

The Union Bug

Published for the members of the United Staff Union

March 2005

NSO 2005 Representative Assembly Delegates

The results of the recent election to the NSO RA are found below. Those serving as alternates are determined by the next closest vote totals and will serve should any of the delegates not be able to attend. Alternates only serve a one year term.

The Representative Assembly this year is scheduled for June 10-11, in San Diego, California. The number of delegates from each Caucus is determined by size of the membership with the USU President being an automatic delegate.

Professional Staff Caucus

Serving the 2nd year of a two-year term

Sandy Nass
Greg Spring

Elected for a two-year term

Eugene Dunk
Dennis Eisenberg

1st alternate Deb Byers
2nd alternate Tim Smith

WEAC/UniServ Associate Staff Caucus

Serving the 2nd year of a two-year term

Diane Johnson
Sally Leffelman

Serving a two-year term

Shorty Ott
Louise Uphoff

1st alternate Ann Reynolds
2nd alternate Linda Coogan
Michelle Plansky

WEA Trust Associate Staff Caucus

Serving the 2nd year of a two-year term

Sandy Trapino
Bev Kemp
Debbie Hallett
Jill Gefke
Dennis O'Kroley
Kathleen Cruice
Jeanne Mooney

Serving a two-year term

Karen Weiss
Dave Sundet
Dale Bruheim
Deb Lewis
Pam Born

1st alternate Jodi Kelter
2nd alternate Steve Gabbei

NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat

This year 10 USU members attended the NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat (WAR College) as participants, while two members, **Armin Blaufuss** and **Louise Uphoff**, were trainers.

Attending were **Denise Maney, Cindy Jensen, Shorty Ott, Tim Smith, Greg Spring, Roger Palek, Kim Rucker, Jo Horton, and Dale Bruheim.**

Our members received training in such topics as Basic Unionism, Grievance Processing (beginning and advanced), Assertiveness and Bargaining, and Dysfunction in the Workplace. Next year's training will take place January 13-14, 2006, in Sarasota, FL.

USU members taking active role in important committees

Two important WEAC committees are now underway that have several USU members on them. As an organization WEAC has chosen to include staff to serve on these committees and give input into their direction and outcome. As participants they will be sharing the staff's perspective on these important issues.

Hiring Committee for the next WEAC Executive Director

Cecile Brown, PALFAR Secretary

Bonnie Breivogel, Northern Tier UniServ Associate Staff

Fred Andrist, West Central Education Association Professional Staff

Consensus Document Committee (2010)

Mallory Keener, Capital Area UniServ South Professional Staff

Greg Spring, WEAC Negotiations Specialist Professional Staff

Louise Uphoff, WEAC Accounting Associate Staff

Fred Andrist, West Central Education Association Professional Staff

Ron Jetty, WEAC IPD Consultant Professional Staff

Kathy Spannbauer, Winnebagoland UniServ Associate Staff

ests and principles with all WEAC members.

This year's RA is in La Crosse at the La Crosse Center on April 22-24. The booth will only be open on Saturday. Anyone interested in donating time to work the booth should contact Fred Andrist. Shifts will be in one hour blocks of time. Contact Fred early to get your pick of the shifts.

Bread and Roses

January 12 was the anniversary of the start of the 1912 Bread and Roses strike—one of the most significant struggles in the history of the U.S. working class—in Lawrence, Mass. A new state law had reduced the work week from 56 to 54 hours. A small gain for workers? Sounds like it. But of course the bosses found a way to gain the advantage. They speeded up the looms and cut the average measly wage of \$6 a week—a last straw for workers living on the edge of starvation. When the wage cut was announced, workers shouted: "Short pay! Short pay!" Thousands of women and men started a spontaneous strike that rippled through two dozen textile factories in Lawrence. Some 23,000 people left the mills and poured into the streets. Immediately the National Guard was called out, along with 22 militia companies and 50 thugs disguised as strikers. They overturned trolley cars, smashed windows, assaulted people and planted dynamite near the strike headquarters.

In 1912, the American Federation of Labor was a group of weak craft unions, made up of white men organized by trade. The AFL refused to organize Black workers. Until 1918, the federation barred women from membership—even in an industry like textiles with twice as many female workers as male. The AFL opposed the Lawrence strike, calling it revolutionary and anarchistic. The IWW, in contrast, was formed by socialists like Eugene Debs. They called for industry-wide unions and even one big union for the whole country. The IWW emphasized unity and solidarity.

The Lawrence strike broke new ground in

USU Booth at the WEAC RA

An important aspect of the USU is our relationship with the members of WEAC and our UniServes. To build upon that relationship, the USU has recently begun a tradition of having a booth at the WEAC Representative Assembly. This gives us the opportunity to let WEAC members know who we are, explain that we are a staff union, and that we share common inter-

two ways. Women led it. And there was a conscious effort to unite workers of all nationalities. There were three demands: a 15-percent wage increase, a 54-hour work week, and double pay. The Lawrence strikers are remembered for inventing the moving picket line. Police had been arresting them for loitering--so they linked arms and formed a moving human chain that wove around the mills 24 hours a day, preventing scabs from getting in.

One freezing morning, cops drenched the strikers with fire hoses. The women caught a cop on a bridge, stripped off his uniform and nearly succeeded in throwing him into the icy river. One lawyer commented, "One policeman can handle 10 men, while it takes 10 police to handle one woman." The children grew weak as the strike continued into February and March. Arrangements were made for hundreds of children to be sent to the homes of socialists in other cities for the duration of the strike. This drew national and international publicity, and donations began to pour in. The cops responded by attacking women and children at the train station so the children couldn't leave. Cops clubbed them, threw them into a heap and dragged them into military trucks, clubbing them again if they cried out. They beat one pregnant woman so hard she had a miscarriage. That was the turning point. The national and international outcry forced Congress to open an investigation. The pressure on the bosses built. On March 14, the

strikers won a 25-percent raise for the lowest-paid workers and smaller increases for higher-paid workers, time-and-a-quarter pay for overtime, and no discrimination against strikers.

The strike victory resulted in easily won wage increases in mill towns throughout New England. But once the Lawrence struggle ended and the IWW left town, the bosses stabbed the workers in the back. They instigated a 50-percent speed-up in the mills. However, the Lawrence strike had shown that low-paid, oppressed workers of diverse nationalities could unite, organize and wage a powerful struggle to win concessions from the bosses. It stands as a shining example of how to build multinational, anti-racist unity with women in the lead.

The strikers wanted not only decent pay, but a chance to enjoy the good things of life. They carried signs saying, "We want bread and roses too!" And they inspired the song: "As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days. The rising of the women

means the rising of the [human] race. No more the drudge and idler, 10 that toil where one reposes—but a sharing of life's glories: Bread and roses! Bread and roses!"

(from Workers World Service)

