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The Union Bug

Published for the members of the United Staff Union

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PEGASUS CONFERENCE REPORT

As reported in an earlier newsletter, USU President Fred Andrist and Secretary Kathy Spannbaauer attended an organizational leadership conference held in Seattle, Washington in early November.

The two spent three days with a large group of WEAC elected officers, leaders, and managers discussing the sessions of the day and how the information might impact on the WEAC organization. There were many speakers on various subjects and the discussion was broad based.

The conference and discussion can be characterized by the following statements taken from the sessions:

- ❖ Leadership structure drives behavior
- ❖ Seek people out who disagree
- ❖ The need for psychological safety in a work environment
- ❖ Guidance built on engagement
- ❖ We generate the energy
- ❖ MLK's speech was "I have a dream" rather than "I have some issues"
- ❖ Leadership defined as – Commitment to the success of the people around you

Coinciding with this training, some of the WEAC/NEA leaders attended a Strong Affiliates conference in Austin, Texas.

Following both conferences the collective group met in Wisconsin in late November to reflect on the conferences and to begin a more concrete discussion on how these thoughts and attitudes could be implemented into the WEAC organization.

More meetings will follow and as information becomes available, it will be communicated here. Watch for it!

USU MEETING SCHEDULE

Board - Friday, 1/11/08, 6:00 p.m.
Concourse, Madison

Board - Friday, 3/7/08, 6:00 p.m.
Sheraton, Madison

Board - Friday, 4/25/08, 6:00 p.m.
Sheraton, Madison

Annual - Saturday, 4/26/08, 11:00 a.m.
Sheraton, Madison

"The history of America has been largely created by the deeds of its working people and their organizations. Nor has this contribution been confined to raising wages and bettering work conditions; it has been fundamental to almost every effort to extend and strengthen our democracy."

William Cahn, labor authority and historian

2008 WINTER ADVOCACY RETREAT

The following people will be attending WAR College in Sarasota, Florida, January 17 – 20. They were nominated by each Caucus and appointed by the President following the criteria in the bylaws which are:

- a. The organizational needs of the USU.
- b. The training needs of the Caucus/Individual.
- c. Service/commitment to the USU.
- d. Incentive for greater participation in union activities by new volunteers.
- e. Whether he/she has made an effort to attend previously sponsored USU training functions either as a trainer or as a participant.

Each participant is expected to provide a written report and/or assessment of training experience to the USU Board of Directors.

WEAC/UniServ Associate Staff

Dianne Hellenbrand
 Deb Meylor
 Bonnie Breivogel
 Deb Armitage

WEAC/UniServ Professional Staff

Anne Boley
 Courtney Derwinski
 Kim Wiemer-Noyce
 Cindy Russell

WEA Trust Associate Staff

Cynthia Majors
 Kathy Cruice
 Pam Born
 Dennis O’Kroley

Officers

Kathy Spannbauer
 Fred Andrist

Most either have recently bargained a contract within the USU or will be doing so soon. Additionally, the USU has following members training, Greg Spring, Jill Gefke, Eugene Dunk, Jina Jonen, Dennis Eisenberg, Louise Uphoff and Armin Blaufuss.

“The test of our progress is . . . not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have too much; it is whether we provide for those who have too little.”

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR, 1933-1945)

SEASONS GREETING FROM THE USU AND THE NEWSLETTER STAFF!



Shorty Ott

Louise Uphoff

Ruth Evenson

Fred Andrist

SWEA SANCTIONS CONTINUE AND BECOMING MORE IMPORTANT

SWEA UniServ Director Kim Wiemer-Noyce has accepted a WEAC position, therefore SWEA UniServ office, located in Platteville will be looking for a new UniServ Director to work alongside Directors Joyce Bos and Tom Fineran. However, SWEA's plan right now is to not fill Kim's position until summer and to have a fill-in, part timer until then. USU President Andrist feels that this is yet another example of UniServ President Addison-Fulton trying to prove her point of needing less staff and it is taking a priority over the interests of members and the welfare of the remaining staff.

The USU has already pointed out to management that there are only so many nights in a week for meetings and that the USU was going to encourage Joyce and Tom not to go above and beyond the expectations of other directors. President Andrist also told Dave O'Connell that given the dedication of Bos and Fineran, he felt that not going above and beyond would be difficult for them.

When SWEA does attempt to fill this position, the USU will make sure it is made clear to all applicants what they are getting into, should they decide to pursue being a WEAC employee assigned to the SWEA UniServ office. Preemptively we, the USU, will be encouraging all good fellow union brothers and sisters not to apply for the position.

We encourage your support of our union brothers and sisters as we continue sanction events until such time as working conditions for both Professional and Associate staff within that office improve. Much of the problems arise from a UniServ President that is taking micro-managing to the extreme, despite recently becoming a State Option UniServ (e.g., waiting so long to replace Kim). She openly does not respect staff and the contributions that they bring to the organization.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS WRONG IN SWEA

NSO advocate Lane Hotchkiss will present the USU case at an arbitration hearing scheduled January 10, 2008. This is the next step in a grievance filed by Professional Staff Joyce Bos, Associate Staff Regina Apel, and the USU. It is a result of UniServ President Addison-Fulton's overreaction to events surrounding staff and equipment that has been retired.

Ms. Addison-Fulton's overreaction resulted in lengthy unpaid suspensions for both USU members. The USU is arguing that it is without just cause.

Lane is a retired staffer from Michigan and has helped NSO in this capacity for many years.



"Someday, there will come the brotherhood of man. Someday, industrial warfare, as well as warfare between nations, will be seen to be ridiculous and a waste of life and money. Someday, men will work together in a grand cooperative scheme. But until that day, the trade union must stand as the only safeguard of the working man; the only instrument by which he can maintain himself and his family."

Clarence Darrow

USU TRUST ASSOCIATE STEWARDS AND MANAGEMENT WORK TO SETTLE GRIEVANCE

Trust Stewards Pam Born and Jenny Ahlvin, along with Vice President Greg Spring recently advocated on behalf of a Trust employee who was leaving.

The language in their contract basically said an employee earns their monthly leave each month provided that they worked all days in the rolling month. Management would then apply it to the person's accumulation at midnight on their anniversary date. Additionally, when a person leaves they receive pay for any unused leave.

The problem here was that the employee worked all days in the month, and resigned on the last work-day of the month. Her anniversary date came two days later, which was on a Sunday. Because she was not considered actively employed on Sunday, the Trust did not want to pay her for the earned leave.

The USU stewards believed that the contract had been violated in Article XIX-Leaves, Section 2-General Paid Leave (GPL), Provision A-Accrual, page 36; and Article XIX-Leaves, Section 2-General Paid Leave (GPL), Provision D-Payment for Unused GPL Upon Quit, page 37.

After filing a grievance, the parties worked to settle the matter at Step 2 of the grievance process. After several discussions, the Trust agreed to pay the employee for her earned leave and to apply the same standard for other employees in a similar situation (future precedential)!

Nicely done, Pam, Jenny, and Greg!!

"Until labor and capital join hands and recognize their interest is a common interest . . . there can be no progress"

*John Davison Rockefeller (1839-1937), industrialist,
oil monopolist, founded Standard Oil, philanthropist*



P & C MEMBERS SETTLE CONTRACT

The USU Member Benefits' contract expired June 30, 2007. The new contract was settled November 9, and will be from July 1, 2007, to June 30, 2010.

The members of the USU negotiation team were co-stewards, Cynthia Majors-Culp and Kim Rucker. They were assisted by Cedar Lake United Educators Director, Sam Froiland. The management team consisted of Vice President of Insurance Services, Jim Polcyn; General Council, Pranav Shah; and note-taker, Merry Bachim.

The USU team negotiated a 2.7% wage increase each year for the next three years and raised the employer contribution to retirement from 20% to 21%. They also received the domestic partner coverage for health insurance (the only USU group without it) and added an additional day for bereavement leave for immediate family. In addition, they received additional days for court subpoena and building disaster closure.

One of the biggest agenda items for the USU team was consistency for managers with unscheduled leave as it affects evaluations. As a result of these negotiations there will be guidelines for all managers to use.