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Steel Power

The Quarterly Newsletter of USW Local 9265

Spring 2010

Ex-NYSNA Rep: Fired By Union for Organizing Work

Sought Steel Workers' Help

By DAVID SIMS

A representative of the New York State Nurses Association is claiming she was fired April 13 because she was active in organizing NYSNA's staff to join the United Steel Workers after their old union walked away last month.

"It's interesting that an association that professes to be a union doesn't give the same rights to its employees," Sonia Echevarria said in a phone interview. She charged she was dismissed because she vocally protested NYSNA's refusal to voluntarily recognize USW as the new bargaining agent.



SONIA ECHEVARRIA: NYSNA hypocrisy showing

Affected by UNITE HERE Split

Her dismissal was made possible by the departure of NYSNA staff's former union, Workers United, which disclaimed its interest March 19 as

bargaining agent because of its split from UNITE HERE.

"We knew this was going to happen, so in the meantime we were exploring other unions to represent us," Ms. Echevarria said. USW, which represents the staff workers at the Public Employees Federation, was selected, with 63 of NYSNA's 66 staff members signing union cards asking to be represented by it.

"We asked NYSNA for voluntary recognition. They denied it, said they were not sure that was the wish of the bargaining unit," Ms. Echevarria said. "On March 23 we told them, we have 63 cards, why don't we have a neutral, third-party card count? They refused and forced our hand to go to the National Labor Relations Board."

Questions NYSNA's Rationale

NYSNA's reason for denying recognition, she said, was supposedly its uncertainty over which new union would represent the workers, as several had been contacted during the search for new representation. "There was no confusion," Ms. Echevarria insisted.

NYSNA Deputy Communications Director Randi Hoffman said in a

phone interview, "It's a personnel matter, and it's not appropriate for us to share the details of anyone's hiring or termination."

The NLRB will now conduct a mail ballot, which Ms. Echevarria seemed confident would confirm USW as the bargaining agent. Ballots will be counted May 11.

But days after the dispute, the contract negotiated under Workers United was dissolved and the conditions of employment for NYSNA staff were unilaterally changed, she alleged.

Benefits like compensatory time, paid lunches for staffers working in the field and grievance procedures were done away with. "They considered us at-will employees at that point," Ms. Echevarria said.

Confidentiality Dispute

She was fired over an e-mail sent to her chapter leader at Bellevue Hospital that NYSNA claimed included confidential information, but she denies the charge, saying it was her activism that cost her the job.

"Once we didn't have the union, it opened the door for them to fire me, and they did," she said. "I was instrumental in organizing us into

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

By Bob Beckwith

Conference Day is scheduled for June 18th in Saratoga, and we are expecting a great turnout. There's a lot happening between the State and PEF, and what happens with them will have a direct impact on



BECKWITH

us. The months and years ahead will bring many changes and challenges that we need to be ready

for. This year's Conference Day will allow us to begin discussing what we can do as a Union to succeed in the face of these changes and challenges.

This year's Conference Day also marks the beginning of the last year of our contract and the year we begin contract negotiations for a successor agreement with PEF. These negotiations will not be easy. The only way we will succeed is if we are united. USW Local 9265 is in the process of forming a contract team. The team will be made up of skilled members that are representative of the entire bargaining unit.

In addition to our normal business meeting, Conference Day also will be a great opportunity for members to learn about what Local 9265 is doing in the Labor and political communities. We will discuss our involvement with the employees of New York State Nurses Association (NYSNA) in their quest to become a USW Local and Local 9265's involvement in other Labor

affiliated activities. We will also discuss the upcoming 2010 elections and what we can do to help Labor-friendly candidates get elected. To that effect, Congressmen Paul Tonko and Scott Murphy plan on speaking at our event. If their plans do not change, this will be a great opportunity to meet and hear two Congressional Representatives from the Capital area.

After our business meeting, we encourage members to explore Saratoga and join us for a "Happy Hour" get together at The Irish Times, a new pub/restaurant in Saratoga. Hopefully, it will be a nice day so we can also enjoy the second floor outdoor deck. USW will also reimburse members for dinner in Saratoga on Friday night.

New this year, we are encouraging Albany area members to stay in Saratoga on Friday night by subsidizing the cost of rooms at the Hilton Garden Inn, making them available for fifty dollars

(\$50.00). We are doing this to allow Albany area members to socialize with the out-of-town members. Social solidarity has its place, too. It is a great deal and hopefully it will be a great time. Feel free to bring your spouse or split a room with another USW member.

I look forward to seeing everyone on June 18th in Saratoga.

May Day

Please read the reprinted description of the history of May Day in this *Steel Power*. It was generated for the recent New York City May Day Rally that was co-sponsored by USW 9265 and attended by several of our members there. The piece not only gives a great historical description of May Day, it helps remind us that success sometimes involves struggle and that without Unions like USW, workers would be at the total mercy of the employer.

Bob Beckwith

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Save the date!!

USW 2010 Conference Day

All members of USW Local 9265 are invited to attend this year's conference day in beautiful downtown Saratoga Springs.

Come join us for our annual meeting, and stay to enjoy the many activities Saratoga has to offer. We'll gather together again in the evening at one of Saratoga's fun pubs, *The Irish Times* to share some light refreshments.



Hilton Garden Inn

Hotel accommodations will be provided by *The Hilton Garden Inn*. Members not from Albany will have their stay paid in full by the union. Albany members may also stay at the *Hilton Garden Inn* Friday evening for \$50.

Members staying in Saratoga or spending the evening following *Happy Hour* will be reimbursed for dinner at a restaurant of your choice. Come spend the start of your weekend with your Brothers and Sisters.

Tentative Schedule of Events

Friday, June 18th, 2010

9:30-10AM	Registration Continental breakfast
10AM	Meeting*
12:30-1:30PM	Lunch
3:00PM	Meeting Concludes
3:00-5:00PM	Explore Saratoga!
5:00-6:30PM	Happy Hour! <i>The Irish Times</i>
6:30PM	Dinner

*Agenda topics include: Current Contract Issues, Contract Negotiation Team, Member Issues, Committee Reports, Labor/Political Action, and Guest Speakers Congressman Paul Tonko and Scott Murphy have been invited to attend.

The Hilton Garden Inn

125 South Broadway, Saratoga Springs

Directions: From South, take I-87 North to Albany Exit 24. Continue North on I-87 to Exit 13N. Follow Route 9 North for 3 miles and the hotel is on the left.

From Albany take I87-North to Exit 13N and follow Route 9 North for 3 miles and the hotel is on the left.

The History of May Day

MAY DAY, the international workers' holiday, began in the U.S.A., its roots go back to Chicago, in 1886.

After the Civil War, the nation's factories and mines were growing fast. They employed hundreds of thousands of new immigrants – German, Irish, Mexican, Chinese, and eastern Europeans – and tens of thousands of African Americans who had just won their freedom. Workers toiled 12, 14, and even 16 hours a day, for miserable wages and in dangerous conditions. During frighteningly long depressions, thousands of working-class families couldn't find work and often starved.

But business owners and the mainstream press blamed this widespread poverty on individual failure – and on the growing number of immigrant and black workers, who they claimed didn't share traditional "American values." Unions had to fight this tide of prejudice, racism and mindless worship of "free markets" as they organized workers.

The emerging labor movement united around a demand to shorten the working day to eight hours. One national labor organization called for a nationwide general strike on May 1st, 1886, if Congress did not act to establish an eight-hour day.

1886 was a year of strikes and militant labor action across the country. People called it "the Great Upheaval" – and Chicago was a center of protest. The city was home to a powerful anarchist movement that included Texas-born Albert Parsons, Lucy Parsons (who historians think had both African American and Mexican ancestors) and August Spies (a German immigrant). With thousands of other workers, they prepared to strike for the eight-hour day.

WHEN MAY 1ST DAWNED, 60,000 Chicago workers went out on strike. Two days later, with the strike gaining momentum, the Chicago police shot two strikers and wounded dozens more at the giant McCormick Reaper Works.

The anarchists organized a demonstration to protest the shootings, on May 4th in Chicago's Haymarket Square. As that rally neared its end, 200 police entered the square and demanded that the remaining protesters disperse. From the darkness someone (whose identity has never been determined) threw a dynamite bomb, killing one policeman and wounding 70 others.

In the chaos and hysteria that followed, the authorities smashed Chicago's labor movement. The Chicago police arrested anarchist leaders Albert Parsons and August Spies and six others and charged them with murder – even though there was no real evidence against them. They were convicted anyway, and four of them, including Parsons, were hanged in Nov. 1887.

After 1886, workers and labor radicals around the world began celebrating May 1st as a day of international working-class solidarity to demand the eight-hour day. In 1890, huge May Day demonstrations in the U.S., across Europe, and in Australia and Cuba demanded eight hours. The international labor movement denounced the frame-up of "the Haymarket martyrs" and demanded that those still in prison be freed. (They were pardoned by a pro-labor governor in 1893.)

AMERICAN BUSINESS LEADERS and the mainstream press wanted to distance the U.S. from May Day, because of its radical roots. With business support, in 1894 President Cleveland officially declared the first Monday in September as Labor Day.

Around the world, workers continued

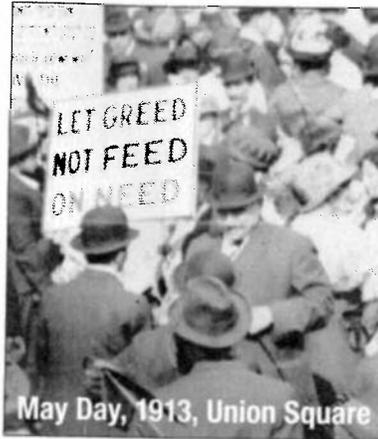
to celebrate May Day as International Workers Day. In the United States, especially after the Russian Revolution, this made-in-U.S.A. holiday was denounced as "un-American." Regular celebrations of May Day continued anyway, notably in New York's Union Square. But after the 1930s, the left in the labor movement came under sharper attack, and U.S. May Day celebrations grew smaller and smaller.

Today May Day is coming back to the country where it began. Millions of immigrant workers from Latin America, Asia and Africa have come to the United States, bringing their own experience in union struggles. They have always known that May Day is the workers' day.

As more immigrants join the U.S. working class and organize for their rights, immigration laws have increasingly been used to fire union members and break up union drives. In response, the labor movement started speaking out in support of immigrants' rights. In 1999 the AFL-CIO called for repealing the anti-immigrant law that makes work a crime. Instead, it called for legal status for the undocumented, reuniting immigrant families, and protecting organizing rights for everyone.

ON MAY 1ST, 2006, millions of immigrant workers poured into the streets in the Great American Boycott, walking off the job and marching against anti-immigrant legislation then being considered by Congress. Many unions supported this May Day protest, and others in the years that followed.

Today May Day belongs to us all. We march to demand equal labor rights and jobs for all. We march to carry forward the May Day tradition that began in 1886, and renew it for our new century.



**DON'T MAKE A FOOL
OUT OF ME...
I AM NOT YOUR ATM!!**



Please join the
**Capital District Area
Labor Federation**
in front of
BANK OF AMERICA
69 State Street, Albany

**Make
Wall
Street** **PAY**

WHO: Organized Labor
WHAT: Protest of Corporate Greed
WHEN: Thursday, April 1st at NOON
WHERE: Corner of State Street and Pearl Street, Albany

**GOOD JOBS
NOW!**

PRINTED BY HOUSE BY THE COAST



I would like to thank
USW members
Nancy Wolff,
Lisa Pulver,
Karen Conte and
Sherry Halbrook for
walking the picket line
for the
Holiday Inn Express
workers.

As all of you know, on January 28th, we met and celebrated the worker's victory at the Holiday Inn Express, Latham. An NLRB settlement had been reached including the reinstatement of the fired workers, full back pay and a new election. A month later the hotel is completely disregarding the law and the conditions we all fought so hard for.

On February 4th, the strikers made an unconditional request to return to work. Federal Labor Law requires immediate reinstatement of Unfair Labor Practice Strikers, but instead, the company largely avoided their communications and stalled. Finally, on 2/19, the hotel called the strikers and told them to attend a meeting on 2/22. We had all assumed that this meeting was intended to return the strikers to work. In fact, we held off on filing new Unfair Labor Practice charges for back pay for the intervening two weeks as a sign of good faith.

Instead, at this meeting the HR Manager fired the strikers and informed them that new management had taken over and told them they could apply to the new company. To date, only two strikers were reinstated, the rest have not. In addition, Craig Prusky, one of the original fired workers was once again terminated from his job.

This is clearly Morrell's latest scheme to refuse to respect the employees' right to organize. With this latest move, Morrell may be positioning himself as the greatest labor law violator in the US, if he hadn't already achieved that dubious distinction.

The union has made multiple attempts to explain to the "new management" that it is responsible for the company's past actions. Their disregard for these worker's rights leave us no choice but to renew our campaign against Morrell and his union busting behavior. To date this unresolved.

Holiday Inn Express located @400 Old Loudon Rd in Latham.

CDALF Holds 9th Annual Meeting

Geraldine Stella, Susan Radosh and Ed Bradley attended the 9th Annual Capital District Area Labor Federation meeting held March 27, 2010. 175 delegates and guests came to the Clarion in Albany to commit to taking action on making the economy work for us all. Colleen Gardner, Department of Labor Commissioner talked about companies misclassifying workers as independent contractors and her willingness to investigate and pursue companies that break the law. Tom DiNapoli, New York State Comptroller, discussed the current budget crisis for both this year and next year. He also stressed the importance of state workers doing the work instead of the much more expensive private contractors. Paul Tonko, Congressman of the 21st District, informed the room that he is on the Jobs Committee that will be advising the White House. He stressed that now that healthcare reform has passed, jobs will be the main priority in Congress and the White House.

The focus of the event centered on those in the room committing to working on fighting for a better economy and bringing more of their coworkers, friends or family with them to join in the fight. Bill Ritchie gave a rousing speech about the current state of our economy and our personal responsibility to make a difference.

Jeff Stark talked about the importance of reforming the IDA system and getting union members on IDA boards. Kevin Eitzmann discussed joining with small business and community banks to fight for funding for Main Street not Wall Street. Ada Martinez gave a great report on the Capital Region Workforce Development Center and its efforts to reach out into the community with the Building Bridges program. Building Bridges helps provide the skills needed for low income minorities to succeed in a Building Trade's apprenticeship program. Carlos Garcia discussed CBTU, LCLAA, Pride at Work and the great work they do. He implored everyone especially in the building trades to sign up for and support the constituency groups' regardless of race.



Following the meeting, participants marched over to the Albany Dodge dealership owned by Jim Morrell, the same person that owns the Holiday Inn Express in Latham that has been abusing workers for over a year. Everyone in attendance let Jim Morrell and Albany Dodge know that there will be no labor peace until the workers are respected and protected.

The Pledge of Actions are as follows:

- Protest Bank of America stealing billions in taxpayer dollars and giving out huge bonuses at 69 State Street Albany, NY at noon on April 1st
- Lobby for IDA reform with the CDALF or my union
- Fight for Labor seats on my Local IDA boards
- Identify and support worker friendly small businesses
- Join the Apollo Alliance and help fight for Green Jobs here in New York
- Join and support our constituency groups CBTU, LCLAA and Pride at Work to promote and support diversity in our labor movement
 - Participate in community projects as union members and support our community groups when called upon
- Fight for a "better choice" state budget
www.abetterchoicefornyc.org

Please email CDALF and tell them you are ready to fight!

www.cdalf.org

(Continued from page 1)

It's official!!

We have new union brothers and sisters and a new USW local in our neighborhood (11 Cornell Rd). The NLRB conducted the ballot count and USW won with a landslide vote of 64 yes, 1 no! The staff of NYSNA are now members of the USW! I would like to congratulate NYSNA staff — Vickie Longo, Annie Rutsky, Kathleen Korman, Janice Treanor, Janet Strominger, Sandy Guynup and Ron Abrahall on their victory. They were very appreciative of Local 9265's support I would like to thank USW members Mario Bruni and Ed Bradley for attending the ballot count and for their SOLIDARITY and SUPPORT. I would also like to thank Jackie Cataldo, Pricilla Marco, Geraldine Stella, Karen Conte and Matt London for all their help and support as well. We would also like to thank Rich Knowles, USW International Representative.

In SOLIDARITY, Gary

USW. I'm very confrontational, I speak my mind, and they don't like that."

Now that she has left the union, she is free from a confidentiality agreement that all of its employees must sign to work there. Ms. Echevarria has filed an improper practice charge over the termination and hopes to regain her job, but either way says that USW has an uphill fight in negotiating a new deal with NYSNA.

"This bargaining unit really has a big war in front of them, trying to get a brand new contract," she said. She called NYSNA's resistance to organized labor ironic considering its fierce campaigns on behalf of members. "They don't even practice what they preach; it's pathetic."



STANDING (L-R) Rich Knowles (Sub-District Director, District 4, USW), Janice Treanor, Kathleen Korman, Ron Abrahall, Sandy Guynup, Vickie Longo and Gary Cunningham. SEATED: Ed Bradley, Annie Rutsky and Janet Strominger.

Members rally to support TSA

ATTENTION UNION MEMBERS:



**Join the Fight for Union Rights for the Workers
Who Secure Our Airports and Airlines!**

The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) is engaged in an historic campaign in support of tens of thousands of transportation security officers (TSOs) organizing at 450 airports across the nation.



When the Transportation Security Administration was created in 2001, the Bush administration denied TSOs the right to bargain collectively. Despite their role as front-line defenders of air passenger security, TSOs have endured substandard working conditions, hostile management policies, discrimination, and workers compensation violations. Now, the Obama administration is committed to restoring TSOs' right to organize and bargain collectively.

The one union that has been there, organizing TSOs, from the beginning has been AFGE. AFGE has committed the resources to this campaign and has been a consistent advocate for TSO rights. Today, more than 11,000 TSOs are dues-paying members of the AFGE, despite the lack of bargaining rights.

WHAT CAN UNION MEMBERS DO?

- **WHAT:** Talk to the TSOs about the benefits of union membership in joining AFGE and show solidarity support.
- **WHEN:** **Thursday, February 4, 2010**
10:00 am - 4:00 pm
- **WHERE:** Albany International Airport
Observation Level
Take Elevator/Stairs before Security Checkpoint

**Please stop by and show your support for these workers.
Help Us Build Power for All of America's Airport and Airline Workers!**

For more information contact the Capital District Area Labor Federation at (518) 452-0404.

*Ken (Brynien),
Per our conversation, Bob Marchetta of AFGE Local 2222 and Amy Desjardins of NYS AFL-CIO have agreed to send me the AFGE luggage tags as SOLIDARITY support for the TSA workers. As I mentioned, we would have the PEF delegates display them on their luggage at PEF's annual convention in Washington, DC. I also spoke to Tom Comanzo, who was active in this campaign to organize the TSA workers and in favor of this idea. Thank you for agreeing to support the TSA workers.
In Solidarity, Gary Cunningham*

Mario Bruni, Nancy Wolff and Gary Cunningham attended this event.

**ON YOUR SIDE
FROM THE
BEGINNING**

www.afge.org
www.screenersunion.org



Luggage tag that PEF has agreed to use for the delegates at the 32nd Convention.