

Unions Mark Commencement with Silent Vigil

Democracy at Yale took a giant step on May 21 as hundreds of Yale union members and supporters stood in silence to support the right to unionize.

Almost 250 members of Local 34 and 35 took personal and vacation time in order to attend the protest, and they were joined by graduate teachers, hospital workers, plus sympathetic students and faculty.

The original plan for the silent vigil was to line the sidewalks on the Green as the university's academic procession passed. Under the guise of "security concerns" for President George W. Bush's visit, the unions were told by the Yale police that we could not assemble on the upper Green near the festivities. The Rev. Kevan Hitch (First & Summerfield United Methodist Church) and Reverends Shepard Parsons and Patricia Carque (Center Church on the Green) then stepped in and invited union members to use their property, and to stand on the church steps for the event.

Wearing black T-shirts and holding signs about democracy, union members and their supporters stood in silent witness to the strug-

gle of Yale employees for their basic human right to organize.

The procession passed closest to the vigil at the Center Church, where Duane Mellor stood. He remembers, "When the procession passed, faculty and students broke ranks to come over to us and get stickers to put on their robes. The administrators standing nearby clearly noticed."

President Richard Levin said in February that Yale places a high value on the right of free association. Despite that, after the April 20 rally where 2200 union supporters asked Yale to negotiate a card-count neutrality agreement that covers its graduate teachers and hospital workers, Acting Yale Vice President Kemel Dawkins published an op-ed saying "no" to neutrality. Joe Zaccagnino, CEO of Yale's teaching hospital, distributed a memo stating that he

opposes neutrality.

Members of Locals 34 and 35 went through the same aggressive anti-union campaigns that the university and hospital administrations are directing toward graduate teachers and hospital workers. This time, things will be different.

The Federation extends its sincere thanks to Reverends Hitch, Carque and Parsons, and

to all the supporters who joined us on the church steps or wore union stickers in the academic procession. And to all the graduates of 2001, congratulations!

Faculty and students broke ranks to come over, get stickers and put them on



A Peek Inside:

City Hears Parking Woes
Nursing Home Staffing Campaign
News from Locals 34 & 35
Clergy & Aldermanic Support
The Members Speak



Congratulations to Alderwoman Dolores Colon!!

Mayor John DeStefano swore in Dolores Colon as New Haven Alderwoman for Ward 7 on Monday, June 4. That evening, she attended her first session as alderwoman.

Dolores received her B.A. from Yale in 1991 and began working in the Yale library. She joined the committee, was Local 34 Vice President from 1994-99, and currently helps staff the Local 34 Job Search Team.

Parking woes heard by city

On April 25th, union workers and local residents joined forces to tell the City Planning Commission (CPC) that Yale is causing a parking nightmare.

The public workshop focused on the medical school complex, but comments extended to the Central/Science campuses as well. City officials got an earful from residents about being unable to park in front of their homes, businessmen whose limited customer parking is becoming even more limited, and workers who have chosen to park on area streets at some distance from their jobs rather than in Yale lots (either because parking spots are too expensive or unavailable).

A Route 34 extension will soon eliminate 1000 parking spaces currently used by medical campus employees. The new Congress Ave. building (under construction) should demand another 600+ spaces. Yale believes the new 950-space Amistad garage (under construction) is adequate to meet the parking needs, but others who have done the math disagree.

Local 34 researcher Antony Dugdale charged that the University and Hospital are not accurately calculating the effect the new medical building will have on parking. This is because the number of employees who park on residential streets have not been included in the calculations of needed capacity.

City officials agreed that Yale had presented no long-term solution to these problems. They did present some short-term solutions: Having workers use the Temple Street and Coliseum garages or moving lots further up the Route 34 corridor towards the Boulevard.

The unions recommend that Yale, in conjunction with a working group of residents, workers, and city officials, develop a comprehensive plan that addresses all the concerns raised at the workshop. To make sure this happens in a timely manner, it should be approved before the DOT project starts, and it should be a condition for issuing the permit for any pending Yale project affected by the plan.

Nursing Homes Launch Staffing Campaign

Over the past several months, members of the New England Health Care Employees' Union (SEIU District 1199) have begun an important campaign to increase staffing levels in private nursing homes across Connecticut.

1199 nursing home workers already have the best wages and benefits in the nation, but wanted to protect patients as well as workers by raising the important issue of staffing. In response, Governor Rowland threatened to call in the National Guard.

Rowland made it clear early on that he would finance owners' costs during the labor action. When the strike began, Rowland spent over \$1 million taxpayer money per day for replacement workers (much of this money came from federal Medicaid money). Rowland told the owners that he would fund strikebreakers, but would not pay anything for improved staffing levels.

Facing a governor willing to bankroll management and intent on breaking the union, 1199 members voted to return to work on May 14. Emboldened by Rowland's support, many owners refused to allow striking workers back to work. However, after a series of demonstrations and acts of civil dis-

obedience by clergy, workers and allies, they signed return-to-work agreements and settled new contracts with the union.

At present, 28 nursing homes have settled new contracts. Workers are back at work and negotiating at 18 other homes. Despite threats, not one worker was replaced, and all returned to work.

Although new staffing language was achieved only in one nursing home system (such language does not yet exist at any other nursing homes in the country), the new contracts are good. They include wage increases of 17-22% over 4 years, on top of the impressive wages 1199's nursing home workers already enjoy. Legislators are still working to pass a "staffing bill" that would address the staffing problems in our state's nursing homes. Without the union making this issue one they are willing to fight for, staffing would never have gotten this kind of attention.

Members of the Federation of Hospital and University Employees stood in support of our union brothers and sisters at a major rally in Hartford on May 24. Over 50 people took a bus from New Haven to Hartford to march at the Governor's mansion with union members from all across the state and all across the labor movement.

Governor Rowland is an ex-officio member of the Yale Corporation. District 1199 is currently organizing workers in Yale New-Haven Hospital. Their fight is our fight. By standing beside 1199 for better staffing levels, Federation members have sent a clear message that Rowland will not win his battle with Connecticut's working people.



News in brief

Local 34's New Officer

At its May 30 membership meeting, Local 34 elected Antonio Lopes, an Autopsy Technician in Pathology, to be a Local 34 Trustee. He has worked at Yale for ten years, and has served on the union's executive board. The trustee position opened when Nina Proto stepped down, though she will remain in her position on the Executive Board.

Local 35 Survey

Starting this month, Local 35 will begin surveying its members. The survey will be conducted in work units over the summer months. Local 35 wants to give each and every member the opportunity to give their input on the issues in the upcoming contract fight. Contact your steward if you would like to participate.

Our Community Support is Shining Through

Clergy Deliver Judgment

On May 30, religious leaders gathered at Woolsey Hall to unroll a 30-foot long scroll with signatures from 287 area clergy. The clergy were asking Yale to sign a card count neutrality agreement with the unions organizing Yale's hospital workers and graduate teachers.

About 40 clergy took turns reading from the scroll, inviting Yale to "set a high moral standard ... by not employing illegal tactics nor importing professional anti-union agencies." The Reverend Barbara Cheney of St. Paul and St. James Episcopal Church in New Haven explained her reason for signing the petition: to seek "a neutral setting for the workers of this city ... without harassment, for the ability to think, to choose, to work together for collective bargaining."

Copies of the petition were delivered to university officials, and after the rally, the clergy delivered them to the office of hospi-

tal president Joseph Zaccagnino.

In a related story, ECCO (Elm City Congregations Organized) has made union neutrality one of its priorities. At a large and enthusiastic meeting held last month at the Church of the Rock, over 700 attendees saw ECCO vote to support two major issues: the affordable housing initiative in the City of New Haven and neutrality for workers who want to form a union.

City Aldermen vote for neutrality

On May 17th, the New Haven Aldermanic Human Resources committee held a public hearing about neutrality for Yale's graduate teachers and hospital workers. The committee voted "yes" unanimously, and sent it on to the full Board of Aldermen, who voted "yes" on both counts at their June 4 meeting.

At the public hearing, Professor David Montgomery (Yale) testified about the

importance of neutrality, and Professor Kate Bronfenbrenner (Cornell), a national labor expert, explained why card count neutrality is a better process than a labor board election. Hospital workers and graduate teachers each testified about supervisors' threats and the hostility they feel in their workplace.

Cathy Meyerson from local 34 explained how Yale had abused the labor board election process during local 34's formation in the 1980s. Ovella Watts, a worker at the Omni Hotel, explained how the card count neutrality agreement there allowed them to settle a fair first contract peacefully.

At the meeting of the full Board on June 4, Alderman Philip Voigt spoke on behalf of the Human Resources Committee, stating that he was voting in support of neutrality because "it is the right thing to do. Free and open talk is what is needed."

The Members Speak ...

Barbara Consiglio

I am a senior administrative assistant in Epidemiology and Public Health (EPH), and have been working at Yale for 12 years.

I took a vacation day this past May 21st, so that I could take part in a silent vigil at Yale's Commencement. The night before, helicopters roared fiercely over my home as the president entered New Haven. I smiled, knowing that I would be part of an historic event. The next day I met my colleagues at work to walk over to the union office. When we got there, we were given beautiful black T-shirts that said "This is what Democracy looks like", along with signs and stickers. I was proud to bear the sign that said "Democracy means Freedom From Fear". As I stood on the church steps, I witnessed an incredible graduation procession, along with the secret service and police entourage for the President. I thought to myself this is an event I can share someday with my grandchildren.

If we all stand together--Locals 34 &

35, GESO, and the hospital workers--we will have approximately 8,000 union members on the Yale campus. Do you want better wages, pensions, parking conditions, an "E" level grade, and respect? This is what I hear when I do surveys in my department. We are fighting for what we deserve, and Yale can well afford it. That's why I came to graduation.

After the silent vigil, I went home to watch the news. I saw the most inspiring undergraduate, wearing her cap and gown and union sign, and she said that 40% of the people she interacted with during her 4 year stay at Yale were clerical, service, maintenance and graduate teachers. This young lady supports our struggle--and the most remarkable thing was that this graduate stood on the very same steps that I stood on just a few hours before.



Michael Boyd

My family and I marched for respect with Dr. King when I was 9 years old. We moved to New Haven from Mississippi three years later. Since then, we have all gotten involved with the Union to protect our rights. I've worked at the University since 1983, and now I'm the head pantry worker in Marigold's cafeteria in the Medical School. My brother John is a Local 34 member over at the Health Plan, and my mother works at Yale-New Haven Hospital and has been helping out with the organizing drive there. My wife, like me, is a Local 35 member, and she works as a custodian in the Medical School. We have four kids.

I got involved with Local 35 because I want to help workers exercise their rights. I've been an executive board member and a steward now for six years, and I've gotten to meet excellent people. I've become more involved in community politics, attending meetings in my ward. It's really gratifying to do my civic duty and increase participation in my neighborhood and my union.

I spoke at the meeting at City Hall about Yale's parking problem because it affects my community and my co-workers. I also marched from the Medical School to the New Haven Green on April 20th because I wanted Yale to know that I'm for the people and their rights as workers.

Local 35 Membership Meeting

Wednesday, June 27
4:45 pm, KGL Auditorium

We will be electing a
nominating committee to
begin the Executive Board
and officer selection process.

Convention Delegates Elected

On Wednesday, May 30, Local 34 nominated and elected delegates to attend the HERE international convention in Los Angeles in July.

The Local 34 delegates are Laura Smith (President), Alexis Flint (Vice President, Science area), Don Frigo (Trustee), Pat Carta (Staff Director), Cathy Meyerson (Lead Organizer, Central-Science Area), Beth Cooper (Lead Organizer, Medical area), and Andrea Cole (Community Organizer). Lee Ann Scott (Trustee) was elected to be the alternate.

The number of delegates is established by the number of union members.

Good Tickets for Good Jobs

Local 35 is turning 60 this fall. Come celebrate with us on Saturday, September 29 at the Omni Hotel. *Hors d'oeuvres* and music start at 6pm, and dinner is at 7pm. Dancing and entertainment will follow until midnight.

Tickets are on sale now only for Local 35 members and their guests. After July 16, they will be available to any other union or community members interested in attending. Tickets are \$40 each, and can be obtained at the union office or from the following committee members: Lynn LaFrazier, Kenny Brown, Linda Felder, Julia Esposito, Sally Notorino, Addie DelFranco, Virginia Henry, Nadine Moore, John Maturo, Ed Streater and Meg Riccio.

Thank You!

District 1199 would like to thank all the HERE union members for supporting us during the nursing home strike and lockouts.

We won't forget your help. The battle for better patient care is not over until all patients and workers are shown the dignity they deserve.

www.yaleunions.org

We're on the Web!

34 Phone: (203) 624-5161
35 Phone: (203) 865-3259
Fax: (203) 776-6438
E-mail: 34@yaleunions.org
35@yaleunions.org

Local 34 and Local 35
425 College Street
New Haven, CT 06511

WORKING TOGETHER

New Haven, CT
Permit No. 714

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID