



# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO, CLC

No. 507

Issue 3, Fall 2009

## Members to Receive Additional Benefits

### **OPEIU Midwest United, Local 2009 Members Save Hundreds of Dollars!**

Local Unions 35 and 39 in Wisconsin and Local 391 in Chicago, Illinois have agreed to share resources, staff and organizing energies to create OPEIU Midwest United, Local 2009, representing more than 2,500 members who work in a variety of professional, technical and clerical positions in Midwest states.

“The offer of membership benefits made this collaboration possible,” said Christian Hains, Council Coordinator for Local 2009 and Business Agent for Local 35. “By showing the membership the union is concerned about them, not only in the workplace, but also in helping them in their personal lives, the membership of

the three Local Unions became excited at the prospect of joining forces and creating a bigger, stronger and more powerful organization.

“Once the members of the three Local Unions learned about the new benefits, and how they could use those benefits to save hundreds of dollars, they approved the establishment of Local 2009 by a vote of more than 90 percent in favor,” said Hains.

Membership benefits offered to all Local 2009 members include:

- \$1,000 Death Benefit;
- \$1,000 Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefits;

• A once-a-year payment of \$250 in Disability Benefits after six weeks of such disability; and

• Up to two annual towing/service calls valued at up to \$100 each.

In addition, all OPEIU members receive the PerksCard discount program, saving members hundreds of dollars in everyday purchases.

All benefits are free of charge to any full-time member of Local 2009. The new membership base reaches from Chicago, Illinois in the south to Green Bay, Wisconsin in the north, and Local 2009 plans to expand by organizing in northern Wisconsin and into Central Illinois.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Mary Mahoney named OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer

The OPEIU Executive Board named Mary Mahoney to serve as Secretary-Treasurer, effective January 1, 2010, following the retirement of Nancy Wohlforth. The appointment was made at the Executive Board’s meeting in Miami, Florida in October 2009. Mahoney has served as a Vice President for Region II since 2001.

“I would like to thank the Executive Board for its decision to appoint me as Secretary-Treasurer,” said

*(Continued on page 4)*



The newly appointed Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney (center), pictured with President Michael Goodwin and the retiring Nancy Wohlforth, at the Executive Board meeting in October 2009 in Miami, Florida.

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## Editorial



# We Want to Hear Your Thoughts About OPEIU's Membership Benefits Program!

By Michael Goodwin, International President

The membership benefits program, originally established for bargaining units in specified right-to-work states and other groups where membership is voluntary such as Guild 45 state chapters, Podiatry, has been a great success. For example, in Las Vegas, Nevada, the International Union's membership benefit program was instrumental in increasing membership in bargaining units of more than 5,000 taxi drivers from 831 drivers in 2006 to more than 3,000 drivers today!

The Industrial, Technical and Professional Employees Union (ITPEU), OPEIU Local 4873, works with the United Steelworkers (USW) under the banner of the Alliance and shares the cost of providing benefits. The ITPEU represents drivers at Yellow, Checker, Star and Henderson taxi companies and the USW represents drivers at six other companies. The success in Las Vegas has prompted USW President Leo Gerard to invite a delegation from ITPEU and me to join him at their December 2009 Executive Board meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The USW's interest is to explore how the Las Vegas program can be extended to other communities.

The program has also been successful among the Government Supervisors Association of Florida (GSAF), OPEIU Local 100, where membership growth has been substantial since the inception of the program and now stands at more than 2,300 members. And there's many more opportunities in Florida since the Union represents more than 6,500 employees in Miami-Dade and Broward counties.

At the 2007 OPEIU Convention in Las Vegas, the delegates approved the establishment of a national PerksCard for all of its 105,000 members. The PerksCard is a national discount card that saves members hundreds of dollars on purchases they make every day, including restaurants, movie theaters, online shopping, and gift cards, etc. The PerksCard works for everybody online, with discounts available when making purchases with national vendors. It also works well in densely populated areas that tend to offer a greater amount of availability of restaurants, movie theaters and walk-in establishments where the member simply needs to show the PerksCard to get the discount. It does not work as well in the more rural areas where there are fewer opportunities to use the card. Therefore, the International Union has thousands of members who are saving money every day in

urban areas, while other members in rural areas are finding savings by shopping online.

We are in the process of discussing these issues with the management of the Perks Group who issues the card. The Union has a three-year contract with the company ending September 30, 2010, and a decision will have to be made soon regarding its continuation. At present, the Union pays \$.25 per member totaling \$26,250 per month, and has informed the company that this cost needs to be reduced or eliminated. Perks Group's response was for OPEIU to allow the company to promote the listing of other products on the website for members to purchase such as auto insurance and homeowner's insurance, etc.

OPEIU made it clear to the company that we are not interested in being the cat's paw for a retailer, but rather are extremely interested in how we can save money for our members through group purchasing of a product with a defined discount. For example, in a dental network plan, the cost of each procedure is listed so the member can match the listed price against a quote they received for the same product and service. What's not acceptable to the Union is when retailers claim to give 20% to 60% discounts, but the buyer is never sure off what amount. There are certain retailers whose marketing strategy is to double the price and announce a 50% discount, leading the buyer to think they are saving money when, in fact, they are not.

In the meantime, the OPEIU Executive Board is looking at all of the above issues so that a recommendation can be made. However, we would appreciate your input into this process.

Please let us know whether or not you think the continuation of the PerksCard is a worthy effort, keeping in mind we may be able to substantially reduce or eliminate the cost. Generally speaking, we are informed that many groups love the PerksCard and use it often to save members hundreds of dollars. On the other hand, we need to build the program further in rural areas.

On page 4 is a response card for you to complete and send to Nicole Korkolis, Director of Communication, Education and Research, c/o OPEIU, 265 W. 14th St., Suite 610, New York, NY 10011 and let her have your thoughts on this matter. You can also email her at [frontdesk@opeiu.org](mailto:frontdesk@opeiu.org).

**Please take a moment to fill out the response card on page 4.**

## Nancy Wohlforth Retires After 31 Years of OPEIU Service

**A**fter an OPEIU career spanning more than 31 years, including the past seven as Secretary-Treasurer, Nancy Wohlforth announced to the Executive Board that she will be retiring effective January 1, 2010.

“Retiring from OPEIU is so hard to do because I’ve had a love affair with this union since 1978 when I started out with Local 3 in San Francisco,” Wohlforth told the Board members. “And, as Secretary-Treasurer, I’ve had the most difficult, most exciting job of my life. I got the chance to help build this union of ours, and to fight for things we believe in like health care for all, domestic partner benefits and social justice, and to try to strengthen our pension funds both in good economic times and disastrous times.

“I’m feeling sad about leaving this union that’s been at the center of my life all these years, but am delighted and very, very relieved that the new Secretary-Treasurer will be Mary Mahoney. I can’t imagine a better person for the position.”

Wohlforth went on to express her gratitude to the many people she has worked with and that have supported her in her work with OPEIU, including her life partner Denice Lombard.

“Every single thing I’ve done in this union — every single thing I am in life —



**Nancy Wohlforth announces her retirement, effective January 1, 2010.**

is because of her,” Wohlforth said. She also expressed her thanks to the members of the Executive Board, which she called “one of the strongest and wisest of any union in America,” and to the “thousands of OPEIU members who have marched with me, organized with me, lobbied with me, rallied with me, negotiated with me, joked with me, befriended me, hugged me and

most of all have been with me through some of my recently very difficult times.”

Wohlforth also shared her admiration of President Michael Goodwin, who asked her to step into the role of Secretary-Treasurer following the untimely death of Carol Dupuis in 2001.

“Mike is literally one of the very finest union leaders of this generation when it comes to fighting for equality and diversity for all,” said Wohlforth. “He really, deeply believes in civil rights, and dignity and fairness for everyone, whether they’re LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered) or straight, whether they’re female or male, whether they’re black or brown or Asian or white.

“For some union leaders, equality is a nice option. For Mike Goodwin, it’s how he runs his union and lives his life.”

Wohlforth concluded by telling the Executive Board that “for the last 31 years, I’ve been the luckiest woman in America. For everything this union has done for me, for the chance it’s given me to fight for the things I believe, for the brave, sentimental, generous women and men it’s brought into my life, for the lessons about solidarity it’s taught me over and over again, for all of my dreams that have come true because of OPEIU, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

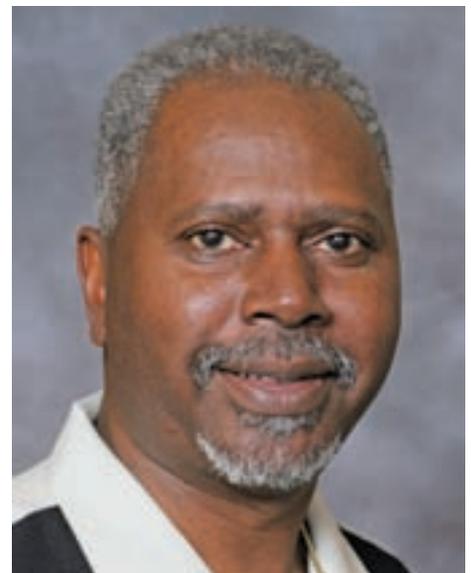
## Allen Byron Named Vice President of Region II

**T**he Executive Board has named Allen Byron to serve as Vice President for Region II. Byron is Secretary-Treasurer/Business Manager of Local 32 in Union, New Jersey. He fills the seat left open on the Executive Board by Mary Mahoney, who now will serve as OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer, effective January 1, 2010.

“Allen has been a dedicated union leader for many years, and his life’s mission has been to better the lives of working families in New Jersey,” said President Michael Goodwin. “His experience working at Local 32, defending members and negotiating higher pay and benefits, makes him the perfect person to represent the members of Region II.”

Byron was a Senior Computer Operator at the Newark Housing Authority (NHA) in November 1979 when he was selected to serve as a member of the contract negotiating committee for the union representing the workers, SEIU Local 617. After a promotion to Supervising Computer Operator, he joined OPEIU Local 32 and became President of the NHA Association, as well as fulltime Union Representative and Chief Shop Steward.

Upon his retirement from NHA in May 2005, Byron became a Local 32 Business Representative, and in 2006 became the Secretary-Treasurer/Business Manager. With the support of OPEIU, he was appointed Vice President of the New Jersey State AFL-CIO. Byron is a lifelong resident of Elizabeth, New Jersey.



**Allen Byron**

# Letters to the Editor



Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcomed in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: Anonymous letters will not be printed.

You can also reach us on the web:  
[www.opeiu.org](http://www.opeiu.org)

**Dear President Goodwin:**

On behalf of the employees of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 237 who attended the Health Insurance Reform rally in Washington, D.C. on June 25, I want to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for having the opportunity to participate in the festivities and the hospitality that was extended to us from you and your staff.

Although there were some mishaps along the way, we were able to overcome those setbacks and not lose focus on the true purpose of our endeavor.

Thanks again and please continue to keep us informed on all upcoming events.

Sincerely,

**Evelies Cabrera**

Local 153 Shop Steward  
New York, N.Y.

**Dear Secretary-Treasurer Wohlforth:**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you once again for your generous support of my education. I consider my first year at Michigan State University a great success and despite the challenging year that stands ahead of me, I plan on the second year being the same. Without the support of this scholarship from OPEIU, there would be far more financial strain on myself and my family and I cannot express how much we appreciate your help. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,

**Andrew Rockwell**

Computer Science '12  
Michigan State University

*See page 13 for more information about this year's scholarship winners.*

## Mary Mahoney named OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer

*(Continued from page 1)*

Mahoney when accepting the appointment. "I'm very excited about this new chapter in my life. I have been on the Executive Board for many years and have learned a lot and seen firsthand the responsibility of the Secretary-Treasurer position. I know in this new role I'll be faced with many challenges and I love a challenge," said Mahoney.

Mahoney has been a member of Local 6 for more than 30 years, and has served as President since 1995. During her time as a member, she was an employee of the Massachusetts Trial Court, which is Local

6's largest bargaining unit. She began as a Steward for Local 6, and later became an Executive Board Member, and was eventually elected to the position of Executive Board Vice President.

Mahoney became Business Manager of Local 6 in 2001. She also serves as a Vice President to the Massachusetts AFL-CIO and received that organization's highest honor in 2006, is a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW), and serves on the Executive Council for the Greater Boston Labor Council as well as a number of central labor councils in Massachusetts.

## We want to hear your thoughts about PerksCard!

Clip and return to OPEIU, Attn: Nicole Korkolis, 265 West 14th Street, Suite 610, NY NY 10011 or email [frontdesk@opeiu.org](mailto:frontdesk@opeiu.org).

How often do you use the PerksCard?

- |                                                |                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Several times a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Once or twice a month |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I rarely use it       | <input type="checkbox"/> I never use it        |

For which services/goods do you use the PerksCard? \_\_\_\_\_

What other types of goods/services would you like to see offered by the PerksCard? \_\_\_\_\_

How could we improve the PerksCard? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to continue to have the PerksCard benefits provided to OPEIU members?  
 Yes  No

### WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of  
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC  
<http://www.opeiu.org>

MICHAEL GOODWIN  
President

NANCY WOHLFORTH  
Secretary-Treasurer



CALM  
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## Korkolis Joins OPEIU as Director of Communication, Education and Research

**N**icole Korkolis has joined OPEIU as Director of Communication, Education and Research. In this position, Korkolis will oversee all communication, marketing and educational activities on behalf of the International Union to support its international operations, organizing and political action campaigns, as well as Local Union activities.

“Nicole’s wide-ranging experience in communication, public affairs and labor relations will be a tremendous asset to OPEIU,” said President Michael Goodwin. “She will help us to improve how we communicate with our members and our Local Unions, use modern technology and the newest methods to assist with lobbying our state and national leaders on issues of importance to OPEIU, and raise the visibility of the union overall.”

Korkolis has twenty years of experience helping the labor movement communicate with its members and constituents. Prior to joining OPEIU, Korkolis was Managing Director of the Carmen Group, Inc., overseeing the firm’s public relations division with clients that included international and local unions, non-profit, educational, business and financial entities.

She also served as Senior Vice President with The Kamber Group, at the time one of the nation’s largest unionized public relations firms.

For OPEIU, Korkolis will oversee all OPEIU communication activities, publications, websites, marketing and advertising, the Educational Conferences, as well as the International’s Membership Benefits department.



**Nicole Korkolis, OPEIU Director of Communication, Education and Research.**

## Charles Wowkanech Honored by ALM

**T**he American Labor Museum/Botto House National Landmark honored New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech at its 27th Annual Sol Stetin Awards Gala on November 19, 2009.

“We were so pleased to honor Charles Wowkanech this year,” said President Michael Goodwin, who also serves as President of the American Labor Museum (ALM). “We couldn’t find a more deserving person than him, whose career represents the same values and goals of the American Labor Museum — protecting and ensuring a better life for America’s working families.”

“It is a great honor to receive this recognition from the American Labor Museum,” said Wowkanech. “My years of experience as a member of the New Jersey labor movement have taught me there is no limit to how much we can accomplish by working together. Beyond legislative victories, union members have built a culture that respects all people and promotes a family bond between us. It continues to be my life’s ambition to uphold, protect, and promote the working family values that we all share.” Wowkanech was first elected president of the million-member statewide New Jersey AFL-CIO on January 5, 1997. The Awards Gala also honored Representative Bill Pascrell Jr. (D-NJ).

In addition, special recognition awards were presented to Irwin Nack, former president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 1796 and American Labor Museum Trustee, and Bennet D. Zurofsky, Esq., labor and civil rights lawyer and director of the New Jersey Industrial Union Council (IUC) “Solidarity Singers.”

The Sol Stetin Awards are named for Mr. Stetin, who was a former president of the

Textile Workers Union and a founder of the American Labor Museum.

The American Labor Museum is housed within the Botto House National Landmark in Haledon, N.J. The Botto House was the scene of rallies held during the Paterson Silk Strike of 1913. It was declared a United States National Historic Landmark in recognition of its role in the effort to end child labor and secure improved working conditions.



**OPEIU President and President of the American Labor Museum Michael Goodwin; Bennet D. Zurofsky, Esq., Labor & Civil Rights Lawyer & Director of the Solidarity Singers, New Jersey Industrial Union Council (IUC); Irwin Nack, AFT Local 1796, William Paterson University & American Labor Museum Trustee; Charles Wowkanech, President, New Jersey State AFL-CIO; and Angelica Santomauro, Ed.D., Director of the American Labor Museum.**

## Members to Receive Additional Benefits

*(Continued from page 1)*

Discussions began in the summer of 2009, and were approved by Local Unions 35, 39, and 391 following the initial meeting of the steering committee in June 2009. Shortly thereafter, the proposal was overwhelmingly approved by the general membership of each Local Union.

The establishment of Local 2009 was necessary to lower operating costs, aid in the organizing of new units and to better service existing members, as well as to more efficiently share staff and their collective expertise.

“The program was designed in a way to

benefit everyone involved,” said Hains. “The new Local 2009 will now be able to hire a full-time Organizer and a floating Business Agent to help with the expanded territory, which has jurisdiction over Wisconsin, Illinois, northwest Indiana and eastern Iowa. The staff will receive enhanced technology to help them more effectively do their jobs, and most importantly, the members will receive additional membership benefits,” Hains said. “We received a great deal of assistance and support from the International Union, and are particularly grateful to President Michael Goodwin

and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler for all their help.”

“Local 2009 has already made good on its promises in just a five-month period,” said Hains. “We have already used the benefit program to successfully organize a new unit, a Dunkin’ Donuts bakery in the western suburbs of Chicago (full story below) and are on course to save tens of thousands of dollars per year by joining Local 2009 and receiving membership benefits.”

To learn more about OPEIU Midwest United, Local 2009, visit the website [www.opeiu2009.org](http://www.opeiu2009.org).

## Dunkin’ Donuts Bakery Workers Vote YES!

**O**n September 8-9, 2009, 40 bakers, fryers, finishers, drivers and janitors working at a Dunkin’ Donuts bakery located in the western suburbs of Chicago voted in favor of joining OPEIU Midwest United, Local 2009.

These workers had contacted representatives of Local 2009 in July and indicated they were interested in union representation. They had grown tired of dangerous working conditions, dealing with an employer who routinely refused to pay workers’ compensation claims, having their paychecks bounce when they tried to deposit them, having no benefits and their schedules changed at the whim of management. “They knew that coming together with their co-workers to organize a union with Local 2009 was the only way that guaranteed any hope for change,” said Christian Hains, Council Coordinator of Local 2009.

Despite language and cultural barriers, these workers stuck together throughout the campaign and resisted the employer’s attempt to exploit their differences and divide the workforce. They stood up at meetings, spoke with each other about the benefits of joining Local 2009, went on house calls and organized rideshares to meetings to ensure everyone was able to hear the union message.

“We had to overcome a lot of barriers in organizing this unit,” said Hains. “But, throughout, the committee remained solid, the



**A worker displays burns she received to her forearm on the job, due to a lack of protective gear. Safety was a prime reason the workers sought union representation.**

staff was able to effectively and quickly counter management’s anti-union campaign, and we won!”

Of particular interest was how Local 2009 utilized the membership benefits program, provided to all members to effectively organize the unit. “We were able

to use the program in many ways,” said Hains. “It helped to offer something concrete to the workers immediately upon joining the union. And when management asked the union to put their promises in writing, we were able to provide them with a letter explaining all of the guaranteed benefits that come with membership in Local 2009.”

The workers at the Dunkin’ Donuts bakery have elected their first bargaining team, have generated contract proposals, and are now ready to achieve and work under their first union contract.



**Christian Hains, Local 2009 Council Coordinator.**



**The Local 2009 Organizing Committee, including Council Coordinator Christian Hains and Organizer Gabriel Byrd.**

## *Lobbyist Corner*

# Health Insurance Reform Takes Giant Step Forward

The Democratic-controlled House and Senate have moved one step closer to ensuring that all Americans have comprehensive health insurance reform that will bring down costs and improve quality of care.

OPEIU and AFL-CIO unions have said that an optional public health insurance plan must be the center of any reform, and that health care can't be paid for by taxing the middle class. OPEIU has been a strong voice in this long fight, advocating on behalf of working families, and has also taken another step to ensure fairness for its members in the National Guild of Medical Providers of the Lower Extremity, Guild 45.

Members of Guild 45 are Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPM), specialists who medically and surgically treat conditions of the foot and ankle and manifestations of systemic diseases in the foot and ankle.

DPMs are defined as "physicians," along with Medical Doctors (MDs) and Doctors of Osteopathy (DOS) in Title XVIII of the Social Security Act governing Medicare, but podiatrists are not similarly defined as physicians in Title XIX of the Social Security Act governing Medicaid.

"This issue is of critical importance to podiatrists who have been fighting for equality in Medicaid for more than 40 years," said President Michael Goodwin. "This is a discrimination issue preventing licensed podiatrists from treating Medicaid patients, and should have been corrected many years ago." Thus OPEIU supports legislation that would end this discriminatory practice and has worked to have it included in the current health insurance reform bills being considered in Congress. At its convention in September, the AFL-CIO also unanimously adopted Resolution 37, "Resolution to Prevent Discrimination Against Doctors of Podiatric Medicine," submitted by OPEIU.

President Goodwin continues to follow the current developments in the negotiations between the Senate committees and has requested the help of Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY), a member of the Senate Finance Committee, to ensure the provision is included in the final Senate bill as it goes to conference. Representative Diana DeGette (D-CO), sponsor of a House bill to correct the discrimination practice in Title XIX, did include the provision in the Energy and Commerce Committee's health care reform bill.

Both the House and Senate Democratic leadership are moving forward to integrate the bills and move them to the floor for debate, and then to conference to provide legislation that will give the American people a health care system that will not tax or bankrupt them, but instead allow them access to quality care by the doctor of their choice.

This will not happen without action! Please email, call and visit your U.S. Representatives and Senators and tell them now is the time for real health insurance reform. The timetable is unclear, but one thing is clear – OPEIU needs your help to see positive change.

As this issue is ongoing, an update will be provided in the next issue of *White Collar*.

## **After Health Care Debate is Over, Employee Free Choice is Next!**

Once the health care debate is over, and hopefully, President Obama has signed real insurance reform into law, Congress will turn its attention to the Employee Free Choice Act.

"We are confident Congress will pass the Employee Free Choice Act, but the exact details and when it will happen are still unclear," said President Michael Goodwin.

The law, to level the field between workers and bosses in organizing and bargaining, is one of labor's two top legislative priorities — along with health care reform — for labor-backed Democratic President Barack Obama and the Democratic-run 111th Congress.

President Obama is firmly behind the measure, saying that its passage is one key to restoring the U.S. middle class. "That's why I stand behind the Employee Free Choice Act — because if a majority of workers want a union, they should get a union," Obama told delegates to the AFL-CIO Convention in September. "If it (the bill) is stuck, it'll be on the details," said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

The Employee Free Choice Act, as originally written, would give workers — not bosses — the choice of how to recognize unions in the workplace, after a verified majority of workers sign union election authorization cards. They could choose immediate recognition through "majority signup" or an NLRB-run election.

The law would also impose triple damages for each instance of labor law-breaking — such as illegally firing a worker for advocating unionization — and would order binding arbitration between bosses and unions if the two sides can't agree on a first contract within 120 days of starting negotiations.

The Senate is the obstacle to passing the law, with the Democrats negotiating with themselves on provisions needed to get the 60 votes to overcome the planned GOP filibuster.

The problem is the Democrats don't have those 60 votes, at least right now. A "gang of six" is discussing proposals to change the law, said one of them, Republican-turned Democrat Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania. A second problem is that another Democratic seat, that of the late labor champion Edward M. Kennedy, is vacant and right now can only be filled by a special election — scheduled for January 2010. Senator Specter, EFCA sponsor Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Sens. Charles Schumer (D-NY), Tom Carper (D-Del), Mark Pryor (D-AR), and Sherrod Brown (D-OH), are in discussions with union leaders, trying to write a bill that will get 60 votes.

# OPEIU AT THE AFL



OPEIU delegates and guests to the AFL-CIO Convention, held September 13-17, 2009 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, included Vice President for Region II and recently appointed OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney, Vice President for Region IV Becky Turner, and Local 251 Acting President Kelley Burns. They are pictured wearing their “Diversity is Our Strength” t-shirts at the Diversity Summit held prior to the opening of the Convention.



President Michael Goodwin talks with Mike Davis, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association (PPMA).



OPEIU delegates, alternates and guests to the AFL-CIO Convention, pictured at the Diversity Summit held September 13, are (left to right) International Vice President Walter Allen Jr., ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 Secretary-Treasurer John Brenton III, Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Wohlforth, Local 8 President Verlene Jones, ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 Vice President and Director of Organizing Dennis Arrington, Region IV Vice President Becky Turner, President Michael Goodwin, NAACP New York Branch President Dr. Annie B. Martin, Region II Vice President and recently appointed OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Mary Mahoney, Region III Vice President Green Lewis, ITPE/OPEIU Local 4873 President and OPEIU Region III Vice President John Conley, Local 153 Senior Business Representative Patricia Hoffman, and Local 251 Acting President Kelley Burns.

# AFL-CIO CONVENTION



OPEIU delegates and alternates to the AFL-CIO Convention, pictured left to right, are Region II Vice President Richard Lanigan, Region III Vice President Green Lewis, Guild 45 President and OPEIU Region II Vice President Dr. John Mattiacci, President Michael Goodwin, Region IV Vice President Becky Turner, Region II Vice President Mary Mahoney, Local 153 Hotel Representative Rebecca Pomares, Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler and Local 153 Senior Business Representative Patricia Hoffman.



Filmmaker Michael Moore introduces his movie, "Capitalism: A Love Story," which had its world premiere at the AFL-CIO Convention.



President Barack Obama greets delegates after his address to the AFL-CIO Convention.



President Goodwin with America's Agenda: Health Care For All President Doug Dority. President Goodwin is on the board of directors of America's Agenda, an organization that brings together national and international labor unions, businesses and government leaders to work toward winning guaranteed access to affordable, high-quality health care for every American.



Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler (left) and Pennsylvania Podiatric Medical Association (PPMA) Executive Director Mike Davis help Region IV Vice President Becky Turner prepare to address the convention in support of Title XIX legislation and against capitation systems affecting podiatrists.



Retiring AFL-CIO President John Sweeney hands over the convention gavel to the newly elected President Richard Trumka, as newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker applaud.

## Local Union News

### Phil Newson Elected Local 109 President

**P**hil Newson has been elected the new President of Local 109, representing Air Methods Corporation (AMC) pilots. A professional pilot for more than 30 years, Newson has been with AMC since 2000 and currently serves as a relief pilot for the company. Prior to his election, Newson served as a Local 109 Vice President. He also was the Steward for the AMC unit since its inception, and was involved in the original organizing campaign. Newson will now be part of the negotiating committee's contract renewal efforts with AMC.

Newson will continue Local 109's mission to promote the best interests of professional helicopter pilots in the Air Medical community, fighting for just wages, improving safety, health and welfare benefits, and working conditions.



**Local 109 President Phil Newson (right) and Senior International Representative Paul Bohelski.**

### Mark McLaughlin Elected President of Local 453

**M**ark McLaughlin, the newly elected President of Local 453, has a clear set of goals in mind. "My goal as President is to make our Local Union more politically active and to strengthen workers' rights, which should go a long way to preventing management abuse," says McLaughlin.

McLaughlin says educating the membership so they can have a stronger political voice is one of his top priorities. And he believes the support of the International will help that goal. "Having the steady leadership of President Michael Goodwin and Director of Organization and Field Services Kevin Kistler will keep us on the right track," he says.

McLaughlin has been an employee of the Mass Bay Transit Authority for 22 years. His jobs have included motorman, money room, track worker and supervisor of cleaning.

McLaughlin is also a high school hockey coach, and enjoys spending time with his four daughters. Justine, 24, is a recent graduate of Boston University and is currently working in New York; his daughters, Presley, 15, Lauren, 13, and Riley 10, live with him in Boston.

"I feel strength in family and union brotherhood is essential in the times ahead," McLaughlin says.



**Local 453 President Mark McLaughlin.**

## Senator Schumer Marches with Local 153 in NY Labor Day Parade



Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) marches with Local 153 members in the 2009 Labor Day Parade on September 12, 2009 in New York City. Despite a rainy day, Local 153 members turned out in force to march in the parade and celebrate the spirit and contributions of the American workforce. Pictured to the right of Schumer is labor activist Domingo Roman.

## Local Union News

### Local 153 Rallies for Bloomberg



Local 153 members rally for New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg on October 13, 2009 as part of his successful re-election bid on November 3. The rally was held at the El Museo del Barrio in Manhattan, where a debate was held later that evening between Bloomberg and his opponent William Thompson, who currently serves as NYC Comptroller. Pictured are Setan Hall University employees and Local 153 members Mabel Wong and Terry Nixon, and labor activists Gloria Tirado and Domingo Roman.

### OPEIU Protests Layoffs in Puerto Rico

More than 200 Local 153 members in Puerto Rico joined the 200,000-person march at the state capitol building in San Juan on October 15, 2009 to protest Gov. Luis G. Fortuño's plan to slash the budget and lay off thousands of workers, many of whom are OPEIU members. In support and solidarity, rallies were also held in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and other cities.

Using recently passed legislation known as Public Law 7, Fortuño plans to lay off as many as 30,000 public employees and deny collective bargaining to the remainder of the island's public workers. According to the AFL-CIO, Puerto Rico "where unemployment is already at 15%, is set to receive \$6 billion in federal economic recovery funds, more than enough to cover a projected \$3.2 billion budget deficit."

In a letter of support read at the San Juan rally, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, "At times like these — and especially at times like these — the people of Puerto Rico need a strong public sector, not a weaker one. We need the government to step in and push the economy forward, not further weaken it. Laying off public servants, particularly at the scale that the governor is planning, is not only anti-worker, it will set back national efforts toward an economic recovery."

"Today's march is a clear demonstration of opposition to the government's policies," Jose Rodriguez Baez, President of the Puerto Rico Federation of Labor, told the crowd in San Juan. "Puerto Rico is unified in repudiation of the layoffs of more than 30,000 public sector workers, the elimination of collective bargaining agreements and policies that promote privatization."

The rally sent a clear message to the Puerto Rican government, and effectively shut down the city for most of the day. "The ports were shutdown, the Plaza las Americas was closed, streets in the metropolitan area were deserted, and only buses taking people to the protests and workers marching to the Plaza were on the streets," said OPEIU International Representative Iram Ramirez. "Public schools were closed, universities were closed, the main medical center was almost shut down, and students blocked the main expressway for six hours."

OPEIU members demonstrated against the planned layoffs for weeks before the large October 15 rally, joining with their union sisters and brothers represented by SEIU, IBEW, UAW. Ramirez was attacked by police during one such peaceful demonstration. Video of the attack can be viewed at [www.opeiu.org](http://www.opeiu.org).



Local 153 members in Puerto Rico demonstrate against government layoffs of thousands of workers, many of whom are OPEIU members.



## Local Union News

# Local 386 in Canada Fights to Save Members During Company Restructuring

**L**ocal 386 in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada, has fought to save the jobs of the remaining 20 office clerical staff at Abitibi Bowater pulp and paper mill despite widespread restructuring efforts and the company's bankruptcy status.

"This is the only pulp and paper mill left in Thunder Bay," said Local 386 President and OPEIU International Representative Larry Kopechanski. "At its peak in the early 1980s, the mill had 2,500 unionized workers and there were 187 unionized office clerical workers. After this last restructuring that eliminated another 147 jobs, the mill will be operating with 470 employees — 90 management and 380 hourly workers." In addition to OPEIU, unions representing these workers include the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers of Canada, IBEW, Operating Engineers and the Steelworkers.

Despite these massive reductions in staff, the company's future is uncertain. "The company is comprised of 11 pulp and paper mills

and 23 saw mills throughout Canada, the United States and even one in the Far East," said Kopechanski. "The company has Chapter 11 protection, but the problem is that some of the loans are insured by the same financial

institutions that provided the loans. If the company folds, these institutions will receive 100 percent of their money back, so obviously it's in their best interest for the company to close. Still, I'm optimistic it will survive."

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**June 28-  
July 1, 2010**

Additional details  
to follow

# Congratulations to 2009 Scholarship Winners!

OPEIU congratulates the winners of the 2009 Howard Coughlin Memorial and John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Funds.

## Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund

### Full-Time Winners



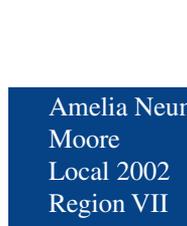
Ravi Budhan  
Local 153  
Region II



Morgan Mayer-Jochimsen  
Local 39  
Region VII



Colleen DeRonda  
Local 109  
Region V



Amelia Neumann-Moore  
Local 2002  
Region VII



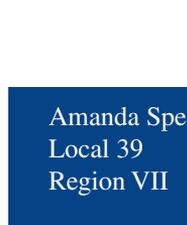
Ethan Frost  
Local 95  
Region VII



Alejandro Sills  
Local 298  
Region IV



Abbeygail Jiongo  
Local 4873  
Region III



Amanda Spencer  
Local 39  
Region VII



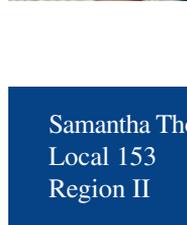
Jason Lombardo  
Local 153  
Region II



Roland Thayer  
Local 12  
Region VII



Christina Luse  
Local 11  
Region VI



Samantha Thompson  
Local 153  
Region II



## John Kelly Labor Studies Scholarship Winner



Sharon O'Connor  
Local 6  
Region II

## Great Opportunity Waiting at Summer Camp!

The OPEIU Romeo Corbeil/Gilles Beauregard Memorial Fund offers an opportunity for children of OPEIU members to attend a summer camp and learn how a union works and why being in a union will provide them with better wages and benefits. They will also learn about issues such as gender discrimination (why women are often paid less for the same job), all while enjoying fun activities such as arts and crafts, basketball, canoeing, softball, swimming and volleyball.

The application deadline for the Summer Camp Program is June 15, 2010 and is offered to children between the ages of 13 and 16. There are only 20 spaces available and applications are selected on a first-come, first-served basis.

Visit [www.opeiu.org](http://www.opeiu.org) and click on Member Resources/Union Scholarships to learn more about OPEIU scholarship opportunities and to download applications.



# WASHINGTON WINDOW

## Who Created This Economic Mess?

**W**ho created this economic mess, the worst since the Great Depression? That's a question posed by union leaders, including new AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, politicians, economists and citizens — especially citizens suffering its ravages.

Trumka is blunt about it. In a speech leading a protest at the nation's financiers' citadel, the New York Stock Exchange, he squarely blamed the bankers, brokers, hedge fund traders, shady manipulators and others who brought the financial system crashing down around their ears — and the U.S. and world economy around ours.

"Brothers and sisters...we are here today to demand more accountability from our financial system...from Wall Street...from the Masters of the Universe who speculate in phony instruments rather than invest in the real economy," Trumka declared.

"And we're here to support President Obama's call here on Wall Street for tough new regulations...to keep our economy safe from speculators and the apostles of greed," he added.

After detailing the woes of jobless-

ness and foreclosures that the crash has brought, Trumka declared: "Banks and other financial institutions must be held accountable for making this mess that required trillions of dollars of our money to clean up...For the pain they've inflicted on families who face financial ruin...unemployment...wiped out pensions...foreclosures and bankruptcy.

"Every bank of America should be held responsible for correcting this course...and especially for practices that strangle commerce and kill jobs," Trumka declared.

Trumka's right. And there's even more to it.

Near the close of debate on a resolution on the economy on the last day of the AFL-CIO Convention, an unnamed delegate had a short but important observation: "Businesses do only what governments allow them to do."

Bingo. Yes, the financials ran amok and drove the economy into the ditch, but that's only because the politicians — Democrats and Republicans — let them do so.

It's called deregulation. Deregulation, remember, was supposed to bring com-

petition. It started with airlines and trucking, under Democrat Jimmy Carter.

Just ask any airline worker about the chaos he or she has had to endure for the last 30 years — or ask any trucker how many hours and miles he or she must drive, fatigued and without a break, in order to pay for his or her own truck, insurance, gas, tires, Social Security taxes, and on and on. That's "deregulation."

It continued under Republican Ronald Reagan and became bipartisan under Democrat Bill Clinton, who agreed to the GOP push — aided and abetted by business dollars and lobbying — for financial deregulations, tearing down the walls FDR erected.

And, of course, neither GOPer George W. Bush, nor GOP-appointed Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan nor either party in Congress stopped the financial deregulation steamroller of the last nine years, much less extended regulation to new industries, such as hedge funds, that needed it. They quashed pro-regulation efforts.

So Trumka is right: Lay the blame at the financiers' feet. But that delegate is also correct. It's the pols' fault, too.

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# Work and Health

## Doctors and Patients: Can The Relationship Be Saved?

**Submitted by Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D.**

**Associate Professor of Surgery, The Mount Sinai School of Medicine, NYC  
OPEIU Local 153 Health Fund Medical Director**

**A**re doctors and patients headed for a “divorce?” Hopefully not! Something has gone terribly wrong with our medical system, as evidenced by the ugly fight in Congress over finding a way to improve our health care system. And the doctor-patient relationship is one of the real victims of this breakdown in communication.

Remember Dr. Marcus Welby, everyone’s favorite family doctor? He clearly savored every moment of practicing medicine and his patients loved him for the care and concern he demonstrated. There was real warmth, understanding and mostly a feeling that the doctor had your best interest at heart. That is the image my fellow residents and I had when we were in the process of training to be physicians. And for that deep concern we were willing to show, we thought we would live in the reflection of the sunshine that our patients would cast upon us as we healed the sick and tended to the dying.

It sounds like a Hollywood melodrama, but in fact it was the way it really was once upon a time. In the last two decades, however, there has been a marked deterioration in the relationship between physicians and their patients. This can be identified in the medical literature and the lay press.

The perceived issues that have led to this include physicians’ insensitivity, lack of time for listening and arrogance. Patients often feel that doctors complain too much and evidence an air of privilege. Doctors on the other hand often think that patients are ungrateful, demanding, and are hard to please. Doctors occasionally become offended when a patient challenges their diagnosis or treatment recommendation, occasionally prompted by accurate or inaccurate information found by the patient.

Who is right? This is a very difficult question. We in the medical profession who think about these problems are convinced this deterioration in the relationship interferes with patient care, creates doubt in the minds of patients, and occasionally leads to unwarranted lawsuits that waste the time and money of the health care system, physicians and patients.

Doctors and patients have legitimate complaints about the system. We have to work together to resolve these issues. We have to start communicating. When your physician seems curt with you, it is alright to point it out to him or her. It is perfectly acceptable to say you do not understand what has been said to you. And if you do not understand the explanation, it is accept-

able to ask for written information or an Internet site where you might be able to obtain data that will clarify your confusion. And if the explanation still does not make any sense, a second opinion may be more than an option; it might be a necessity to show you exactly what you have and what to do about it. Nothing less is acceptable, and it is your doctor’s obligation to provide that. And it is your obligation as a patient to be open, honest and forthright in your interaction and provide clear information to the doctor, and ask direct questions that do not avoid what are often painful topics. Also, if you are having a problem, return to see your physician with someone accompanying you who may have more expertise or experience with medical problems.

These tips will allow you to maintain a professional relationship with your physician and receive the medical care you are entitled too. If, at the end of your efforts, your physicians does not do these things, it might be time to look for another physician. This too is completely acceptable and desirable if you are to receive the medical care you deserve.

*Jeffrey S. Freed, M.D., P.C. specializes in general surgery/proctology. He can be reached via email at jsfmd@aol.com.*

**For more information about the  
OPEIU, visit our website at  
[www.opeiu.org](http://www.opeiu.org).**



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# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

*The Officers and Staff of the  
Office and Professional  
Employees International Union  
extend their very best wishes to  
all OPEIU members for a happy  
and healthy holiday.*