

# WORKING TOGETHER

Monthly Newsletter of Locals 34 & 35

Summer 2001 Volume 1, Number 9



Local 35 member Mark Wilson speaks at HERE Convention in California, while (right to left) John Wilhelm, Maria Elena Durazzo (HERE Vice President), and Richard Trumka (AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer) listen.

## Local 34 and 35 lead the way at HERE Convention

From July 15-19, Locals 34 and 35 representatives attended a rocking HERE International Convention, an event held once every 5 years. Local 34 President Laura Smith said that it was an “amazing experience. The convention focused on organizing and was really all about the important work of rank and file members and member participation.”

The convention opened with local union members from all across the country describing the victories HERE locals have had since the last conference in 1996. Alexis Flint (Local 34) and Mark Wilson (Local 35) described the victories achieved in New Haven. Wilson said the conference was “wonderful and inspiring.”

Don Frigo (Local 34) explained, “To me the highlight of the convention was seeing that our contract fight and everyone else’s is part of a bigger struggle nationwide for working people to better themselves.”

Laura Smith and Bobby Proto gave a presentation on Local 34 and 35’s history and our strategy for creating an alliance with the hospital workers and GESO for greater organizing and bargaining power at Yale.

Our international union elected its new officers at the convention. Our locals’ presidents Proto and Smith were part of the nominating team for John Wilhelm’s position as President of HERE. They described Wilhelm’s roots with Local 35 and Local 34 in the 1980s and how he still continues to inspire the unions at Yale. Karl Lechow, who has been active in the New Haven organizing for years, was elected Director of Organizing.

Laura Smith said, “Lechow and Wilhelm’s elections made me feel proud to be a part of this union.”

Meg Riccio, Local 35 Chief Steward, discussed the excitement of their approaching 60th birthday party. Riccio also spoke about the Local 35 “Women’s Program”, encouraging other locals to expand their training pro-

**“Our contract fight is part of a bigger struggle nationwide”**

**- Don Frigo  
Local 34 Trustee**

### A Peek Inside:

Mayor on Yale Parking  
Pension Increase  
Our Unions in London  
\$20,000 grant for Local 35  
Local 34 Surveys  
Our Members Speak

### Essay on Yale and Slavery is available

On Monday, August 13, the Amistad Committee released an essay, “Yale, Slavery and Abolition”, authored by Antony Dugdale (Local 34 researcher) and by J.J. Fueser & Celso de Castro Alves, two GESO researchers.

You can read the entire report online:

**[www.yaleslavery.org](http://www.yaleslavery.org)**

In addition to local TV coverage, the essay has been reported by *Newsweek* magazine and NPR’s “Morning Edition”. The *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, and *Hartford Courant* have written editorials. All the press clippings, including TV, are included on the “What’s New” section of that website.

grams.

Rev. Lillian Daniel of Church of the Redeemer in New Haven and a prominent member of ECCO (Elm City Congregations Organized) addressed the convention on the role that clergy can play in support of an organizing drive.

The New Haven delegates’ presentations showed the important work that Locals 34 and 35 are doing. According to Don Frigo, “The convention helped me realize how our work here helps other locals elsewhere, by seeing how our victory and our contract contributes to making the Union stronger.”

*“All that harms labor is treason to America. No line can be drawn between these two.”*

*- Abraham Lincoln*

# Activism Sparks Pension Increase for pre-1996 Retirees

We all know how important union solidarity is in the effort to improve our working lives. Recently, our retired sisters and brothers have gotten Yale to begin improving the pension for older retirees, by standing together with Locals 34 & 35. The increases are just a start, and do not apply to recent retirees, but they do reveal that Yale is willing to negotiate pension increases.

Organized in 1998, the Yale Unions Retirees Association (YURA), is composed of Local 34 and Local 35 members who are now retired. The mission of the group is to further the interests of and to protect the rights and benefits of Yale retirees. According to Doris Rogan, former Senior Administrative Assistant in Geology & Geophysics and a YURA leader, there are currently about 1,100 Local 34 and Local 35 retirees.

About 30% of all Yale retirees receive less than \$300 per month in their Yale pension.

Members of YURA have been organizing rallies and petitions to support a pension increase. They have also been present in increasing numbers at the October and April actions by the Federation of Hospital and University Employees. The retirees even distributed a flyer about the pension to alumni after George H. W. Bush spoke on April 21 at the Tercentennial event. Many retirees were front and center at the Yale unions' vigil during the 2001 commencement ceremonies.

Finally, this past June, the University reacted to YURA's efforts and announced an adjustment to the pension, effective July 2001. The size of one's increase depends on one's year of retirement:

1988: 20% increase  
1989: 18%  
1990: 16%  
1991: 14%  
1992: 12%  
1993: 10%  
1994: 8%  
1995: 6%  
1996 - present: 0%

# Mayor DeStefano works for better parking on Yale campus

Last May, the City Plan Commission held a public workshop on Yale's parking plans. Since that time, Mayor DeStefano and his administration have worked to improve parking across the Yale campus.

First, the mayor established a "task force" to address the problems parking around the Yale medical area. He has assigned both Local 34 researcher Antony Dugdale and District 1199 research Grace Rollins to the task group.

The task force has been charged to come up with both short-term and long term solutions. The State of Connecticut is expanding the Route 34 connector out towards Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, scheduled to begin next Spring or Summer. The construction will eliminate parking under the Air Rights garage, in Lot 2, and in the other lots in the median between the Frontage roads. The task force will develop plans that minimize the disruption to the Yale parkers who use those spaces.

The task force is also charged to develop long-term solutions; current discussions include the possibility of additional parking structures.

The mayor's efforts also extend to the Central and Science Hill campuses. In a let-

ter dated August 16, 2001, Mayor DeStefano writes: "Yale has a responsibility to the residents of this City as well as its employees to make adequate parking a part of its expansion plans. With a new medical building, new arts building, and new bio-engineering building, Yale is spreading out-but without consideration for residents or employees. In addition to being inadequate in terms of accomodating the demand, most of the parking Yale provides is too far from the workplace, and not within zoning code ordinance requirements."

The mayor continues: "Yale should be-and will be-held accountable. The City will demand that Yale adhere to the zoning code ordinance, and the City Plan Department will require that Yale modify its facilities development proposal to include parking plans that are acceptable and accomodating to all who will be impacted."

The mayor's letter concludes, "Yale prides itself on its status as a premier higher learning institution. But the university's measures to enhance learning opportunities for students should not be at the expense of everyone who lives, works, or visits New Haven. Improving life for the benefit of all should be the first and most important lesson."

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Workers who retired in September 1996 or later receive no increase under this initiative.

Many of our retired sisters and brothers helped organize Locals 35 and 34, and their continued hard work and solidarity on behalf of working people should make us all proud.

Doris Rogan explained why she is active in the retirees association: "Yale would not be the great institution it is if not for the loyal dedication and hard work of both its former and current employees. As workers and union members, we learned the value of sticking together, and that lesson is just as vital now that we're retired."



*Doris Rogan, a leader of YURA, the Yale Unions Retirees Association*

# News in brief

## Local 34 Contract Surveys

To date, about 1300 surveys have been conducted in the Local 34 bargaining unit. Besides substantial raises, which seems to be first on most lists, the next 4 items our members would like to see improved pension/retirement benefits, parking, health benefits, training/promotion opportunities, respectively. Interestingly, these items were ranked as #1 in importance in the same order. The survey is on-going.

## Local 35 wins \$20,000

Local 35 won another year of funding for its acclaimed "Women's Program". The union will receive \$20,000 to allow union members to take time off of work and receive leadership training. Contact Meg Riccio for details.

## Our Unions in London

On July 6, our British allies leafletted in protest outside St. Paul's Cathedral in London, while Yale held its European Tercentennial celebration inside.

The event was reported in British newspapers *The Guardian* and *The London Times Higher Education Supplement*. Leafletting is not the norm for union activity in England, but our allies reportedly loved it and are looking for opportunities to try it again. Just as Yale is "everywhere", so are unions in solidarity.

## 1199 Strike Fund Collection

At the last Local 34 Membership meeting, \$500 was collected to donate to the 1199 nursing home strike fund. That money will be matched by Union funds, making the donation a total of \$1,000.

# A note on the mayoral primary

Neither Local 34 nor Local 35 have ever endorsed a candidate in a mayoral primary. In the upcoming New Haven mayoral primary on September 11, we will continue in that tradition, and will not take sides.

Both candidates are strong supporters of workers rights at Yale, and both candidates are our friends. Both candidates have supporters among our members.

Both candidates spoke before an assembled group of union leaders on August 8. Both made clear their willingness to work hard for the interests of working people.

We encourage all our members who are "Democrats" to become active in the primary campaign, to work for the candidate they believe to be best for New Haven, and to vote on Tuesday, September 11.

# The Members Speak ...

## Adam Patten

My name is Adam Patten, and I just started here at Yale. I am fresh out of college, graduating in May 2000. I had several administrative summer jobs in corporate settings, and also worked one year as an apprentice electrician. My job as an administrative assistant at EPH is my first job since being out of college.

I believe in the unity of us as workers, and I think the best way to establish that is to form personal contacts or relationships with co-workers in my department and throughout the university. What motivated me to become a part of the EPH Committee was that I attended a few local 34 membership meetings and the rally on April 20th. Through these actions I saw a great potential to participate in my workplace through the union.

The energy and commitment of the members was inspirational, so I decided to join the EPH Committee. As a new employee, joining the union gives me a sense of



being part of a community, and it helps to instill a feeling of pride in me for the work that my co-workers and I do here for the University. It also makes me feel more active in deciding the conditions of my employment, rather than a passive recipient of conditions/standards that would be pushed upon me by Yale.

When I have conducted interviews, I have received feedback that people feel fairly secure with their Yale jobs, which can probably be attributed to past gains made through union contracts. Still, the workers in Local 34 at the Medical School are looking for improvements in salaries, pensions, parking, and tuition reimbursement for employees and families. I am very confident that we will achieve these things and more in our new contract.

## Connie Russell



I started at Yale in October of 1998 as a casual in the Psychology Department. I was hired as a full-time editorial assistant in the department in March of 1999. I had been involved with the union this past year by setting up times for surveys in my building and talking about the

upcoming union events.

I joined the committee early this summer because I was interested in just getting people more involved with the union. I want to take time to talk to people in my department to encourage them to talk about what is important to them and to find out what changes they would like to see at Yale. I want to let them know what is going on in the union and get their input on upcoming events and issues.

There are also a lot of new people in my department and I plan to talk to them and introduce them to Local 34.

## Local 35 Membership Meeting

Wednesday, September 26  
Kline Geology Lab

Executive Board: 6:30pm  
Membership Meeting: 7:30pm

## The Loss of a Friend

By Pam Ossorio

On June 19th Eileen Lewis lost her twelve-year battle against breast cancer. She was a founding member of Local 34 and was on the first Negotiating Committee. She never hesitated to do anything for the Union that would make life at Yale better.

From her friends I would like to thank the staff of the ICF in the Health Plan who gave her such loving care. Also Dr. Farber, Molly Meyer and Kathy Schwab-Ward who helped keep her alive to fight all these years. If you would like to make a donation in her memory to the ICF, make checks out to "University Health Services". In the memo write: "Oncology Room". Send the check and a letter to Paul Genecin specifying the donation is in Eileen Lewis' memory and that it be used for nursing care, equipment or any use in the Infirmiry Oncology Room.

Eileen always loved the Unions. Let's make this contract one she would have been proud of.

## 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 \$40 each. Arrangements can be made to reserve tables of ten. You may make purchases 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.

A program book is being put together to help defray the costs. If you are interested in purchasing an ad or want to put a message in the program, call Meg Riccio.

## Recycle your Computer!

When your office computer is being replaced because it is outdated or broken, call Yale Recycling to have it recycled. Working PCs which are Pentium or better will be donated to registered non-profits in the New Haven area. Broken or old computers will be sent to a computer recycler.

Last year Yale recycled more than 11 tons of computers. This is still only a small percentage of the 12,000 laptop and desktop machines on campus. With your help we hope to recycle and donate more computers this year.

More info: 432-6852 or [www.yale.edu/recycling](http://www.yale.edu/recycling)

[www.yaleunions.org](http://www.yaleunions.org)

We're on the Web!

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