

# WORKING TOGETHER

Monthly Newsletter of Locals 34 & 35

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## Local 34 Gets Ready

The Local 34 & 35 contracts expire in less than one year, in January 2002, and preparation for negotiations is already in high gear. First and foremost, we are working to make sure that twice as many workers negotiate contracts in this round: We're standing with Yale's graduate teachers and hospital workers. But we cannot help others if we are not ready to help ourselves. Local 34 & Local 35 are getting ready (see "Local 35 on the Move," right).

Local 34 is aiming to survey every clerical and technical employee at Yale. Departmental union committees throughout Yale are meeting one-on-one with C&T's to find out how much of a raise we deserve and what issues we need to focus on during our next set of negotiations. It's a simple one-page form whose results will shape the next strategic steps.

Our members are everywhere--around the campus and off, in large offices and in nooks and crannies. If you have not yet been surveyed, or if you know someone who has not yet been surveyed, get in touch with your committee person, department steward, or union organizer to get that ball rolling.

We want your input!

## Local 35 on the Move:

### A Letter from Bob Proto

Members of Local 35 started off the new year with a great membership meeting on January 31 at the First and Summerfield Methodist Church, where all departments turned out in full force. The agenda included a full presentation of our upcoming negotiations and such important issues as pensions, wages, medical benefits, and job security. Key leaders stepped forward to join committees in their departments to address specific problems, including subcontracting, quality of food, and our grievance procedures.

The membership reaffirmed our support of both the GESO organizing drive and the desire of the Yale-New Haven Hospital workers to unionize. Department steward Ron Altieri and veteran leaders of Local 35 voiced our absolute support for

both the teachers and the hospital workers --we all know very well that we would not be here if we hadn't supported Local 34's organizing drive in 1984, and we must make that same level of commitment to these two groups.

After an informative presentation by our research department, members were very pleased to know that leaders in Local 35 are doing their homework early to be prepared to make significant gains during our upcoming negotiations.

Our union will soon celebrate its 60th anniversary, and we have had many struggles to achieve good contracts for our workers. It is such a good feeling to once again see our great union come together and commit to one another that we will work hard and we will participate. We realize our goals can only be achieved by working together, and we are once again prepared to take a lead in helping all Yale workers. Local 35 will be looking for more members from all departments to join committees and to get involved in the decisions that affect us all every day. If this membership meeting is any indication of our members' desire for a good contract, I feel very confident that we will achieve one.



*Pat Caprolione (right), a senior administrative assistant from Media Services, surveys Billy Grego, a photographer at the School of Art.*

### A Peek Inside:

Yale Pension Info

Quinnipiac Union

Y-NHH Dietary Contract Vote

MLK Day

Our Members Ask . . .

Our Members Speak . . .

# Our Members Ask ...

## 1. What will my pension be when I retire?

Retired members of Local 34 and Local 35 receive a monthly pension benefit calculated according to a schedule specified in their contracts. Basically, your annual pension is a percentage of your highest salary in your last 5 years of employment at Yale times the number of years of service at the University. This percentage or "multiplier" is the key to your pension.

For the first \$20,000 of the salary used to calculate your pension, your yearly pension is \$222.50 (the "multiplier" varies from 1.15% to 1.05% according to a simple formula). For everything above the first \$20,000, your multiplier is a flat 1%. The combined amount is then multiplied by your years of service.

To take an example, let's look at a hypothetical retired Yale employee, "Paul", earning \$30,000 after thirty years at Yale:

<b>Paul's Annual Pension</b>	
<i>(Current)</i>	
<b>\$30K salary &amp; 30 years service</b>	
First \$20,000	= \$222.50
1% of \$10,000	= <u>\$100</u>
Subtotal	= \$322.50
Years of Service	<u>x 30</u>
Annual Pension	= <b>\$9,675</b>

It's important to realize that there is currently no cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) to these benefits. You continue getting the same fixed amount, even though it decreases in value over time.

A group of retired workers from Yale, the Yale Unions Retirees Association (YURA), is working to change this. Hopefully, we'll soon achieve a COLA for our pensions.

## 2. Can I supplement the Yale pension plan?

Yes, you can. Yale's unionized employees can invest in a supplemental retirement program. For an employee over age 45 with at least 5 years of service, Yale will match contributions dollar-for-dollar up to 4% of your salary. For any other employee with at least 2 years of service, the University will make a one-to-one match up to 2% of your salary. The match program is a great option, considering that Yale would not give employees that extra money without the program. (The adage "use it or lose it" applies here.) And any contributions you make are pre-tax, so they help to reduce your tax bill while they grow in value over the long haul.

(TIP: Speaking of value, the sooner you contribute and the more you contribute to your portfolio, the better your return when you retire. This should make the supplemental retirement program especially appealing to younger employees, who have more time to invest. In this case, a penny saved now will become much more than a penny earned.)

### Profile of a Retiree

Florence Pacella, an 83-year-old widow whose husband died in World War II, lives in senior subsidized housing on Putnam Avenue in Hamden. Florence worked full-time at Yale for 13 years as a payroll clerk at 20 Ashmun Street before retiring in 1980 at the age of 63 to take care of her sick mother. She receives a Yale pension of \$109 per month, or \$1,308 per year.

Although Florence retired before Local 34 organized, she is glad to receive the benefits that 34 negotiates retroactively for all retirees. At negotiation time, it is our duty to remember the needs of Yale retirees. We shall all be there someday, God willing.

## 3. How can we improve the pension plan in the next contract?

There are many different ways for us to increase our monthly pension benefit. First and foremost, we should improve our salary structures so that we can retire with higher incomes. Simply put, the more money we make when we leave Yale, the more money we will get from Yale in retirement. We need bigger raises, and our history at Yale tells us that our salaries rise when the number of union members on campus grows.

Another important area for possible gains is the actual multiplier itself.

Depending on how strong the Federation becomes, we can achieve a variety of changes in the multiplier schedule.

In the tables to the left, we can see what would happen if the multiplier increased by either 1/2 of one percentage point, or by a single percentage point (that is, by 0.5% or by 1%).

As you can see, slight increases in the multiplier

result in significant improvements to our pension benefits. That's one of the reasons Yale resists increasing the multiplier. The last time Local 35 negotiated an increase to the multiplier was in 1984, after holding firm in solidarity with a new group of organizing workers, the C&T's who formed Local 34. The time has come again. Solidarity with GESO and the hospital workers will enable us to take another giant leap forward.

<b>Paul's Annual Pension</b>	
<i>(Possible)</i>	
<b>with a 1/2 point increase</b>	
First \$20,000	= \$322.50
1.5% of \$10,000	= <u>\$150</u>
Subtotal	= \$472.50
Years of Service	<u>x 30</u>
Annual Pension	= <b>\$14,175</b>

<b>Paul's Annual Pension</b>	
<i>(Possible)</i>	
<b>with a 1 point increase</b>	
First \$20,000	= \$422.50
2% of \$10,000	= <u>\$200</u>
Subtotal	= \$622.50
Years of Service	<u>x 30</u>
Annual Pension	= <b>\$18,675</b>

# Our Pensions Grew With the Alliance

Before 1985, when Local 35 workers retired from Yale, their yearly pensions amounted to 1% their highest recent salary times their number of years of service at Yale. So, if a custodian retired after 40 years with a peak salary of \$25,000, his annual pension came to a mere \$10,000. No much, even in the early 1980s. After the contract, the same worker would get a \$10,900 annual pension. That's an increase of 9%, and was possible only because Local 35 stuck with Local 34. For

the first time in years, Local 35 earned a much-needed increase in the pension multiplier. (Note: The multiplier was only increased for the first \$20,000 of one's salary. For the rest, the original 1% still applies.)

How did this happen? The number of organized Yale employees more than doubled. More people = more power = more money.

Soon both Local 34 and Local 35 will enter into negotiation with Yale, and given the many long-term employees in both bar-

gaining units, a lot of union members will want (and need) substantial improvements in the pension plan. How will this happen? The number of unionized workers at Yale is ready to double again, this time because of the organizing efforts of Yale-New Haven Hospital workers and the graduate teachers of GESO. Solidarity won the day in the 1980s, and it will mean a much better future for Yale's union workers in the 21st century.

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## Our Members Speak ...

### Virginia Henry

Seventeen years ago, I applied for a position at Yale as a third cook through a job search program here in New Haven. Since that job wasn't available, I was given the entry-level tests for pantry worker, desk attendant, and custodian. I scored 100% on the custodial test and was offered a position in custodial services. I have been there ever since.

I work at the Peabody Museum and at Kline

Geology Lab. I have a sense of pride in what I contribute to the offices and public areas where I work. I know that I am responsible for them, and I keep them looking good.

I have four children, 18 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, most of whom live in New Haven. One son works at Yale. In 1990, Yale gave me the Elm-Ivy Award for my community work bridging the "town/gown" gap between Yale and New Haven. I was a member of the Dwight Hall board that sets policies for student volunteers. I am one of the founders of Fair Haven Mediation, now known as Community Mediation. I'm taking a refresher course on mediation in the workplace and racial issues, and I recently attended Local 35's women's program,



which develops leadership roles for women within the Union and in the community.

As a former member of the Local 35 Executive Board, I know how important it is to be an active Union member. I have stepped up to be a custodial department steward in the Central and Science area. I know how the Union helps members every day, whether the problem is in the workplace or is personal. And I know how hard the Union works to keep members safe and fairly treated in the workplace. As a steward I have seen workers disciplined for being one minute late. This is ridiculous.

In the upcoming negotiations for the new contract, I would like to see a good raise, a better pension, and an increase in the 401k plan. I know Yale can easily afford them.

### Aileen Novick

I have been working as an editorial assistant at Yale University Press since February 2000. I came to the Press from a historical society in Boston where I worked on various publications. Yale University Press publishes great history books, and I came here to learn more about academic



publishing.

I assist the editorial director in the acquisitions department, where the acquiring editors choose the manuscripts that will be published and then monitor them through every stage until the books are published (and beyond). My boss specializes in books on eastern European history, philosophy, literary criticism, and biographies. Some of my more interesting duties are monitoring incoming proposals and manuscripts, finding professors from all over the world to review these projects for us, and keeping in touch with authors about their books.

I became involved in Local 34 this past summer when the assistants in my department were upset that while we were all doing the same work, some of us were at a lower salary grade level than others. We were told over and over that this would change, but the only change we ever saw was free donuts on Friday. We decided to take action, so we called the Union office to ask what to do.

My co-workers and I "buttoned up" (we wore our union buttons to work) and we went to management and pushed them to take action. We won our upgrades and the lower-level positions were all reclassified.

Since I've gotten involved with Local 34, I feel more empowered to make sure that there are better working conditions for all the workers at Yale University Press.



# Union Calendar

## *Human Rights Watch*

### *Forum on Workers Rights at Yale*

Wednesday, February 7, 4:00pm  
Dwight Hall, High St.

## *Local 35*

### *Membership Meeting*

Wednesday, February 28, 7:30 PM  
Kline Geology Lab, 210 Whitney Ave.

## *Joint Locals 34 & 35*

### *Membership Meeting*

Wednesday, March 28, 5:30 PM  
Location TBA

### **MLK Service for Economic Justice in New Haven**

On Monday, January 15th, about 1,000 local clergy, prominent politicians, Yale employees, and community members came together to honor the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by continuing his struggle. The service, "Economic Justice in the New Millennium," was held from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at United Church on the New Haven Green, and speakers included U.S. Senator Christopher Dodd, New Haven Mayor John DeStefano, and Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. The service brought together groups that have, in the past, held separate MLK Day services and was sponsored by FHUE (The Federation of Hospital and University Employees, the unions at Yale), ICM (Interfaith Cooperative Ministries), CCNE (Connecticut Center for a New Economy), The Greater New Haven Clergy Association, and the Roman Catholic Deanery of New Haven.

After 15 years of struggling to earn this holiday, Yale's employees enjoyed the full day off to celebrate it. It was great to see so many people come into town on their day off to celebrate Dr. King's legacy together.

# News In Brief

## **Quinnipiac Workers Rally for Fairness**

Members and supporters of Local 217 at Quinnipiac University rallied on January 22 to send a message to their administration: An array of health insurance take-aways and a substandard wage proposal are not acceptable. These 170 employees have been in negotiations with Quinnipiac for about eight months. Local 34 President Laura Smith spoke at the afternoon rally, reminding all that Quinnipiac's unionized secretaries were instrumental in the Local 34 organizing drive back in the early 1980s. Our sisters at Quinnipiac helped give us the confidence to push ahead at a time when Yale was telling us that C&T's had no business being in a union. It's good to see that support going both ways now.

## **Dietary Workers Reject Yale's Offer**

The dietary workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital are working without a union contract. These members of 1199 have regularly negotiated new union contracts with Y-NHH since 1973. This time around, the workers asked for a contract that would expire after one year, at about the same time as the Local 34 & 35 contracts. The hospital refused this and other demands.

The administration has been putting pressure on workers to accept its latest offer. In a contract ratification vote held in early January, the workers decided 98-5 to reject the hospital's offer and to continue negotiating.

### **Job Posting**

#### **Office Assistant II**

#### **Labor Grade B, 37.5 hours per week**

#### **General Description:**

Under the limited supervision of the Office Manager, provide skilled and independent support to specific office tasks. Manage community database. Maintain union files. Manage computerized grievance and arbitration records. Sort, copy and distribute mail, e-mail, and faxes. Classify and file incoming and outgoing union correspondence. Compose and keyboard memos and letters for self and others. Provide support and backup to dues and membership functions. Specific job assignments vary according to the needs of the office.

#### **For Application Details:**

E-mail [heremanager@snet.net](mailto:heremanager@snet.net) or call Debbi Conlon at 624-5161.

*www.yaleunions.org*

**We're on the Web!**

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