

The Spark

August 2013

Local 888
SEIU
Stronger Together

Local 888 Helicopter Mechanics Recognized



Helicopter maintenance technicians Lou Williams, Tim Cuthbert and Peter Gilson with director of maintenance Tom Koury (in purple).

Members of Local 888 members who perform essential maintenance on the helicopters used by the Massachusetts State Police Air Wing have been recognized for their role in the apprehension of Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokahr Tsarnaev. The helicopter maintenance technicians, who work at the Air Wing's Plymouth Facility, were cited in a feature story in *Professional Pilot* magazine.

Lou Williams, Tim Cuthbert and Peter Gilson are responsible for maintaining the helicopters in the state police fleet, including the Eurocopter AS355 TwinStar that was used to apprehend Tsarnaev. All three of the technicians are former Coast Guard helicopter maintenance personnel.

The Mass. State Police Air Wing has a fleet of five Eurocopters, and they are subject to rigorous safety and maintenance standards. Mike Potts, author of the *Professional Pilot* story, praised the highly professional flight operation, including the technicians, for their role in bringing the search for the bombing suspect to a close. Wrote Potts: "In doing so, they brought honor and respect to airborne law enforcement units and personnel everywhere." ■

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Walmart Workers Need Your Support

Walmart workers across the country, including here in Massachusetts, have been speaking out and walking off the job to call attention to low wages and poor working conditions at the company. Now these workers are asking for your support.

Doreen and David Coulomb (in bright green t-shirts) both work at the Walmart store in Chelmsford and are members of Organization United for Respect at Walmart, or OUR Walmart. With hundreds of other Walmart workers across the country, they participated in a one day strike in June to improve their wages and working conditions. Walmart responded to this legally protected activity by firing and disciplining more than 60 workers – including issuing warnings to Doreen and David.

Accompanied by UFCW staff and Jobs with Justice organizers, the two OUR Walmart members visited with Local 888 officers and staff on Thursday, Aug. 1. They are looking for support from SEIU and other union members in Massachusetts to attend a rally on Sept. 7. (See calendar on next page for details.)

If you would like to attend the Solidarity Rally, please contact Rand Wilson at the Local 888 union hall. If you have family or friends who work at Walmart, contact JWW organizer Edwin Argueta at: edwin@massjwj.net. ■

Ask Sparky

Dear Sparky: We're hoping you can settle a dispute for us. We work in a professional type setting and have a disagreement about how our contract should be viewed. My contingent sees it as sort of a guide — the big principles are important but there's a lot of little stuff that's not going to hurt anyone if it's not enforced. The other camp sees the contract more as a bible and gets upset when our employer violates the smallest detail. What do you think?



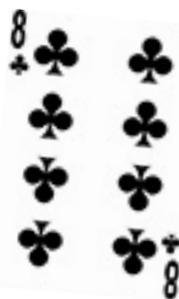
Not Sweating the Small Stuff

Dear Sweating: Sounds like this issue has become what I like to call a "bone" of contention...This is a great question because it really gets to what role a contract plays in the workplace. I'm with you about the importance of laying down a set of big principles. But your coworkers in the other camp have a point too. Let too much of the "little stuff" slide and before long, key issues, like overtime or work hours, are getting a pass too. Are you familiar with the expression "use it or lose it"? Think of your contract as a muscle. Let it go unused for too long and it will atrophy and get soft. Your contract is a living document. Which gives me a great idea — before your next round of negotiations, why not get your colleagues together and go through the contract point by point. Is there language you think isn't necessary anymore? Anything important missing? And please invite me to the party, especially if you're serving snacks.

Sparky

Meet the Crazy 8's Winners!

Allen Williamson, Helal Saghier and Ferney Lopez (all from UMass Lowell) were the winners of this newsletter's "Crazy 8's" game with the correct answer of 93 eights (totaling 744) that appeared in the July *Spark*. First prize winner Allen Williamson won a gift card worth \$75! Williamson, who works in UMass Lowell's Web Services division, says that he attributes his win to being a thorough reader of the monthly Local 888 newsletter. "You have to read every page," says Williamson. Congratulations to all and look for another Crazy 8s contest in the **September** issue of the *Spark*.



Interested in attending the national **March to Realize the Dream** in Washington DC on August 24? For details about transportation, a special reception for SEIU members in DC and "meet-up points" to march with other SEIU members, contact Brenda Rodrigues at: brodrigues@seiu888.org.

Coming Attractions

Worcester Special Election for State Rep.

The special election to replace John Fresolo will be held on **Tuesday, August 13th**. Polling hours are between 7 AM - 8 PM. Note: the SEIU endorsed candidate is Khristian King. For information about where to vote visit: www.wheredoivotema.com

Bread and Roses Heritage Festival

A free, day-long event featuring live music and dance to celebrate labor history, cultural diversity, and social justice on the anniversary of the famous 1912 Bread and Roses strike. Be sure to stop by the Local 888 table. For more information visit www.breadandrosesheritage.org
When: September 2, 12 PM - 6 PM
Where: Lawrence, MA

Day of Action at Walmart

When: Saturday, September 7, 11 AM
Where: Walmart, 99 Parkhurst Rd., Chelmsford, MA
Join Massachusetts Jobs with Justice to show community support for Walmart workers who were fired for speaking up about wages and working conditions. For more information, visit www.massjwj.net

SEIU Local 888 Executive Board meeting

When: Wednesday, September 18, 10 AM
Where: SEIU Local 888 union hall, 52 Roland Street, Charlestown, MA

Boston Preliminary Election

The preliminary election to determine which candidates will run to replace Mayor Menino will be **Tuesday, September 24**. Polling hours are between 7 AM and 8 PM For information about where to vote visit: www.cityofboston.gov/elections/voter

Member Spotlight



Walking for Peace

When Local 888 member **Tom McKeever** and his wife Kate heard about the Richard family, tragically impacted by the Boston Marathon bombings, they knew that they had to do something. The McKeeveres, who moved from Dorchester to Hanover last year, knew the Richards personally, and their daughter attended the same school as 8 year old Martin Richard, one of three people to die in the attack.

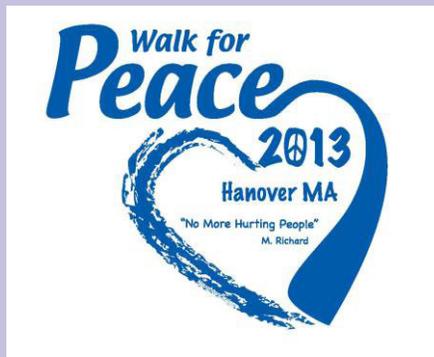
So the McKeeveres sprang into action. They organized a "Walk for Peace" with the proceeds going to the

Richard Family Fund, set up to help pay the ever-increasing medical bills for the family. Tom McKeever, who works for the Massachusetts State Lottery Commission, says that the aim of the June 23 walk, was to raise money to pay for a prosthetic leg for the Richard's daughter.

The event, organized in little more than a month, attracted hundreds of walkers, who kicked off their 2.2 mile walk at a Hanover elementary school, then attended a silent auction and fundraising raffle at Squires Pub. Martin Richard's own call for peace, "No More Hurting People," served as a theme for the event.

McKeever says that he was thrilled by the amount of publicity the event received, but hopes that people will continue to keep the Richard family in their thoughts even after their story has faded from the headlines. "They're going to have major expenses ahead." ■

To donate to the Richard family, go to www.richardfamilyfund.org



Making Politicians Listen

Now more than ever, public service employees need a strong, united voice to make our elected officials listen. And like it or not, it takes money because union dues cannot be used for political contributions.

Local 888 has hired Rayleen Barboza as our new political organizer. She will be working to recruit increased member participation on the COPA committee and helping to ramp up the political program.

Rayleen is an SEIU member from Fall River with experience working as a member political organizer on the Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey campaigns.

Says Barboza: "With all the talk about budget cuts and austerity, each of us has to do our part to let the politicians know that quality services shouldn't be on the chopping block!"

Want to help build the program? Give Rayleen a call at (508) 318-8849 or email her at copa@seiu888.org. ■



Rayleen Barboza, Local 888's new political organizer

Local 888 Scholarships!

- Local 888 has established a scholarship program for members and their immediate family with awards up to \$500.
- Three scholarships will be awarded for any qualified college or post-secondary education program and two scholarships are designated specifically for labor-related education and training programs. All members are encouraged to apply by visiting www.seiu888.org/888members/benefits or emailing myunion@seiu888.org.



Chapter Reports

Military Installation Officers Cheer New Contract

Local 888 military installation officers who protect the Barnes and Otis Air National Guard Bases voted unanimously for their first contract. The new agreement restores unilateral pay cuts made prior to the guards joining Local 888, raises wages, gives credit for prior service and includes weekend differential pay. "It's a step in the right direction," says **Willie Mathieson**, an installation security officer at the Barnes airfield and a member of the negotiating team. Mathieson says that the guards are pleased with the pay hike that puts them on par with police officers, but that the new contract represents something more important than money. "We finally have something that gives everyone guidance. It keeps management on the right track to treat everyone fairly."



Gloucester Administrators

Gloucester Administrators have negotiated and ratified a three year contract with a 2% wage increase for all three years. Longevity was also increased starting July 1, 2013. The new contract also establishes a grievance committee for the very first time as well as increasing tuition reimbursement for members.

Lowell School Clerks and Librarians

Lowell clerks and librarians won 2.5% raises in each year of a new contract that is retroactive to July 1, 2012. Some more senior members also received upgrades. Approximately 100 members are covered by the agreement which expires on June 30, 2014.

In Amherst, Third Time's a Charm

The Town of Amherst Employees recently ratified a new three year contract that includes a cost of living increase of 2% for each year. Chapter chair and Local 888 Recording Secretary **Tina Swift** says that the contract includes a number of small but hard won victories including a \$100 boot allowance for maintenance and inspectors and a shift differential. Most significantly, says Swift, the chapter finally won a provision that maintenance people receive time and a half when Town Hall is closed due to weather or disaster conditions. "This was the third time we've fought for this," says Swift. The negotiating team included **Kim Littmann**, Treasurer (Accounting), **Jenn Reynolds** (Parking Enforcement), **Pat Desmarais** (Leisure Services and Supplemental Education), **Beth Chudzik** (Dispatch) and **Tina Swift** (Jones Library).

Oxford Cafeteria Workers/ Custodians

Oxford Cafeteria Workers and Custodians recently ratified a new contract that includes wage increases, shift differentials and an increase in clothing allowance. Also included in the new deal: an increase in the number of sick days that can be used to care for sick family members and extra bereavement days. The contract includes so-called Evergreen language, ensuring that contract conditions remain in effect even if the contract expires before a new agreement is reached.

Carver Town Employees

Town employees unanimously ratified a new three year contract in June with 2% raises in the first year and a wage reopener for years two and three. They also won an adjustment in the step scale that created a new top step and dropped the old bottom step, shifting the scale, which means that members will be receiving either a 4% or 6% raise this year.



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