

September 16, 2005
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The Union Bug

OUR RENAISSANCE PLAN

USU MEETING SCHEDULE

Friday, 9/23/05, 6:00 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn, Wisc. Dells

Friday, 10/21/05, 6:00 p.m.
Hilton Garden Inn, Wisc. Dells

Friday, 12/09/05, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison

Friday, 1/20/06, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison

Friday, 3/17/06, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison

Friday, 4/28/06, 6:00 p.m.
Sheraton, Madison

Saturday, 4/29/06, Annual Mtg,
11:00 a.m. Sheraton, Madison



For a long time now WEAC has been looking into the future and quite appropriately tried to shape the organization's future. In the past it has been called and dealt with in a variety of ways: "A Blue Print for the Future", "A Strategic Plan," "2010," "The Consensus Committee" and now "Our Renaissance Plan."

Our Renaissance Plan contains thirteen initiatives that may or may not come to pass. Each has to take a certain course of action to become reality. This course of action is outlined in the document and highlights which appropriate organizational body must deal with it along with the key people identified to carry it forward.

Presently WEAC has begun the input gathering phase while the information is being distributed to a broader audience. The WEAC Board of Directors has reviewed the material and has put their questions/concerns about it in writing. UniServ Presidents will be given an opportunity to react to the document at their next meeting on September 17th. All Professional and the elected USU Associate Staff leadership will react to the document at the Professional Staff meeting on September 23rd. In an effort to reach further down into the organization, local presidents will be offered the opportunity for input and reaction at a weekend meeting yet to be set sometime before November.

It is our professional obligation to not sit on the sidelines during the discussion of *Our Renaissance Plan* but to give our perspective particularly when asked. Therefore, all the Professional and Associate Staff should review the document and the Professional Staff should come to the September staff meeting ready to provide a reaction and input. Associate Staff should give their reaction and input preferably in written form to their Steward and/or the USU Secretary and/or the USU Treasurer before the Staff meeting so that they may share it with the presenters.

The *Our Renaissance Plan* document has been recently sent to all WEAC/UniServ staff electronically so please take the time to review it and give your input at the appropriate time and place. Our future depends on it!! If you need a copy, contact President Andrist.

THE MYTH - A UNION PROTECTS BAD EMPLOYEES

Teachers and support staff hear this often in their ranks. Would you believe the USU hears it even about our organization? However, the answer is the same whether it is union teachers and support staff within schools or union employees who work for WEAC or the WEA Trust.

The best any Union can do is to ensure that all employees get due process and that “just cause” is met. “Just cause” simply means that the reason for any discipline, including termination meets a fair, common sense standard rather than be an overreaction or for frivolous reasons. This might require management to do their homework beforehand and/or apply some basic management principles such as progressive discipline rather than jump to termination for the slightest infraction.

People, particularly managers, that say Unions protect bad employees simply are either unwilling or unable to do those things that are required to justly and fairly discipline an employee. It is easier for a manager to complain about Unions than to do their job competently. It also makes employees that are struggling in their job because of the actions of a co-worker think it is the Union’s fault that it is continuing. This is not a Union issue, it is a manager/supervisor issue!!

Take, for example, the employee that consistently is breaking an employer rule. It doesn’t matter if it is stealing or just tardiness. If due process and just cause exist, it is possible for an employee to lose their job in either situation. Make no mistake about it. If an employee is screwing up, even if they ask for Union representation, the Union might not be able to ensure they keep their job.

The labor movement is people. Our unions have brought millions of men and women together, made them members one of another, and given them common tools for common goals. Their goals are goals for all America – and their enemies are the enemies for progress. The two cannot be separated.

President
John F. Kennedy

I think American labor unions get a large share of the credit for making us a middle-class country.

George Frederick Will (yes, THAT George Will)

SUBCONTRACTING



In a recent *ON WEAC Direct* article the issue of subcontracting was discussed and a bill was reviewed concerning it. The article clearly espoused the detrimental effects of subcontracting.

Please take the time to examine your work life and take note of how much subcontracting your organization does of our work. Whether it is WEAC or the Trust, the USU finds it ironic that an organization that should know the effects of subcontracting on the workforce uses it as much as it does.

If you want to take this issue a step more, write out your assessment of subcontracting in your work life and e-mail it to President Andrist.

NSO AND USU REACT TO HURRICANE KATRINA

Stripped to its essentials, what the labor movement is all about is power, the power for workers to confront management at the job site, across the bargaining table or in the political arena on equal footing. And it is that fundamental of gaining power, a power workers have only achieved through collective action, that is the basis of the union movement.

Arthur Osborne



We have all read the headlines and watched the news. We have seen the countless number of people that have been devastated by Hurricane Katrina. But have you stopped to think that we have fellow Union brothers and sisters just as dramatically affected by this tragedy? Fellow NSO staff people have lost family members, their homes, their places of work and the way they go about their lives.

Consequently, the NSO has set up a "NSO Disaster Relief Fund." Funds specifically collected will be designated for NSO members who have been impacted by Hurricane Katrina. The fund will accept all donations, no matter how large or small.

Contributions can be sent directly to **Vera Stafford**, NSO's Financial Advisor. Her address is **49730 8th Avenue, Grand Junction, MI 49056**. Her e-mail address is: verjer@btc-bci.com. The funds will be deposited into a special account. Checks should be made payable to "NSO Disaster Relief Fund." NSO will determine how many members are impacted and will provide whatever financial assistance they can.

The USU has placed the issue on the September Board meeting agenda and will consider making a donation to this fund. However, individual USU members should consider contributing as well.

Whatever their faults, unions have been the only powerful and effective voice working people have ever had in the history of this country.

Bruce Springsteen, 1996

WINTER ADVOCACY RETREAT (WAR COLLEGE)

The 2006 WAR College will take place January 13-14, 2006, in Sarasota, FL. This year the USU Board has approved 3 participants from the Professional Caucus and 4 each from the Trust Associate and WEAC/UniServ Associate Caucuses.

The WAR College is a wonderful opportunity to receive training in union issues such as grievance processing, bargaining, mentoring and union history, to name a very few. The training is done by our brothers and sisters of our national union, the National Staff Organization, including some from the USU. For more information about the WAR College and the NSO, go to their website at www.nationalstaff.org.

If you are interested in attending, please contact your caucus chair by Friday, October 15, 2005. They will then forward the names to President Andrist, who will make the final decision. The criteria are found in the USU Policies.



OBTAINING RETROACTIVE PAY WHEN YOU SUCCESSFULLY ACHIEVE RECLASSIFICATION

By Steve Pieroni

Obtaining reclassification of your position to a higher paying classification can be time consuming but satisfying. If you successfully obtain reclassification, there is always the issue of when the new pay rate will take effect.

The UEA designated representative is Dave O'Connell, Director of Human Relations at WEAC. All petitions for reclassification go through him. Mr. O'Connell takes the position that retroactive pay will commence from the time he receives a properly documented request for reclassification. Therefore, it is recommended that you submit a request for reclassification to Mr. O'Connell at the earliest possible date. Especially for our support staff members who work in UniServ offices, it is recommended that you file a request simultaneously with your UniServ President and Dave O'Connell.

It is also recommended that you consult with a knowledgeable USU representative before proceeding with a request for reclassification. Getting reclassified requires a lot of preparation. Putting together a portfolio of your work is essential.

In conclusion, it is possible to be successful in this type of case but it requires a great deal of preparation and knowledgeable advice. If reclassification is obtained, retroactive pay will be paid from the date that a written request is received by the UEA representative, Dave O'Connell.

ELECTION RESULTS FROM THIS SUMMER

1. There were 434 ballots prepared.
2. There were a total of 184 ballots returned and all were good ones.
3. The USU Board will certify these results at the September meeting.

WEAC Associate Staff

Ann Reynolds/Michelle Plansky (co)
Denise Maney

WEAC Professional Staff

Dennis Eisenberg/Melissa Cherney (co)
Dustin Beilke

WEAC/UniServ Associate Staff Caucus Chair(s)

Dianne Hellenbrand/Bonnie Breivogel (co)

WEA Trust Professional

Eugene Dunk

WEA P&C Associate

Carrie Yun/Kim Rucker (co)

NW Associate

Renee Ison

NE Professional

Tim Smith

WEA Trust Associate

Julie Olson
Penny Pick
Jill Gefke
Debbie Hallett
Jo Horton
Karen Weiss
Dale Bruheim
Beth Steckelberg

NE Associate

Deb Armitage

NW Professional

Steve Holzhausen

SE Associate

Sally Leffelman/Robbyn Marcinkevic Corbin (co)

SE Professional

Steve Cupery

SW Associate

Karen McCulloch

SW Professional

Peter Gust (Mallory Keener will fill in during Pete's recovery)