



The Road Scholar

WSU Union of Part-Time Faculty newsletter

UPTF Local 477
AFT / AFL-CIO

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Bread and Roses

A Union For One Is A Victory For All!

By Rayfield Waller
Africana Studies

A union like ours (bless the UPTF!) embodies one of the most important messages of the history of American labor: *Bread and Roses!* J. Oppenheim's popular labor poem, inspired by the famous Lawrence, Massachusetts textile mill women workers' strike of 1911-1912, invoked that message: workers must have fair wages, and must have *dignity too*.

Having been one of the UPTF organizers present at the bargaining table during the forging of our first contract, I can testify that the ripple effect of UPTF's enthusiasm has not only given us now our second year of a hard fought and hard-won legally binding contract, but also has afforded us respect in our departments, greater respect from our students and fellow professors in the AAUP-AFT, and has inspired many like us who struggle nationally for contracts like ours.

Our contract, which we negotiated with an eye toward winning the right to expect dignity in our working conditions, is widely seen as an exemplary model.

UPTF officers have discovered this fact when attending union conferences locally and nationally. All contingent faculty in the U.S. want a living wage, and our local success in having forged the

basis for this in our contract, is a victory for *all* part-time academic workers who see and are inspired by what UPTF has accomplished.

We began with the

basic demand that as contingent faculty we must have a living wage, job security, and benefits. There is work still to be done, on benefits particularly, but as a new AFT local, we now have for the first time at Wayne State, a basis upon which to use collective bargaining to work toward the ideal.

From the very beginning though, we also let it be known that Wayne's part-time faculty also require respect, and dignity, which are crucial to our role as educators, and to our role as advocates of literacy in our community and nationally. We bargained with an added pas-

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Labor, community and student supporters participating in a Michigan Restaurant Opportunities Center United protest Jan. 12, 2010 at Andiamo's restaurant in Dearborn. The ROC has filed state and federal charges against the restaurant for discrimination and wage and hour violations. A multi-faceted ROC campaign is ongoing to win justice for workers at Andiamo's. The AFT Michigan and locals throughout the state, including the UPTF, are supporting the campaign by joining picket lines, signing petitions and more. See www.rocunited.org/affiliates/michigan for more information on support activities.

Photo: MECAWI



**"Organize and FIGHT
— Don't starve!"**

**- 1930s slogan of the
Unemployed Councils**



'Bread and Roses' continued from page 1

sion that came from knowing that we have to halt and turn back the creeping disrespect toward intellectual workers that accompanies low wages, adjunct abuse, job insecurity, and wage ceilings. Bread is what feeds us, but roses too, are crucial to the aims of a union: winning the myriad tangible and intangible considerations that equal professional status, and the dignity of being treated as teachers, scholars, and workers with legitimacy. Thankfully, UPTF organizers understood and advanced this principle from the word go. As an African American member who served on the bargaining committee, and on the Un-

ion Council, that attitude among organizers impressed me and won my loyalty.

The respect we demanded and fought for, beginning with the earliest bargaining sessions as we hammered out the first contract, continues to grow in our second year. Since the signing of our contract in July, 2008 our union has fought back against unfair payroll practices; fought for enforcement of the presidential policy mandating parking benefits for part-time faculty; strengthened the effect of the Benefits Committee; increased the number of departmental union stewards who offer ears to hear grievances and eyes to keep watch over the administration;

fought for improvement in allocation of university professional development funds for distribution to our members; monitored procedures for promotion of members; and continues to be active in the larger labor-community-student solidarity activities of Southeastern Michigan and elsewhere internationally.

The UPTF is visible and supportive to and for other Michigan workers (organized and unorganized) struggling for and seeking to maintain decent benefits, wages, job security, dignity and respect. We have made friends and allies of other unions as well as student and community organizations throughout Detroit and beyond including the AFT, AAUP, the UAW, the Steelworkers, the NEA, the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), the Michigan Restaurant Opportunities Center United (ROC), SEIU, UNITE HERE, the United Electrical Workers, Nurse's Union and Jobs With Justice. The UPTF has received national attention and accolades for the swiftness and strength of our struggle to organize, bargain, and put a first contract squarely on its feet. Organizers elsewhere building part-time faculty unions are following our example.

Now that a new semester is here we consider that every new year is a hectic and ex-

hilarating time for us. We are coming back from an extended holiday break which was happy for many of us as well as stressful: spending time with family and friends can be joyous but in hard economic times can also be burdensome and taxing. Let's face it, in a state continuing to suffer record job losses and foreclosures, there are sad, even tragic stories in all our families. Unemployment, healthcare issues plaguing those under-insured or uninsured, and of course, financial crises, come to a head around Christmas and New Year's.

This is all the more reason to pause and recognize the fruits of our struggle for our union, and to recognize the work that still lies ahead. Some of that work now is to build a strong stewards' council, strengthen friendships with fellow unions and student-community organizations, conduct outreach to members teaching at WSU and its satellite campuses, and to press our demands for the benefits we deserve.

Happy New Year, and please make a resolution right now to ensure *that a gain for one will be a gain for all*, by getting involved in your Union of Part-Time Faculty-AFT Local 477!

Δ† Together, we win! Δ†

Union Council Upcoming Meetings

- **Friday, January 15 / Noon**
- **Friday, January 29 / Noon**
- **Friday, February 12 / Noon**
- **Friday, February 26 / Noon**

All meetings held at the UPTF office

All members are welcome

In consultation with and on behalf of the membership, the UPTF Union Council directs the day-to-day operations of the union and implements members' decisions.

"I am convinced that if we are to get on the right side of the world revolution, we as a nation must undergo a radical revolution of values. We must rapidly begin the shift from a "thing-oriented" society to a "person-oriented" society. When machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, materialism, and militarism are incapable of being conquered."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Beyond Vietnam: A Time To Break The Silence" April 4, 1967



Steward's Corner

By Tom Anderson, Chief Steward & Vice President

There were not many new issues between the administration and the UPTF in the Fall 2009 semester. Most of those that came to our attention were resolved with a phone call or email. But we should continue to be vigilant to ensure our contract is adhered to by the administration.

These were the main issues for Fall 2009:

→ Several departments had neglected to add in the 2.5 raise to Letters of Offer issued for the Fall semester, but, insofar as we know, all of those affected have received pay adjustments reflecting the 2.5% raise;

→ As many know, there has been a long-term problem about getting paid in a timely manner. The Provost's Office has been helpful in trying to end this problem and we are making progress. One of the worst habitual offenders in the past had been the Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. When the new Dean of the College, Professor Lloyd Y. Young, became aware of the problem in the fall, he promised us that his College would do a better job in the future. From our information, the College beat the Dean's deadline and signed Letters of Offer were being returned to the departments by the first week of December.

→ In one unit, several individuals who were due for evaluation for promotion to PTF-2 would not have been evaluated except one of the affected persons brought it to our attention; this is a clear example of why we still need to build a more comprehensive steward's structure. The UPTF Union Council cannot monitor the administration by itself. Our information comes from what members tell us. Please study the contract, volunteer to pass out fliers in your department about upcoming UPTF events, come to membership meetings, and help build a more effective and active union.Δ

**UPTF STEWARDS COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, FEB. 11, 2010 / 3 P.M.
UPTF OFFICE / 5057 WOODWARD AVE.
3RD FLOOR**

**2010 DETROIT MLK DAY
RALLY AND MARCH**

FOR JOBS, PEACE, AND JUSTICE!

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, NOON

**CENTRAL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
23 E. ADAMS (AT WOODWARD), DETROIT**

Sponsored by the Detroit MLK Day Rally and March Committee

Labor donated

AFT Benefits

UPTF members are eligible

Because the UPTF is affiliated with the AFT (American Federation of Teachers), UPTF members are eligible for the many member benefits offered by the AFT, including discounted insurance rates. For instance, the AFT offers a Limited Supplemental Medical Plan for \$62.35 per month for individual members. This plan has no deductibles and no preexisting condition limitations.

Other AFT benefits include:

- Discounted life insurance, long-term care insurance, car insur-

ance, home insurance, and renters' insurance;

- Free 30-minute legal consultations;
- Free credit counseling;
- Health club discounts;
- Discounts on theme park admissions, car rental, and hotel rates

To find out about all of the AFT benefits that you are entitled to, pick up an AFT Member Benefits booklet outside the UPTF office on the 3rd floor of 5057 Woodward (the Maccabees building) or go to: www.aftbenefits.org.Δ

"The artist must elect to fight for freedom or for slavery.

I have made my choice.

I had no alternative."

— Mr. Paul Robeson

Union of Part-Time Faculty Local 477 AFT / AFL-CIO

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www.aftmichigan.org

United States Social Forum (USSF)
Another World Is Possible / Another U.S. Is Necessary!
Detroit / June 22-26 2010
www.ussf2010.org

In Honor of Black History Month in February!

“History is best qualified to reward our research.”
— Mr. El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz / Mr. Malcolm X

UPTF General Membership Meeting

Friday, March 5, 2010

3—4:30 p.m.

Walter Reuther Library at WSU
5401 Cass Avenue
2nd Floor Conference Room

- ▶ Updates on Benefits discussion with the administration
 - ▶ Discussion of issues facing members
 - ▶ Organizing updates
 - ▶ Political Education updates & More

— *Beverages and Food provided* —