

The Spark

October 2, 2012



2012 Election Guide



October 17 is the last day to register to vote. No matter what your political affiliation or orientation, it's important that you make your voice heard. Often people aren't aware that if their name has changed or if they've moved they may need to re-register to vote. For more information go to www.seiu888.org.

The election is just weeks away and Local 888 is committed to electing pro-worker candidates who will represent us in the State House and beyond. All summer long members of the Local 888 Committee on Political Action (COPA) have been meeting to interview candidates for office. Membership on the committee is open to any COPA contributor. The committee currently consists of: Jorge Vargas, Boston Public Schools Facilities Management; Fred Simmons, Haverhill custodian; Mike Kelly, Lottery Commission; Domingos DaRosa, Boston Center for Youth and Families; and Local 888 Secretary Treasurer Brenda Rodrigues.

2012 Endorsed Candidates

President: Barack Obama
(Endorsed by SEIU International)

US Senator: Elizabeth Warren (Endorsed by SEIU State Council of Massachusetts)

Massachusetts State Senate

Therese Murray
Plymouth and Barnstable District. Towns covered: Plymouth.
www.theresemurray.com

Jamie Eldridge
Middlesex and Worcester District. Towns covered: Acton, Hudson, Marlborough.
www.senatoreldridge.com

Massachusetts House of Representatives

Robert DeLeo
19th Suffolk District. Towns covered: Revere and Winthrop

Convention Update

Important: Advance registration for the Local 888 convention has been extended through October 5th. Register at www.seiu888.org to be eligible for prizes, including a flat screen TV and tickets to the Patriots vs. Jets game on October 21. Members must be present to win.

When: Saturday, October 13, 1:30-6:00 PM, registration opens at 12:30

Where: 1199-SEIU union hall, 150 Mount Vernon Street, Dorchester

Who: Convention is open to all members

What's on the agenda?

State of the Union by Local 888 President Mark DelloRusso

Special guests

Tom Woodruff, SEIU Executive VP
Eileen Kirlin, SEIU Executive VP, Public Services Division

Official business

Discussion, debate and secret ballot vote on the proposed dues equality measure. Resolutions on organizing, health care and a financial transaction tax.

Party and banquet

Convention will be followed by reception, dinner and celebration. Members may bring 1 guest.

In this issue:

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www.seiu888.org

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LABOR LEADER—Jen Springer was named one of the top 50 Irish-American labor leaders by the Irish Echo newspaper. Also pictured: State Representative Marty Walsh (left) and Mike Monahan of IBEW Local 103.

Staff Profile: Attorney Jen Springer

I came on board at Local 888 less than a year ago, but it already feels like home to me. Before joining the Local 888 staff I spent 12 years at AFSCME, working first as a staff attorney then as business agent, negotiating contracts for city workers, public and municipal employees. That background has really been helpful for the work I'm doing now. The attorney in me knows what can happen, while the negotiator knows how to get things resolved.

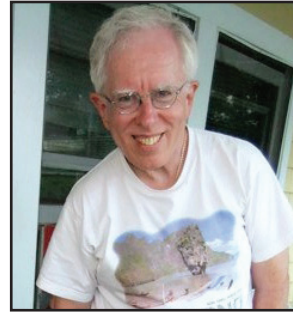
I've had a passion for workers' rights since I was young. My first job was at a nursing home in Norwood. I washed dishes as a teenager and I saw how hard people worked. My years working in the labor movement have also given me a real understanding of the importance of having a strong union. The stronger your union is, the stronger you are as an individual worker.

As more members step up and get involved, we'll make sure that you have the tools and support you need to be effective. Local 888 has great members and I feel privileged to be able to work with them.

When I learned that I'd been named one of Irish Echo's top Irish American labor leaders, I felt incredibly honored. It was a real privilege to be recognized for the work I love so much. Thanks to all of you for making that work so rewarding. ■

Member Speakout: Dues Equality

By Greg King



At our October 13 membership convention, we'll have the opportunity to vote on whether we will all have the same dues structure, or whether the flat rate that many members now pay will continue. The 1.6% rate would be phased in, starting on January 1, 2013 and be

fully in effect as of July 1, 2013.

What's the point of having everyone pay 1.6% of their income in dues, instead of a flat rate of, let's say, \$5.00 a week? For someone making \$300 a week, considering all the taxes, pension contributions, health insurance, etc. that's also taken out, \$5.00 a week feels like a lot. For someone making \$800 a week, though, \$5.00 would barely be missed.

That's what's wrong with a flat rate dues payment. It hurts lower-paid members much more than it hurts the higher-paid ones. America is supposed to be about fairness. I think everybody would agree that it's only fair that somebody with a \$300 per week salary would contribute less in dues than a member earning \$800 per week. Those who can afford to pay more should pay more. Those who can't should pay less.

We have a union so that we can have trained negotiators paid by the union assisting us when we're bargaining with our employers over a new contract. Also, we depend on having union reps to fight for us at later stages of the grievance process and attorneys to represent us and the union in arbitration.

It's my understanding that if the current dues structure continues, our local will sink deeper into debt. Whereas, if the 1.6% plan goes into effect, it won't be long before we will be back in the black. That means many more grievances can be processed, more arbitrations attended, and many more bargaining sessions ably led and advised.

Most importantly, we'd know that everyone is paying the same percentage. No more gross disparities. We don't need to feel that some of us are carrying half the load while others have one pinky pressed on part of it. ■

Greg King works for the City of Boston as a housing program information coordinator.

Correction: the article "Dues Equality: What's it All About" in the September issue of the Spark contained a typo. The article stated that effective January 1st, all members will pay 1.6% dues with the maximum rate of \$16 per week (based on 52 weeks of employment per year). The correct date is July 2013.

Military Installation Officers Join Local 888

The military installation officers who protect the Barnes and Otis Air National Guard Bases have always been a distinct bunch. For one thing, the officers, who work hand-in-hand with the Air Force Reserve guards, are the only state employees who deal exclusively with the military. And until recently they were treated as contract employees, neither state nor federal, with no right to bargain over their wages and working conditions.

That all changed this summer when the 30 officers became members of Local 888, covered by the Unit 2 Alliance contract for state employees. Raoul Santos, who has worked at Otis for six years, says that for his coworkers, the change was a long time coming. "It's great to finally have a contract, a grievance procedure, you name it. We never had any kind of a say before," says Santos.

Santos notes that this is the first time that many of his fellow officers have belonged to a union. "I'm the guy they come to with their questions because I've been involved in unions my whole life. Now we have a seat at the table and it's a really different experience." The new Local 888 members are currently in contract negotiations with the state and the military. Santos says that the latter isn't easy. "It's tough for the military to embrace unions." Welcome aboard! ■



ON GUARD—Military installation officers—and new Local 888 members—at Otis Air National Guard Base in Barnstable. The officers, and their coworkers at the Barnes base in Westfield, recently joined Local 888.

Crossing Guards' Safety Efforts Make Headlines

Since an Everett crossing guard was struck and killed on the job last year, crossing guards around the state have been working together to improve on-the-job safety. The guards come from communities including Springfield, Somerville and Lexington, and include members of Local 888 and independent unions as well as some not-yet-union guards.

The death of 71-year-old Marie Stewart, who was hit by a truck in an Everett crosswalk confirmed the worst fears of crossing guards, who deal with safety threats on a daily basis. Guards have been meeting with representatives of the Massachusetts Coalition on Occupational Safety and Health to share safety concerns and learn about measures that cities and towns are required to take to protect them while they are on the job.

The crossing guards cause is attracting attention. The Springfield Republican recently told the story of Springfield guard and Local 888 member Joe Perry, a 60-year-old retired telephone worker and now a crusader for guard safety. The newspaper described Perry as "part shepherd, part human shield." Says Perry: "Motorists need to be reminded that we're here to protect children."

According to the Centers for Disease Control, 120 school crossing guards died on the job between 1993 and 2008. The organizing effort by guards in Massachusetts is an attempt to confront the fact that guards face the same safety threats no matter where they live, explains Local 888 organizer Rand Wilson. "It makes sense to deal with those challenges on an industry-wide basis." ■



SAFETY FIRST— Joe Perry, a crossing guard from Springfield, stops traffic for a group of elementary school students. Photo by Mark M. Murray, Springfield Republican.

For more information about the Massachusetts Coalition of Crossing Guards or to get involved contact Rand Wilson at (617) 241.3368 or email rwilson@seiu888.org.

Woburn Workers Prevail In Quest for Information

Chapter leaders and union bargaining committee members are entitled to get information they need to represent members from management. State labor law requires that management provide information that is “relevant and reasonably necessary for the union to execute its duties as collective bargaining representative.”

Don't get stonewalled. State labor law requires that management provide information that is “relevant and reasonably necessary for the union to execute its duties as collective bargaining representative.”

Usually, local union leaders get the information they need. But when Local 888 members at the Woburn DPW and City Hall asked for updated home addresses and phone numbers for members, the Woburn HR Director refused to turn over the information.

Local 888 filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) against the City of Woburn to get the requested data. The city argued that it provided that data to the union in 2006 and was not obligated to do it again as it was too burdensome and not needed.

The union prevailed! After hard work and detailed testimony by Local 888 Finance Director Anthony Nunes, the Division of Labor Relations ruled on September 12, 2012 that the Woburn members were entitled to the data.

Should you or your field rep be stonewalled by management's refusal to provide needed information for bargaining or grievance processing, contact the Local 888 Legal Department at (617) 241-3310. ■

Coming up in the Nov. Spark:

- **Convention 2012 Report**
- **New Member Guide**
- **Local spotlight: Chris Calliman**

Movie Night

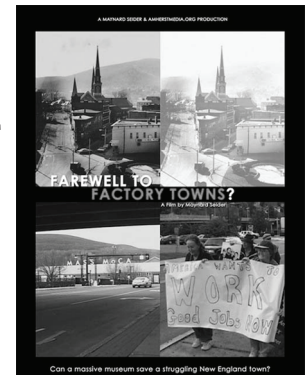
You're invited to a free screening of a new film:

Farewell to Factory Towns?

A film that explores what happened to good jobs and how we can bring them back

**Thursday, October 11
6:30 – 7:00 pm, Pizza
reception with film-
maker Maynard Seider
followed by film and
discussion**

**SEIU Local 888 Union
Hall, 52 Roland St.,
Charlestown**



RSVP to rwilson@seiu888org

2012 Election Guide

Continued from cover

Jason Lewis

31st Middlesex District. Towns Covered: Winchester and Stoneham. www.repjasonlewis.com

Barbara L'Italien

18th Essex District. Towns Covered: Andover, North Andover, Boxford, Georgetown, Haverhill, Methuen. <http://teambarbara.com>

Jim O'Day

14th Worcester District. Towns covered: Worcester, West Boylston. Contact: electjimoday@gmail.com

Carl Sciortino

34th Middlesex District. Towns covered: Medford and Somerville. www.electcarl.org

Aaron Vega

5th Hampden District. Towns covered: Holyoke. www.vegaforholyoke.com

To see the full list of candidates go to www.seiu888.org/2012-legislative-endorsements