

ON THE MOVE



Publication of
CWA Local 1032, AFL-CIO



PENSION FIGHT AHEAD?



Storm clouds are gathering over public employee pension plans but no definite proposal has yet been made to reduce them. You don't need to be a weatherman to know which way the wind is blowing. Just read the periodic newspaper reports, listen to the radio jocks and watch the drumbeat of semi-official reports coming to the surface. If some people have their way, public employee pensions are going to be cut in New Jersey.

Former Governor Codey's Benefits Review Task Force has made several dozen recommendations concerning pension and health care benefits. Among those most threatening are to raise the retirement age without a reduction in benefits to sixty from fifty-five, base pensions on the average of the highest five years of work rather than the current three, and to require all current and retired employees to contribute 5% of health care premiums.

Governor Corzine's Transition Policy Group has recommended "changes in the pension system in the context of the trends

across the country in both the public and private sector." What are they talking about? The recent actions by United Airlines, Verizon and IBM to walk away from their pension obligations?

Everywhere you look in the United States, employers are trying to reduce the retirement security of their employees. And if President Bush has his way, Social Security benefits will also be trimmed.

To put the issue in a historical perspective, no employer anywhere has voluntarily given the great mass of their employees pension benefits. Pension plans in the United States became a part of employee compensation packages on a mass scale around 1946 - when unions in this country began agitating for them and had the numbers of members and the willingness to fight for them. This pattern holds true for every industrial country in the world. Pension benefits were fought for and taken by workers - not given by employers.

Now that union strength has been lessened by "globalization," the sending of union jobs overseas to cheap labor markets, employers see an opportunity to take back long fought for benefits. The drastic take backs are occurring in the private sector. But listen to the arguments being made about public employee pensions. The claim is that public employees expect benefits that employees in the private sector no longer receive.

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From The Shoulder

by President Jim Marketti

The press and other media are full of suggestions and speculation about how our new Governor is going to get out of the financial hole dug for him by previous years of voodoo economics at the Statehouse. A lot of the ballyhoo is about what to do about the "pension problem" (Public Employee pensions in New Jersey are under funded by \$12 billion). The powers that be and were dug this hole by failing to adequately pre-fund promised pension benefits for the past dozen years. They were too busy giving tax cuts to the rich and funding their pet projects to remember their pension obligations.

While there have been public pronouncements about raising the retirement age, reducing the benefit amount, changing to a 401(k) plan, etc., insiders are mainly floating the idea of a two tier system. Existing employees would get the current pension plan and new employees would get a lesser pension plan. Some members with whom I've discussed this idea have said "well that's not so bad. I'll keep my

pension and new employees will know what they will have for retirement benefits before they agree to take the job." Big mistake.

A two-tier system, whether for pensions, wages or any other benefits, is a ticking time bomb for unionized employees. It might solve a short term problem but when the second tier becomes the majority, all hell breaks loose.

The first thing that happens is that as the second tier membership grows, support for first tier benefits erodes. Second tier people think well, the older people didn't fight for me, why should I be concerned about them. The politicians and decision makers pick up on this and begin to attack first tier benefits by hacking away at them piece by piece. The first tier people who thought they were safe, find themselves back in the soup but with fewer numbers to support their position.

I once worked at a company with two tiers of wages and benefits. The union had agreed to the arrangement ten years previously. There was always tension between the new and the older employees. People working side by side doing the same job were getting two different rates of pay and benefits. Then the second tier became the majority. The second tier took over the union and set out on a crusade to return equity to the workplace.

Some even wanted to punish the first tier employees for letting the situation develop. It took a lot of effort to convince people that two wrongs did not make a right.

One of the premises of a union, is that there is strength and unity in numbers. Once you drive a wedge between people, you undermine that premise. By agreeing to two tiers, a union has set the stage for divide and conquer. The only safe and sensible course is to resist the siren song of the two tier system. Equality begins at home and should be fought for and maintained. □

Local Secretary Jeanne Majors Retires



Jeanne Majors

Local 1032 Secretary Jeanne Majors retired from her employment at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey on December 16, 2005. Jeanne worked at PANY&NJ since February 20, 1990.

Local President Jim Marketti noted that Jeanne had served as Local Secretary for nearly ten years. "It will be hard to find a more loyal and capable Secretary than Jeanne. We will certainly miss her and wish her well," Marketti said.

As a result of Jeanne's leaving the membership list of Local 1032, the office of Local Secretary became vacant. Marketti reported that the Executive Board will make an interim appointment to the position at its next meeting and that a special election would be conducted within a couple of months to fill the unexpired term of Local Secretary. □

ON THE MOVE is a publication of Local 1032, Communications Workers of America, AFL-CIO.

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CWA Gets Ready for the Future

At the CWA National Convention in Chicago this past summer, delegates adopted Resolution One, “CWA: Ready For The Future.” This resolution calls upon all levels of CWA “to examine our union thoroughly from top to bottom in order to best represent our members.” The last time CWA underwent a similar self-examination was in the early 1980s and no one can deny that not only has our union changed drastically in the last 20 years, but so too has the landscape in which we work.

CWA has gone from a union representing mainly telephone workers to now representing workers from every sector – public employees, nurses, customer service representatives, newspaper staff, manufacturing workers, and many others. At the same time, we are confronted with perhaps the most anti-union administration we have ever known, one that has favored the interests of the wealthy over those of working families. In order to respond to the myriad issues facing the labor movement today – from privatization and outsourcing to all out attacks on health care and retirement security – “Ready For The Future’s” core goal is to build the union power necessary to counter the ongoing assault.

Initial discussions have focused on improving three main areas of our work – organizing new members, member education, and political action, all of which are crucial if CWA is going to grow the union and better represent its members in this current climate. While some of our current deficiencies are structural, it is clear that meaningful improvements in these areas will require resources. Much of the initial discussion at Local 1032 has focused on how best to allocate resources to meet these goals.

Local 1032 has made significant investments in each of these three core areas as part of our commitment to providing the highest level of representation and service to our members. As the national union begins this important process, we all agree that change is essential if we are going to strengthen our Local, our National Union, and the broader labor movement. Our ability to bargain good contracts and fight to protect our pensions and health benefits is dependent on our strength. Corporate America and the wealthy may have the ear of the President and the majority in Washington, but our voice has to become one that cannot be ignored. Getting ready for the future begins now.

For updates on CWA’s Ready For the Future initiative visit our website: www.cwalocal1032.org.

You can also register to participate in an ongoing discussion about these issues at: www.cwa-union.org/future/ □

Pension Fight continued from page 1

Let’s make one thing clear. If state and local governments claim that they can’t afford the cost of pension benefits, that problem is entirely of their own making. Public employers in New Jersey have known all along that they had to come up with money to pre-fund pension benefits. For years, they have underfunded or not funded the benefits they promised to employees to get the employees to take smaller wage compensation. Only the employees have made consistent contributions to the pension funds. Now that the chickens have come home to roost, public employers want to leave the employees holding the bag.

The problems in New Jersey are not isolated from those among other public and private employees in the United States and across the world. The only thing that has kept employers from attacking pension benefits anywhere is the fear that the employees will fight back and take to the streets to protect their pensions. Let us all remind ourselves of this lesson. If the powers that be in New Jersey decide they want to risk a fight with public employees, let them first think about what it would be like if 60,000 to 70,000 public workers showed up at the state house to show their displeasure and to vow vengeance. Hold that thought because we may need to get back to it sooner rather than later. □

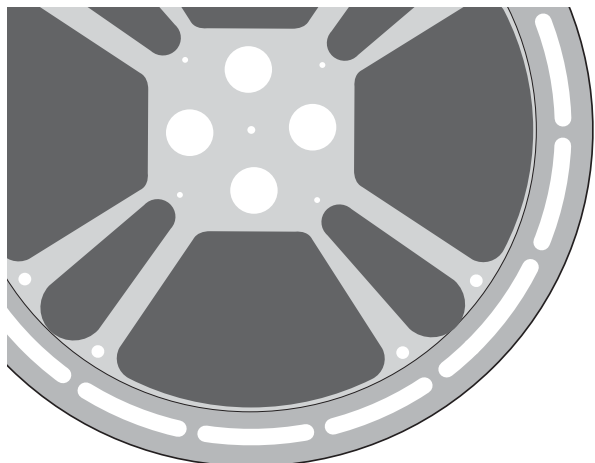
ATTENTION!!



Last May, CWA members joined with thousands of others in a rally outside the Statehouse to protest Acting Governor Codey’s attempts to characterize our pension and health benefits as “entitlements.” The state’s message was clear: despite their own failure to fund and manage the system, state employees were going to pay for the mistakes. We survived that attack, but recent proposals by the Benefits Review Task Force and Governor Corzine’s transition team indicate that our pension and health benefits will once again be hot topics in the upcoming budget negotiations.

In conjunction with many other public employee unions, many of whom rallied with us last year, we will once again be taking it to the streets in Trenton. We are planning an even bigger Pension Day of Action rally at the State House to send the message once again that “We Are Not The Problem!” The rally will take place in May; complete details will be forthcoming.

Updated information will be available on our website: www.cwalocal1032.org. □



Local 1032 Film Series

Local 1032 is launching a new film series that will feature movies, documentaries, and other media that focus on the past, present, and future of the labor movement. To kick off the series, we will be holding two screenings of the recently released, and much discussed, documentary: *Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price*.

About The Film: **WAL-MART: THE HIGH COST OF LOW PRICE** is a feature length documentary that uncovers a retail giant's assault on families and American values. The film dives into the deeply personal stories and everyday lives of families and communities struggling to fight a goliath. A working mother is forced to turn to public assistance to provide healthcare for her two small children. A Missouri family loses its business after Wal-Mart is given over \$2 million to open its doors down the road. A mayor struggles to equip his first responders after Wal-Mart pulls out and relocates just outside the city limits. A community in California unites, takes on the giant, and wins!

For more about the movie, visit: www.walmartmovie.com.

WHAT: WAL-MART: THE HIGH COST OF LOW PRICE

WHEN: 2 SCREENINGS
Wednesday, March 22, 2006
Tuesday, March 28, 2006
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (both nights)
Pizza and Soda will be provided

WHERE: CWA LOCAL 1032
67 Scotch Road
Ewing, NJ 08628

RSVP: 1-800-882-1032

NOTE: Space is limited. You must RSVP by March 17th if you plan to attend either of the two screenings.

New Health Insurance Option for Children Under 30

Recently enacted New Jersey legislation will allow many Local 1032 members to continue health insurance coverage for their children up to age 30. The legislation, which covers both public and private sector employers in New Jersey, allows dependent children to receive health insurance under their parent's health insurance coverage until the child reaches age 30.

To qualify as a dependent the child must be under 30 years old, unmarried, have no dependent(s) of their own, not be receiving other health insurance, and be a resident of New Jersey or a full-time college student. Under this law, the cost of the child's coverage will normally be paid by either the child or parent, though unions may bargain for employer's to pay this cost.

Local 1032 members in the State Health Benefit Plan will probably first be able to apply for this program during the open enrollment period in fall 2006 with coverage actually beginning in January 2007. Dependents of members of other Local 1032 employers may become eligible for this coverage earlier.

Local 1032 members in the State Health Benefit Plan now receive paid coverage for unmarried children up to age 23 if the child either lives at home or is away at school. Coverage ends at age 23 or when the child marries or moves out. However, if the child is disabled coverage continues and is paid by the employer indefinitely as long as the child is disabled. This coverage will continue and is not affected by the new state law.

Currently, children of SHBP members who marry, move out of their parent's household, or reach age 23 can purchase SHBP coverage for three years through the COBRA program.



AROUND THE LOCAL

New Contract at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey

Members at the Port Authority overwhelmingly approved a new contract by a margin of 94% to 6%. In addition to across-the-board salary increases totaling 11%, the agreement provides for a new 11th step on the salary guide. Effective retroactive to January 1, 2005, members who have been in-grade and at Step 10 for two (2) years will receive the new step.

In addition, a new classification review process was agreed to in an effort to streamline requests for reclassification and improvements were made to Training Pay, Shift Differential, Life Insurance, Compensatory Time, Employee Safety, and other areas.

Members will not have to contribute to the cost of the premium for their health coverage and will receive the same prescription and dental plan as management employees. Furthermore, same sex domestic healthcare coverage is also available to members.

The new contract will expire on August 31, 2009. □



DOT members Bill Piedra and Daniel McRae listen to local politicians at the Public Affairs Dinner.

Frankford Township Ratifies Contract

Shop Steward John Demarest reports that members at Frankford Township have approved a new contract. The three-year agreement provides for 4% increases each year, along with improvements in longevity, overtime, shoe allowance, bereavement leave, retirement, and eyeglass reimbursement. There were no give-backs or changes in medical coverage. □



Newly elected National CWA President Larry Cohen speaks with Governor Corzine at a meeting of CWA activists.

American Plus Printers, Freehold Borough, and Hamilton Township Approve Contract Extensions

Members at American Plus voted unanimously to extend the current contract for one year, through December 31, 2006. Similarly, the membership in Hamilton Township voted unanimously to extend the contract through June 30, 2008. All members will receive an across-the-board increase of 4% on July 1, 2007. In Freehold, the contract was extended through December 31, 2006 with members receiving 2% on January 1, 2006 and 2% on July 1, 2006. □



Tom Miller presents a bouquet to retiring Assemblywoman Mary Previte.

MEMBER BENEFITS: New Movie Ticket Discounts

In addition to our current movie ticket offerings, Local 1032 will soon be offering discounted tickets to Destina Theatres. Destina locations include the Hamilton 12 at Independence Plaza in Hamilton and in New Windsor, New York (Orange County).

Tickets are available to members only for \$3.50 each and can be purchased at the Ewing office (cash or check), or by mail using the movie ticket order form, available online at http://www.cwalocal1032.org/members_benefits.htm. Tickets ordered by mail must be paid for by check or money order. There is a limit of four (4) tickets per month.

For more information, contact the Local: 1-800-882-1032. □

Local 1032 Election Results

Elections for all Local 1032 offices were held this past fall.
Officers for the current term are as follows.

Local President: James P. Marketti
Local Executive Vice-President: Michael DeSiena
Secretary: Vacant
Treasurer: Paul Pologruto

Vice President, Higher Level Supervisors (State Unit)	Bill Piedra
Vice President, Primary Level Supervisors (State Unit)	Alan Hardy
Vice President, Administrative/Clerical Unit (State Unit)	Ron Schwaeble
Vice President, Professional Unit (State Unit)	Larry Gustin
Vice President, Local Government	Robert Teets
Vice President, Other Sectors	Ellen Carlock
Branch 1 President (Judiciary)	Susan Norris
Branch 2 President (DOT North)	Billy Ricci
Branch 3 President (DOT Central)	Robert Parker
Branch 4 President (DOT South)	Tom Miller
Branch 5 President (DOT HQ)	Anil DeSai
Branch 6 President (Local Gov't/Private Sector)	Mike Marotta
Branch 7 President (OIT)	Mike Lombardi
Branch 8 President (Port Authority)	Joyce Joyner
Branch 9 President (Monmouth Local Gov't)	Patrick Kavanagh
Branch 10 President (Sussex Local Gov't)	Nancy Holleran

Organize! Organize! Organize!

Do you know someone who could use a union at their job? Do you have a friend or family member who would benefit from a union contract on the job? Local 1032 is committed to organizing the unorganized and needs your help to identify possible leads.

If you know somebody you think might be interested in forming a union at their job or who just wants to have an initial conversation about benefits of unionization please call Mickey Santiago at 973-589-1544, or 1-800-882-1032. □



President Jim Marketti addresses members' pension concerns.

What is the New Jersey Citizen Action Oil Group?



Started in 1983, the NJCA Oil Group helps consumers pool their buying power and save money on home heating oil. New Jersey Citizen Action is the state's largest statewide citizen watchdog organization.

Who Can Benefit from NJCA's Oil Group?

Everyone wins with the Oil Group. Suppliers expand their customer base, and customers can rely on low rates without having to shop around every time they need their tanks filled. It is not just for homeowners either. Churches, businesses, non-profit associations and apartment owners can reap substantial savings. In fact, the greater the fuel use, the larger the savings.

How Does the Oil Group Work?

As an agent for thousands of members, the Oil Group negotiates with local oil suppliers to get the best possible discounted price. Members are guaranteed a fixed mark-up above wholesale prices for their heating oil purchases. Generally, the prices members receive are 15-30% less than average retail prices. All of the Oil Group's local suppliers provide service contracts, tank insurance, billing options and payment plans to its members.

Getting the benefits from the Oil Group is easy. After joining, members are assigned a supplier. The member simply calls the supplier and makes arrangement for fuel delivery but at the Oil Group price. If there is ever a question or problem with price, the member can call the Oil Group directly for price confirmation or assistance.

What Region Does the Oil Group Cover?

Currently the Oil Group operates in every New Jersey County with the exception of Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic and Salem Counties.

What Does It cost?

Membership cost is \$24 annually, \$15 for senior citizens (over 60 years of age), and \$30 for commercial members. Members are eligible for more than one billing address at \$6 for each additional address.

How Do I Sign Up?

To join, call the Oil Group at 1-800-464-8465 to request an application. Information and applications are also available at www.njcitizenaction.org.



Labor Q&A

As part of our ongoing efforts to make labor history and labor news a more prominent part of our lives as CWA members, Local 1032 is launching a new feature in this issue of *On The Move*: Labor Q & A. Our goal is to use this section of the newsletter to highlight current and historically significant facts about the labor movement, collective bargaining, and representation.

The labor movement is in the midst of a serious dialogue about how best to address the issues facing union members and working families. As we evaluate the state of the movement and plan for the future, we hope that this new feature can provide some context for this important discussion.

In addition, we hope that this will become an interactive feature. If you have a question you'd like answered, or if you have an idea for a feature, please email Patrick Kavanagh at patrick.cwa@verizon.net.

The Alliance for Labor Action

Last July, several unions, led by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the International Brotherhood of Teamsters disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO and formed the Change to Win Federation. This move came after months of debate about which model was best to help unions address the issues and challenges facing the labor movement. While this split may seem like a bold – and risky – move at such a critical point when the rights of workers are under relentless attack, it's not the first time that unions broke away from the AFL-CIO to form an alternative organization.

In the late 1960s, the United Auto Workers (UAW), led by Walter Reuther, joined with the Teamsters to form the Alliance For Labor Action. The goal was to revitalize the labor movement by combining a brand of progressive unionism with a commitment to organizing. At the time, leaders felt that the AFL-CIO was not doing enough to organize new workers and build alliances with other groups, namely students, which would help the labor movement move forward. The Alliance fell apart in the early 1970s and its success is debatable.

CWA LOCAL 1032

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Tuesday, March 28, 2006 at 6:00 P.M.

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CWA Local 1032: 1-800-882-1032

See page 4 for more information.
