

The Sentinel

UUP-Oneonta

Volume 3, Number 6

September, 2003

New Solidarity: An Agenda

by Bill Simons, President

Disaster was avoided last year because the UUP rank and file and their counterparts in other unions wrote letters and e-mails, contributed to VOTE COPE, lobbied lawmakers, and massed in Albany on May 3, 2003, for the most significant education rally in American history. Our efforts emboldened the state legislature to override education-killing edicts of Governor George Pataki 119 times. Thank you for your efforts, but the crisis continues. And, for the good of SUNY, for the good of our students, and for the good of our members, we must not slide into complacency. We have no contract, and the fiscal situation is brutal. Nor will there be another \$950 tuition increase next year. The crusade to save SUNY and our most vulnerable constituents must continue; indeed, it demands more of our energies. Apathy, isolation, and fragmentation are prescriptions for disaster: united, however, we can prevail in this historic struggle. With a change in the leadership of UUP/Oneonta, it is time for a New Solidarity.

As chapter president, my first priority will be to promote a "big-tent" welcome to all. Part-timers as well as full-timers, professionals as well as faculty, the untenured as well as the tenured, and the active as well as the retired, regardless of race,

ethnicity, religion, gender, age, or sexual orientation deserve — and will receive — respect. We need to increase UUP awareness, membership, and activism. Emblematic of this process, on August 1, August 26, and August 28, Vice President Ed Wesnofske and I reinstated the practice of meeting new SUCO hires.

UUP-Oneonta is committed to augmenting membership and VOTE COPE rolls, a process that Chapter Development Officer John Carney will spearhead. But that is not enough. The professionals and faculty hired in the previous three years need a fuller introduction to UUP culture. New chapter Executive Board members Richie Lee, Rob Compton, Keith Fitzpatrick, and Jay McDermott are a hopeful beginning to this initiative. As a part of a New Solidarity, UUP invites all new and veteran members to volunteer for one of four new committees: (1) Part-Time

Concerns, (2) Professional Concerns, (3) Workload, and (4) Assessment. Read the purpose and responsibilities envisioned for these four task forces below: then, if you wish to be part of the solution E-mail me at SimonsWM@Oneonta.Edu indicating your name, E-mail, telephone #, and the committee on which you wish to serve.

The time commitment for serving on any of the four committees—Part-Time Concerns, Professional Concerns, Workload, and Assessment — will be modest. Each committee will meet a few times; additional responsibilities will include collecting ideas, proposals, and concerns through brainstorming, hosting a focus group and/or open forum, and receiving E-mail, telephone, and face-to-face testimony. Then, each committee will present a written report, modest in length, summarizing problems and recommendations. The reports will form the basis for UUP advocacy at formal Labor-Management meetings and for articles in *The Sentinel*.

Although the working boundaries for these committees will inevitably evolve, the initial mandates are as follows:

Part-Time Concerns. This committee will develop recommendations reflecting the concerns of part-timers,

including but not limited to compensation, responsibilities, access to support services, participation in decision-making, workplace environment and respect.

Professional Concerns.

This committee will develop recommendations reflecting the concerns of professional employees, including performance programs, responsibilities, compensation, participation in decision-making, workplace environment, and respect.

Workload.

This committee will develop recommendations reflecting the concerns of professionals and academics involving increases, inequities, and expectations in workload as well as related issues involving compensation, support services, and workplace environment.

Assessment.

This committee will develop recommendations reflecting the concerns of UUP members concerning the time, resources, content, and use made of the various proliferating forms of assessment, including those instruments that emanate from campus administration, the state, and outside agencies.

(see "...Agenda" on page 7)

In this Issue:

- **What happens to me now that I am not covered by a contract? See Bill Scheuerman's letter and Brockport Chapter President Gary Owens's summaries.**
- **Who is on the new Executive Board in Oneonta? See back page.**

First Food for Thought:

**Tuesday, 9/16,
noon, Le Café in
Morris Hall
(see page 7)**



Left to right: Dora Dumont, Dan Payne, UUP President Bill Scheuerman, the top of Richie Lee's head, Bill Simons, Rob Compton, Norm Payne, Chris Bulson, Ed Wesnofske

Rally Day in Albany, 3 May 2003

It is worth remembering that over 30,000 union faithful spent a Saturday in Albany seeking to alert the Legislature and the Governor to the exigencies of New Yorkers' educational needs.

Yes, it was only three months ago, but the summer's lazy pace has a way of forcing forgetfulness.

The picture to the left is an important social document for several reasons.

First, past and present chapter Presidents Payne and Simons are linked to the larger UUP picture very intimately in the person of Bill Scheuerman. Further, the range of Oneonta State College personnel represented speaks to an important issue within UUP locally and statewide: retirees, senior faculty and professional staff, and junior faculty are shown working together towards a common goal.

As we operate without a contract in the coming months, the unity and focus pictured here should be recalled, often.

The Contract - What Happens When it Ends? Gary Owens, President, Brockport Chapter UUP

“All Provisions of the Contract will continue unless there is a specific expiration date or sunset.”

I am sure there are many questions concerning the contract. All UUP members need to know what will happen to their benefits when the contract ends July 1, 2003. The following information covers some of the provisions of the contract.

As you are aware, all provisions of the Agreement continue after July 1, 2003 except where

there is a specific expiration date or “sunset”. The Sick leave Exchange Program, Article 23.4(k) was experimental and ends on December 31, 2003 unless extended by the parties. Of course, the Agreement's last salary increase, Article 20.10, Location Stipend, Article 20.20 and Discretionary Increase, Article 20.11 with payment dates of July/September 2002, January 2003 and December 2003 respectively, will not be paid again after these dates until new payment dates are negotiated in a new Agreement.

Certain programs had negotiated funding and the expiration of the Agreement will affect this funding:

Benefit Trust Fund – This is of the greatest importance in this category. Unlike in previous contracts, there is no ambiguity and the Bene-

fit Trust will continue to receive the same funding as in the last year of the expiring Agreement. While it will not receive any increase in funding to support increased costs, the Fund is extremely well run and fiscally sound. We anticipate that existing programs (dental, vision, tuition reimbursement) will be continued for the foreseeable future with or without a new agreement.

Joint Labor Management Committee Programs – These programs receive a fixed dollar amount in each year of the Agreement and have expended all their funding. Until a new agreement with a new allocation of funds, these programs will not be available for another round of awards. This includes Professional Development awards, Campus Grants, Drescher

awards and all other funded programs.

After July 1, the State will not make contributions to the pre-tax Dependent Care Advantage Accounts, although the DCAA program will still be available for employee pre-tax contributions. The Life-Works program, because it was jointly funded with the other state unions whose Agreements expire March 31, will end April 1 [2003]. UUP could not sustain the program alone. The money the State would have paid to cover UUP members for this program is being paid into the UUP Benefit Trust Fund instead.

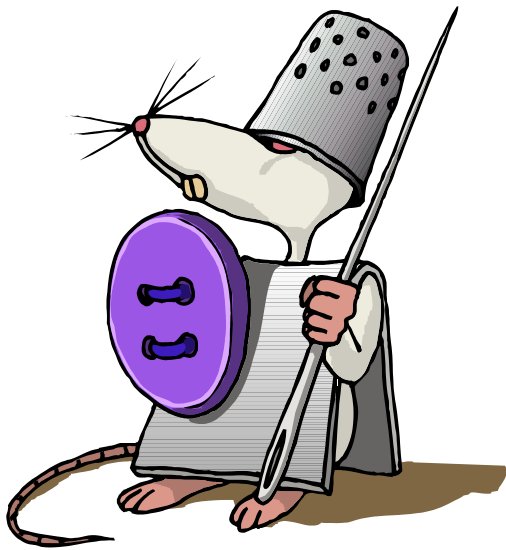
I hope this information is helpful to each of you.



Labor in Struggle and Triumph

Kudos to Fred Miller, former UUP-Oneonta Chapter President and current member of our Executive Board, for his contribution to the struggle and triumph of labor. Although Fred's most recent efforts involved brothers and sisters in another union, the larger issues are generic to the labor movement and a reminder that the imperative for social justice is universal. The letter to Fred that appears below, reprinted verbatim, was written by Rick White, a union activist:

In June of this year, I sent a thank you e-mail to you for the tremendous support you gave me during the event of my hearing before an Administrative Law Judge in the matter of an Unfair Labor Practice that was charged against Endicott Interconnect Technologies. EIT wrongfully and illegally terminated me because of my 'protracted and concerted activity' as a union organizer for Alliance@IBM, Local 1701, EIT Chapter.



The judge has ruled . . . in my favor and the CWA (Communications Workers of America) and I have won the case. The other side will have the opportunity to file an exception (appeal) and some time will pass before this is all resolved. In the mean time, I promised you that I would keep you apprised of the results and the experience I get from this event. [*editor's note: the Binghamton Press & Sun Bulletin's report of the verdict can be found at www.pressconnects.com.*] You can also read the article from the Alliance at IBM website.

This has been a great learning experience for me. I have learned that standing up for what you believe requires patience, persistence, and most of all other people's support to eventually realize a positive outcome. With all my sincerity, I thank you for your e-mail support to me and your notification to me that I was right to stand up for the Union. You were completely right when you said, "you are right to fight for a union. Though you were illegally fired, the labor movement will stand behind you as you fight to get your job back, and you have all of labor behind you! Keep on fighting!"

Labor law, in my opinion, is for the most part, grossly misunderstood by most American workers. The single most important advice I can give from what I learned in my case is, become familiar with labor law and your home state laws that govern business. To know these laws better is to enable you to find relief and fairness among issues you may have as a union organizer and a union member.

I will be sharing with you more of my experiences in the near future. Again I thank you sincerely for your support during this time.

I couldn't have done it without you.

In solidarity,
Rick White, Alliance@IBM
CWA Local 1701, EIT Chapter



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June 18, 2003

Sisters and Brothers:

As you know, UUP is in the midst of tough contract negotiations with the State and it has become apparent that we will not have a new Agreement prior to July 1, when our current contract expires.

I want to assure you that the same excellent benefits you attained in the current contract will continue to protect you as our negotiations continue. Yes, it was *you* who attained those benefits, through the most democratic labor negotiations process in the country. It's the same process at work for you now. No final decisions will be made without the consent of the membership.

With the rare exceptions of those few provisions that have a specific expiration date, your existing contract will remain in effect until we secure the new contract.

Of particular importance is the status of the UUP Benefit Trust Fund. **I'm pleased to inform you that the Benefit Trust Fund will continue to receive the same funding as it has this past year.** Some of you may recall that two contracts ago, the State cut off the Benefit Trust Fund during negotiations. That won't happen again because we have since negotiated provisions that will protect the Fund after the existing contract ends. The Fund is well managed, well funded, and will be there for you throughout the negotiations process.

Negotiations are difficult now for several reasons. The economy is in recession; Wall Street is slumping; and the tragic terrorist attack of September 11 has cost New York tens of thousands of jobs. Consequently, the State is experiencing the largest budget deficit in its history, and it's not likely to go away soon. Despite these difficult circumstances, we will now waiver from our goal of negotiating a contract that ensures you the best working conditions possible in an atmosphere that enhances the professions we practice.

I am greatly encouraged by our progress. We've demonstrated to the State that we mean business – the business of our union. UUPers made that loud and clear at the May 3rd march for Public Education, and we're making it clear once again in our approach to negotiations.

This is a time of determination and hard work, but also pride and strength. The unionist spirit that has gotten us this far will carry us through until we have a fair and just contract. We will continue to update you regularly on our progress. **The list on the back of this letter [facing page: editor] outlines the status of the various contract provisions after July 1.** I thank you for your patience and continued support.

Yours in Solidarity,

Bill

William E. Scheuerman, President
United University Professions



Beginning July 2 and continuing until a new agreement is reached:

All Provisions of the Agreement will continue except when there is a specific expiration date or “sunset.”

*The Sick Leave Exchange Program, Article 23.4(k) was experimental and ends December 31, 2003, unless extended by the parties.

*Salaries will continue at the level they were during the last year of the 1999-2003 contract.

*Even though the last day of the existing contract is July 1, 2003, employees on the payroll as of June 30, 2003, are eligible for discretionary increases, with the final discretionary increase under the contract to be paid no later than the end of the this year. [sic]

*The Benefit Trust Fund will continue to receive the same funding as in the last year of the contract that is ending. While it will now receive any increase in funding to support increased costs, the Fund is extremely well run and fiscally sound. We anticipate that existing programs will be continued for the foreseeable future with or without a new Agreement.

*The Joint Labor Management Committee Programs have expended all their funding and will not be eligible for another round of awards until there is a new Agreement. This includes Professional Development Awards, Campus Grants, Drescher awards and all other funded programs. After July 1, the State will not make contributions to the pre-tax Dependent Care Advantage Accounts, although the DCAA program will still be available for employee pre-tax contributions. (This will only affect employees who have a change of status after July 1, until January 1, 2004, when it will affect all participants.) The Life Works Program ended March 31, because it was jointly funded with the other state unions whose Agreements ended March 31. UUP was unable to sustain the program alone. The money the State would have paid to cover UUP members for this program is being paid into the UUP Benefit Trust Fund instead.



FALL MEETING SCHEDULES

***Food for Thought/Chapter Meetings:** Tuesdays, Le Café, Morris Hall:

9/16, 10/21, 11/18

***Executive Board:** 2pm Mondays, Human Ecology 107:

8/25, 9/22, 10/27, 11/17

***Labor/Management Meetings** 3pm Mondays, Netzer 341
(President's Conference Room):

9/15, 10/20, 11/10, 12/1

***Pre- and Post-Labor/Management Meetings:**

2:30pm & 'debriefing' immediately after the meeting:

9/15: Netzer 333A

10/20: Netzer310

11/10: Netzer 333A

12/1: Netzer 310

Make Your Voice Heard!

Take note of the days, times and locations of the meetings listed above: they are for and about *you*. Contact a delegate or an officer to let someone know about issues that are on your mind. Random hallway complaints are no substitute for involved discussion, so let us know what *you* think needs to be addressed!





...Agenda *(continued from page 1)*

*The New Solidarity
requires a renewed
commitment to
your union...*

The preceding — the prevention of layoffs, union building, part-time concerns, professional concerns, workload, and assessment — represents the agenda of UUP-Oneonta's New Solidarity. Challenge brings out the best in people. For the first time in nearly a decade, we have a campus Grievance Officer, Paul Conway. We have a great Benefits Officers, Mona Hughes. Richie Lee is investing *The Sentinel* with excellence. Loraine Tyler always invests special events with signifi-

cance and flair. Look at the other names of Executive Board members listed in this newsletter: it is, by any standard, a formidable group.

In recent years, regular Labor-Management meetings were not held. This is no longer acceptable. Monthly Labor-Management meetings are the core of UUP-Oneonta's mission. Our first Labor-Management meeting will be on September 15. Initial discussions with the administration will focus on fair distribution of discretionary money, sub-standard working environments, the 100% in-

crease in the cost of a parking sticker, and promoting awareness of the voluntary and compensated nature of faculty involvement in summer events.

Nonetheless, the ambitious agenda outlined above will not be accomplished quickly or easily. At this time of renewal, I make no promise other than to do my damndest. I will attempt to reflect your points of view, but also to lead. Ultimately, the success or failure of the New Solidarity rests with all of us.

Food for Thought: Fall 2003

Free lunch.

That's the "grabber," but we share more than food alone at our monthly gatherings: guest speakers, conversation, collegiality, a respite from the workday. The lunch is free (and you don't have to clean up!), but we hope you'll sing for your

supper by sharing your company with us as we conduct UUP Chapter meetings after lunch.

Join us at noon in *Le Café*, Morris Hall on the following Tuesdays this fall:

September 16

October 21

November 18





The Sentinel online:

[http://organizations.oneonta.edu/uup/.](http://organizations.oneonta.edu/uup/)

Editor's Note: The Sentinel is experimenting with a new format. Please bear with us over the next few issues as we work out the kinks. For the time being, please let us know what you think (eye-appeal, content, etc.). If you have any questions or would like to see more coverage of a specific union-related issue, please contact the UUP office at 436-2135, or the editor at 436-2493.

Executive Board Contact Info

UUP Office — 206 Human Ecology 436-2135

President (d)	Bill Simons	SIMONSWM
VP for Academics (d)	Ed Wesnofske	WESNOFER
VP for Professionals (d)	Norm Payne	PAYNENE
Secretary (alt. d)	Rob Compton	COMPTORW
Treasurer	Rich Tyler	TYLERRF
Grievance Officer	Paul Conway	CONWAYPG
Benefits Officer	Mona Hughes	HUGHESML
Membership Director (alt. d)	John Carney	CARNEYJJ
Newsletter Editor (d)	Richie Lee	LEERE
Part-Time Concerns	Jay McDermott	MCDERMJ
Office Assistant	Peg Carney	ONEONTA@UUP.ORG

Other Delegates & Alternates:

Janet Nepkie	NEPKIEJ	Tom DeMeo	DEMEOT
Keith Fitzpatrick	FITZPAKB	Fred Miller	MILLEREW
Joe Baldwin	BALDWIJC	Chris Bulson	BULSONCE

(d = delegate)

Thanks to Norm Payne!

He is not going very far, but it's appropriate to take official notice of the changing of the guard. Norm Payne is now VP for Professionals after a very active period as UUP Chapter President. Bill Simons's reign as President officially began on June 1, 2003. We are happy to report that the transfer of power was effected with a minimum of bloodletting. Norm worked tirelessly on many fronts in his support of all constituencies; his dedication and pleasant manner helped to keep our union meaningful. In his professional capacity—most recently as Associate Director of Advisement and Orientation—Norm was already one of the busiest people on campus. His as-

sumption of a leadership role in UUP multiplied that workload. Norm had already been active in the Union, but his two years as chapter leader saw him take on a heady series of additional tasks: he re-invigorated the newsletter, writing many of the articles and editing it by himself; he attended innumerable meetings, at state and local levels, to learn all the issues that confront the membership; he went to a steady series of workshops to hone his skills.



Please take the time to thank Norm Payne when you see him next: his hard work and self-effacing dedication to a labor-intensive, time-consuming chore stands as a model of service to all who have benefited from his leadership. Thanks Norm!