

THE WORKING PRESS

The Labor Coalition, Midstate Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO 109 West State Street; Ithaca, NY 14850 607-277-5670

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Newfield Teachers Out On The Line

The Newfield Teachers' Association (NTA) is standing strong in their struggle for a more equitable contract with the Newfield School Board. After 17 months of working without a contract, some progress has been made but the School Board has still not come up with a proposal that addresses the major inequities in the compensations system.

The teachers' salaries in the Newfield School District lag far behind the salaries of other Tompkins County teachers. In fact, not only is the Newfield teachers' median salary the lowest for any public school in Tompkins County, it is ranked 574th out of 597 districts in New York State.

The District's present salary proposal is still just over 3% in the next two years, lower than the salary increases received by

other teachers in the County. At this rate, the District will continue to lose some of its best teachers to districts that are willing to pay

"Our salaries are already considered lower and to take that kind of hit just puts people further behind."

more competitive salaries and to reward teachers for loyalty and length of service. As of now, eight experienced teachers have resigned this year.

Meanwhile, the District is also proposing givebacks on health insurance, with higher premium rates, and a bigger percentage paid by the teachers. For new employees, the situation is particularly bad. According to the Dis-

trict's present proposal new employees would get a \$1,000.00 pay increase with \$1400.00 givebacks on health insurance. "That's just unacceptable," says Albert Comfort, President of the Teachers' Association. "Our salaries are already considered lower and to take that kind of hit just puts people further behind."

The Union has met with the District and a federal mediator in recent weeks and made progress on some non-economic issues.

The Newfield Teachers' Association was joined by other local labor activists at an information picket in front of Newfield Schools on November 29 and November 6. Contact the Labor Coalition if you want to get involved in future picketing and job actions.

**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**



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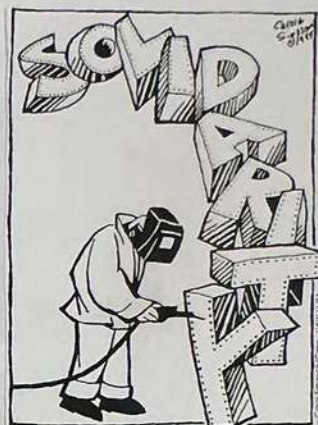
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Steelworkers Score Victory at U.S. Salt

The workers at U.S. Salt, members of Steelworkers, Local 12460 scored a major victory on Halloween Eve, winning a new contract with their employer. The Union was faced with management proposals full of Union givebacks on issues centered around seniority, forced overtime, and discipline and prepared for a strike.

The Labor Coalition, after hearing about the impending strike and U.S. Salt's plan to bring in replacement workers, planned a rally for Sunday, November 1. U.S. Salt could see the writing on the wall - workers around Central NY standing together for a fair contract - and they gave in late Halloween eve.

What was going to be a picket line on November 1 turned into an inspired victory rally. Steelworkers were joined by the Labor Coalition staff and steering committee, as well as UAW 2300, Odessa and Newfield Teachers, and the Building Trades.



SOLIDARITY WORKS

Health and Safety



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has awarded a \$469,000 grant to a national consortium of labor-based safety and health advocates, including Midstate Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO). Midstate will receive \$21,000.

The grant will fund 1998-99 implementation of the "Protecting Workers Who Exercise Rights" (PWWER) project. The PWWER project is designed to provide workers with information, materials, training and education aimed at increasing understanding of their rights to call for OSHA inspections, and to be protected in cases where employers retaliate against workers who exercise their rights under the OSHA.

The Labor Coalition has a new health/safety staff member. Greg Shaw is available to perform no-cost on-site ergonomic analyses to help workers identify potentially harmful work environments or work practices. If workers have concerns about their work environments or pain or discomfort they experience as a result of performing their job they should call for a free consultation.

The Political Front

1998 Labor Victories In Congress...

As Congress closed shop on a less than productive year, the following victories were chalked up to the efforts of labor:



WE WON:

- ⇒ 100,000 new teachers who will be hired to reduce classroom size
- ⇒ OSHA Federal enforcement funds above that provided by either the House or Senate
- ⇒ NLRB funding at the full Administration request - after three years of cuts and freezes
- ⇒ Increased funding for wage-hour enforcement
- ⇒ Provisions on workers and environmental rights protections

WE STOPPED:

- ⇒ A burdensome peer review process for OSHA
- ⇒ Narrowing of NLRB's jurisdiction to cover fewer employees
- ⇒ Creation of an expanded H-2A agricultural guestworker program without worker protec-

New Organizing

For more information, contact Tom Stephens (Labor Council Coordinator) (607) 277-5670

Community Mobilizes with Local Nurses

A group of registered nurses at the Cayuga Medical Center have recently decided to organize a Union with the help of CSEA/AFSCME, Local 1000. Nurses are fighting inadequate staffing, extra-long shifts on short notice, job redesign which assigns nursing duties to untrained hospital staff, and the lack of ongoing continuing education for nurses.

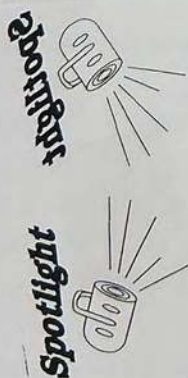
CSEA asked the Cayuga Medical Center management to subscribe to a set of principles, guaranteeing an organizing campaign free of intimidation and threats. Cayuga Medical Center has made it clear that it has no intention of subscribing to these principles. You can help.



Write a letter to Bonnie Howell, President and CEO of Cayuga Medical Center. This letter should state your support for a Nurses' Union, and should call on the hospital to subscribe to the "Principles of a Fair Campaign". Send the letter to: Cayuga Medical Center, 101 Dates Drive; Ithaca, NY 14850. Please send a copy of your letter to CMC Nurses Association/CSEA; 622 W. State St.; Ithaca, NY 14850.

The nurses have already reached 3,000 community members who are supporting their organizing efforts.

American Federation of Musicians Looking for New Members



The American Federation of Musicians, Local 132-314 is working to rebuild its presence in the Ithaca/Twin Tiers area. The Twin Tiers Music Association (Local 132-314), AFM International Staff, and the Midstate Central Labor Council are working jointly to promote Musicians Union Membership, which features such benefits as group health and equipment insurance, pension credits, competitive pay, and an employer referral service.

The Coalition will coordinate with community leaders to promote the arts through co-sponsored non-profit community performances and functions. Focus will also be directed upon increased member recruitment from all aspects of our local music culture. Be prepared to welcome new Union Brothers and Sisters!

For more information, contact Tom Stephens or Shannon Tiffany at 277-5670, or Vince Stepulis (Local Executive Secretary) at 1-888-734-8862.

Midstate Central Labor Council

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Local Union Contact

Phone

Service Employees International Union 200A

Coert Bonthius 275-0910

Service Employees International Union 200B

Bob Tompkins 315-437-2951

United Auto Workers 2300

Harry Evans 272-4108

United Brotherhood of Carpenters

John Gillis 272-7461

Internat'l Brotherhood of Electrical Wrkrs 241

Gary Kirton 272-2809

Bricklayers Local 8

Mark Babbage 273-3050

Civil Service

Employees Association Region 5

Will Streeter 800-559-7975

Tom Stephens, the Coordinator of the Midstate Central Labor Council, started at the beginning of August. He has been involved with the Building Trades since graduating from high school and has been a member of Carpenters Local 532 in Elmira since 1993. Tom also serves as Vice President of the Chemung County Central Labor Council and Trustee of the Carpenters Local 532.

Tom is interested in extending the Midstate Central Labor Council successes into Chemung and Steuben Counties through increased affiliate and member participation, fostering union awareness in the community and actively seeking to increase and improve organizing campaigns.

We Need Your E-Mail Addresses

In order to send out more timely labor alerts and mobilize community support for upcoming labor struggles, we need your e-mail address. If you have e-mail and you are interested in being on the E-mail Labor Alert Listing, please e-mail your address to: tstephens@clarityconnect.com or chf6@cornell.edu