves to be seen by anyone interested in workplace and/or women's rights.



The movie will be shown in the Schafer Theater in the IT Building on the Utica campus. Admission is free to everyone. Hope to see you there.

Other films to be aired this semester include Robert Reich's new film *Inequality*

jane fonda
lily tomlin
dolly parton

9 to 5

for All (March 11) and
9 to 5 (April 29). Both will be shown in

Utica at the Schafer Theater and will begin at 6pm.

Walk a Mile in my Shoes

The Rescue Mission of Utica will be holding it's 3rd annual "Walk a Mile in my Shoes" fundraiser on Saturday, February 8, at 11am at Hanna Park in Utica. Registration begins at 10am. If your local or any union members out there are interested in participating in an events for an organization that changes lives, consider this. The Rescue Mission does wonderful work and makes this a better community for their efforts.



United Way

LIVE UNITED



If you haven't made your donation to the United Way yet, there's still time. The need doesn't diminish with time. Sadly, it's always there and increasing as time passes. So when you think of helping your community, think UW.

Walgreens ending contract with UPS in favor of non-union FedEx

Walgreens just announced it plans to end the contract with UPS (Teamsters) and instead send their business to FedEx. This will negatively impact 600 good union jobs. NYSAFL-CIO President Mario Cilento sent the following letter to Kermit Crawford, the President of the Pharmacy, Health and Wellness Division of Walgreens. Central Labor councils and area labor federations (ALFs) are being asked to express their displeasure with the decision. We can go one better. Review the letter below and go to Walgreens' web page and express your displeasure there. This represents another in a long list of unfortunate "race to the bottom" examples provided by corporate America.

With some deletions, President Cilento's letter follows.
On behalf of the 2.5 million union members, retirees, and their families I have the privilege to represent, I write to express deep disappointment with Walgreens' decision to end its contract with UPS.

We are disheartened by the impact on good union jobs that this decision will have. It's estimated that your cancellation will impact over 600 jobs.

Additionally, union health plans that utilize Walgreens will now have prescriptions delivered to their members by non-union drivers. This is disconcerting for unions, which are mindful that their resources should be used to support good jobs with union representation whenever possible.

In addition to those who use Walgreens' mail service, union members are customers in your brick and mortar stores. They will be troubled by your decision and the impact on the livelihoods of their sisters and brothers.

We hope you will reconsider and support the quality union workers at UPS.

Even two sentences entered on the company's web page can have real impact if repeated by many. Try to make your displeasure known directly to Walgreens and think carefully about where you want to shop and get your prescriptions filled in the future.

Memorable Quotes:

"Thank God for ACC [Alamance Community College] where even the working poor can come, get financial assistance, and get a new start in life."

I met the doctor's children, the lawyer's children and the ones who had money versus the ones like myself... I noticed it was those children that were always the cheerleaders, in band... And people like myself and the young boys, we didn't even think about it because we didn't have the money to participate. But I just resented that my family were textile workers. And textile workers were called lint heads and cotton mill trash because they were poor. ...When you worked in a cotton mill and when you came out the lint would all in your hair. Back then we didn't realize it was getting all in our lungs too. That's what I resented."

Crystal Lee Sutton (the real Norma Rae), talking about her local community college and about class differences in her town when she was growing up.

A Serial Graphic Story of Unions and Inequality or If you don't like inequality, maybe you should support unions.

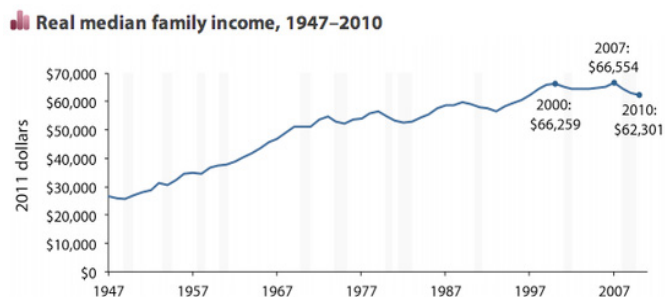
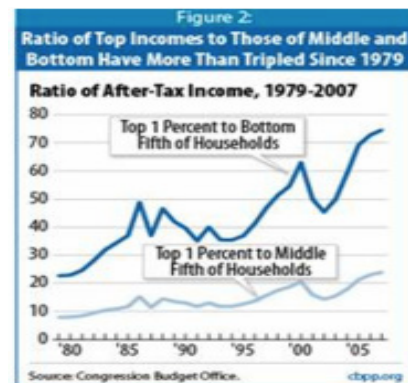
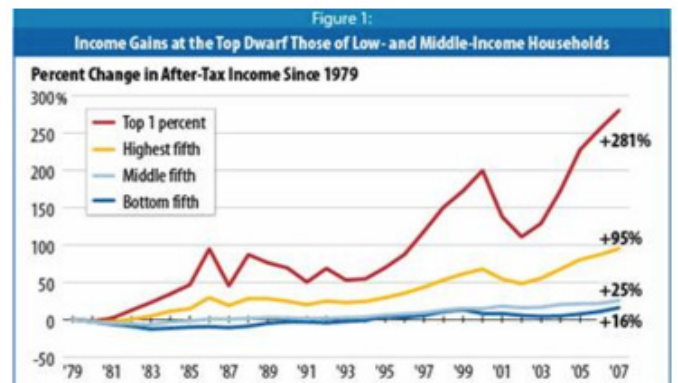
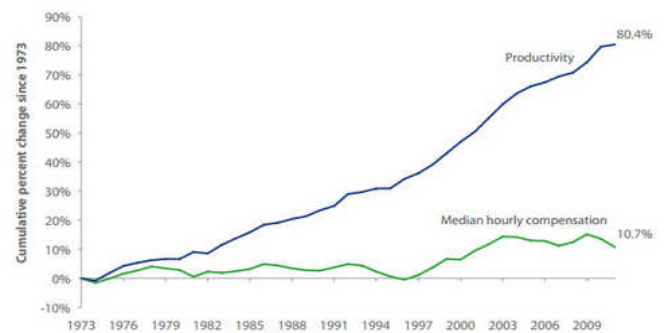
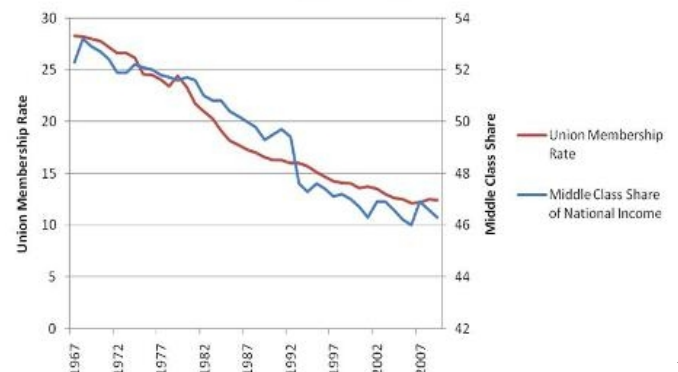


FIGURE A: Change in hourly productivity and median compensation, 1973-2011



Five graphs, all with depressing economic news for the little guy... for just regular families. It's simply baffling. What could possibly explain it?????????

As union membership decreases, middle class income shrinks



All graphs used in this "story" were taken from I. Clawson, *Daily Kos Labor*; Sun, Sep 01, 2013.



If you haven't yet gotten your copy of the 2014 Working Women calendar, stop by the Council office and get one.

A First, hopefully annual, Labor Council Poker Run is being planned.

While it's just in the initial planning stages, a Poker Run is being planned for the warm weather season. At this point it's expected that it will begin and end at the UFCW headquarters at the Oneida County Airport. Any kind of vehicle will be allowed to participate with each participant receiving a poker card at each of five stops. The "winner" is whoever ends up with the best poker hand. At this point there are also plans for participants to meet up with participants in a similar poker run by union members from the north country. Logistics and details are yet to be finalized but be thinking about it.

Winter Coat and Boots Drive

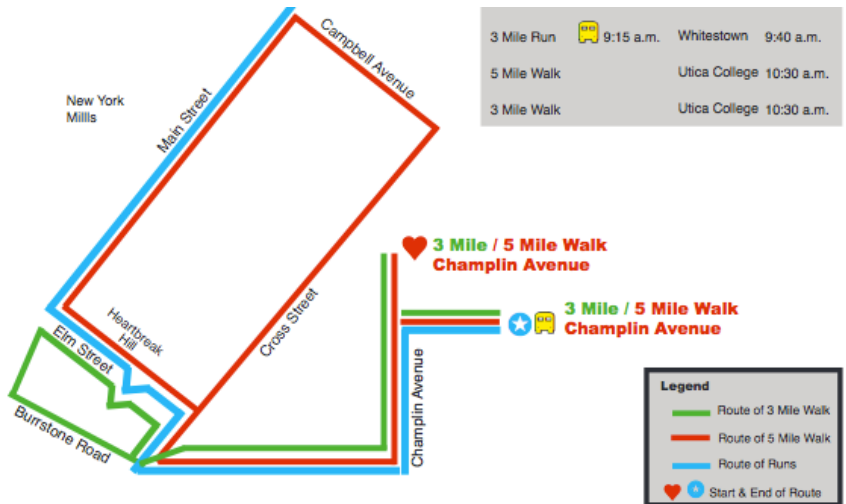
The Winter Coat and Boots Drive that the Central New York Labor Council sponsored before Christmas netted over 200 warm and usable items. At the January meeting of the Council, Enesa reported that the items had been distributed to a variety of grateful organizations. These included the Veterans Outreach Center, Herkimer County Catholic Charities, the Rome Rescue Mission, the Thea Bowman House, Evelyn's House, and Emmaeus House.



Thanks sincerely to all the members and locals who got behind this effort and did a little something to make these cold months more comfortable for our fellow citizens who must make due with much less than us. When you participate in an initiative like this, you can't help but realize how fortunate we are to have good middle class jobs with benefits and protections. Let's never stop working to make a good job the reality for every healthy person who wants to work.

Upcoming Events:

March 1: America's Greatest Heart Run/Walk - Utica College



Both walks start at Utica College at 10:30am.
All runners are bussed to their start lines.

St. Patrick's Day Parade

Saturday, March 15 at 10am

The Labor Council will be sponsoring a float and we'll need workers at the Council office by 8:00am.



Check out the Labor Council web page... cnylc.org

There, among other things of interest, you will find an electronic archive of past newsletters. Check them out and share them with your brothers and sisters.

Next Labor Council Meeting:

February 27 at **6pm**, 287 Genesee St., Utica

Join us if you are able.

Thinking about contributing to the newsletter?

Contact: Bill Perrotti, Newsletter editor at

bill.perrotti@yahoo.com