



The Union Times

United Food & Commercial Workers Union, Local 371, AFL-CIO

JANUARY 2020



PAGE 1

TEAMSTERS SUPPORT STOP & SHOP STRIKERS



VICTORIES, CASUALTIES, AND "HEROES" IN LABOR FIGHTS

BY MIKE DALY, EDITOR, CT POST



For Tom Wilkinson, of Fairfield, a labor organizer by destiny and a practicing one the last 42 years, the recent successful 11-day strike by some 31,000 Stop & Shop workers was by all accounts a momentous event, perhaps the most momentous of his career. The strike ended last week and forced European corporate owners to acknowledge the lives of their American workers. The strike, the placards on the picket lines, the human faces, of course, was what caught the attention of not only the corporation, but also the media and the public. That job action, though, came at the end

of an exhausting three months of fruitless, frustrating negotiations by Wilkinson and other leaders of the United Food & Commercial Workers International Union. Work like that takes its toll. Wilkinson was born and bred in the union town of Lynn, Mass., where his father was a mailman. "GE was big in town, with the electrical workers," he said the other day as we sat over coffee. "Everybody was union. "Union" was just part of our vocabulary; it was what we knew. We weren't management, corporate types," he said. He worked in a union market in Boston and found himself collecting strike benefits even before his probationary period on the job was up. When a position as an organizer opened, he went for it and he's never looked back. "You have to go to nonunion places and convince them the union is a better way of life," he said, summing up his life's work. He advanced to his position as International Vice President, and president of Local 371, United Food & Commercial Workers International Union, responsible for operations in Connecticut and Western Massachusetts. The UFCW is the successor organization to the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America. There's the whiff of the gunfighter about Wilkinson, tall and slim, silver hair slicked back, a scar here, a scar there, the faded reminders of a more roustabout period of his life. Today, at age 65, he and wife, Katie, are the parents of two sons and a daughter. He is a student of the labor movement; a voracious reader who bestows books on labor history – and myriad other topics – on his friends. Wilkinson is proud, but not vengeful, about the success of this job action. Not because of his role in it, but because of the impact it will have on workers not only here, but also around the country. "This is reverberating around the country. It's a huge event," he said. "The importance of this is the connection we made with the nonunion world, like the shoppers who would go into nonunion stores and tell the employees there they are shopping there because they support the union workers at Stop & Shop."

"The heroes – if you want to use that word – of labor are the people who had the guts to organize, who didn't have the union, to fight to get the union in."

The struggle of the American labor movement has never been an easy one. It was 1978, Wilkinson recalled, one of his early days on the job, when he walked through Boston's Faneuil Hall. "I saw these guys sweeping, picking up cigarette butts, working pretty hard. So, I asked them if they were interested in the union. Their eyes lit up," he recounted. About 50 of them, just about all Haitians, signed cards. "Those people welcomed me into their homes. I lived with them for about two months helping make sure they had a good campaign. "They got an election and they won. They were going to get a chance to live a part of the American dream." But things turned bad. "The day we're supposed to start negotiations, I'm home and the phone rings," he says. He repeats, "The phone rings." He stops. His eyes are welling. He brings his hands to his face and cries. I offer a napkin. The tension of the last few months, it seems, is literally erupting and escaping from his body. "God," he gasps and says almost by way of apology, "It's been an emotional time" he exhales. "It's 7 in the morning. Mister Tom – that's what they called me – the guy says on the phone. Come quick. Help us. Help us." "So, you know what goes on at the start of the 7 a.m. shift? They're handing off the babies. The mother or father is coming off work, and the other parent starting. I go down to the jail, and there they are, behind the bars, with the babies." "That vision haunts me to this day" he said. Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market – "the cradle of liberty," he noted – had been raided by the Immigration and Naturalizations Service, the forerunner of today's ICE, Immigration and Customs Enforcement. He never saw the Haitians again. There's another long pause and his facial muscles tense. "That was the worst day of my life." Another pause. "They were casualties."

The rest of the story... soon after the raid and with only five remaining workers, the management team of Faneuil Hall/Quincy Market, came to the bargaining table. They were not responsible for the raid. Supposedly, it came from a disgruntled and vengeful foreman. Remarkably, the Union, then Local 592 of the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen, was able to negotiate a first contract. Today, 41 years later, the workers still have their union. They are members of Local 1445 UFCW. Those brave, immigrant, unknown workers are the sole reason. I think of them often.

SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE: PG. 7

2019 ROBERT BURKE PETRONELLA SCHOLARSHIP AWARD MEMBERS

In June of 2019, Local 371 was proud to award five scholarship awards to deserving students. Each of these students are children of our members. Each student received a four-year scholarship totaling \$6000. The 2020 Robert Burke Petronella Scholarship application will be available in the spring of 2020, so if you or your child or grandchild is graduating high school in 2020 and going on to a four-year college or university, please check back to our website, www.ufcw371.org in the spring to download the application.



CAITLYN GUERRERA

Caitlyn lives in Cheshire CT. She loves to listen to music and dance. She has been dancing for fifteen years and is proud to say she was a part of the competitive dance team with Dance City and the Arts. She also was part of the Cheshire Ram Cross-Country Team for four years. She enjoyed volunteering and has been involved in many community service events, both with her school and the First Congregational Church in Cheshire. She attends Salve Regina University in Newport Rhode Island and is studying nursing. She hopes to continue to engage in dancing and running along with other community service projects at college. Caitlyn Guerrero is the daughter of Karen Guerrero, who works at Stop and Shop 680 in Meriden CT.



JULIA MARYANSKI

Julia graduated from Westfield High School as a member of the National Honors Society. She was captain of her school's gymnastics team, and has competed in gymnastics at her local YMCA for 9 years. She also volunteers at her church in their high school worship band, singing and playing piano. Julia will be going to Westfield State University, majoring in Health Sciences, with the goal of becoming a Physician's Assistant. After volunteering at her local hospital in the Surgery Center as a student ambassador, she knew she wanted a career in healthcare. Julia is currently working as a gymnastics coach helping children to excel in the sport she loves. She looks forward to a career that will enable her to give back to her community. Julia Maryanski is the daughter of James Maryanski, who works at Stop and Shop 611 in Granby CT.



JOSEPH OLIVA

Joseph graduated from Newington High School and is attending the University of Connecticut where he is majoring in Biological Sciences. He has always loved school and loved to learn. He plans to graduate from college and attend medical school where he will pursue the career of becoming a doctor. This scholarship has given him a great opportunity to pursue his passion, and he is very thankful! Joseph Oliva is the son of Dave Oliva, who works at Stop and Shop 610 in Wethersfield CT.



NATHAN ROSA

Nathan is 18 years old and is the son of Glenn & Deanna Rosa of Bristol, CT. He has a younger brother, Victor. He graduated from Bristol Central High School where he was an honors student & scholar athlete. He is attending Western New England University in Springfield, MA where he is majoring in Accounting and playing football. He is honored and privileged to be the first in his family to attend college. His goal is to earn a bachelor's degree and go on to become a Certified Public Accountant. He looks forward to a career which allows him financial stability and happiness. Nathan Rosa is the son of Glenn Rosa, who works at Stop and Shop 645 in New Britain CT.



GINA SOUSA

Gina is a class of 2019 graduate from Cromwell High School. She was captain of the Varsity Girls Basketball team where she won two State Championships. She also danced competitively at the local and national levels. She was a member of National Honor Society where she dedicated her time serving the community and those in need. She will be attending the University of Hartford in the fall majoring in Nursing. Gina Sousa is the daughter of Jorge Sousa, who works at Stop and Shop 2613 in Newington CT.

Our Local 371 Scholarship application will be posted on our website and distributed in your workplaces in the spring, so watch for updates!

We give out 5 four-year scholarships totaling \$6000 each.



Exclusive UFCW Local 371 Membership Education Programs

Our members work hard and deserve a better life. Local 371 believes that all members should be able to further their education, regardless of their ability to pay.

We offer many educational options to fit your needs.

FREE COLLEGE TUITION PROGRAM

The UFCW Free College Benefit makes it possible for you and your family members to earn an associate degree completely online for FREE!

www.ufcwfreecollege.org

UNION PLUS

BACHELORS DEGREE PROGRAM

The Union Plus Bachelor's Degree Completion Program complements our free associate's degree program to help our members get the education they deserve at a price they can afford.

www.unionlowcostdegrees.org

UFCW FREE GED PROGRAM

UFCW members can take General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes for free through Essential GED.

www.ufcw.org/ged

UFCW FREE LANGUAGE CLASSES

UFCW members can use this benefit to learn a foreign language for free online and at their own pace. All lessons are self-guided. This member benefit can be used to learn Spanish, French, German, English, and/or Mandarin

www.ufcw.org/language

NEED LEGAL ASSISTANCE?

UNION PLUS LEGAL PROGRAM FOR UNION FAMILIES IN NEED OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE

You can find reliable advice at an affordable price if you need legal help or simply have a question of a legal nature.

Union members have free access to basic legal services or can upgrade to a higher level of legal service at a discounted price

<https://www.unionplus.org/legal>



FREE College for UFCW Members and Families

That's right: UFCW members and their families can attend FREE online classes through Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) with no out-of-pocket costs for tuition or books.

- Earn a college degree – FOR FREE
- For UFCW members AND families
- Costs for tuition, books and fees are all covered
- Credits you earn transfer to other schools
- Eastern Gateway Community College is a public, nonprofit, regionally accredited school
- Advising and tutoring to support and guide you



You work hard and have earned a better life. The UFCW Free College program is designed to help you build it.

For more information visit
www.UFCWFreeCollege.org or call 888-590-9009

UFCW.org

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to the union! Our newest members to join Local 371 work at Clinton Shop Rite, Cromwell Shop Rite, and Ethel Walker School in Simsbury CT. Welcome sisters and brothers!



CLINTON SHOP RITE

Left to right: Peter Abdul, Justin Dukehart, David Moreno, William Stokes



CROMWELL SHOP RITE

Left to right: Jonathan Ayotte, Brandon Walters, Antono Esquillin, Matthew Michaud, Cathy Jordan, Michael Cordero



THE ETHEL WALKER SCHOOL

Left to right: Tawfeeq Nasser, Abdo Khedir, Fred Blocker

TEAMSTERS AWARDS

President Tom Wilkinson was awarded a Man of the Year Award by the Teamsters Black Caucus. Executive Board Members Eileen Antolini and Joseph Jarmie joined him to celebrate, as well as UFCW office staff Christina Andersen, Jamie Garnett, and retiree Barbara Coleman.



CONGRATULATIONS LYNN REYES!



Lynn recently retired after working over thirty years for our Local 371 Health and Welfare Fund. Lynn was always a warm voice on the other end of the phone ready to help a member work through their health or disability issues, whether they spoke English or Spanish. Her commitment to caring for people and for the labor movement was unmatched and she will be missed. Enjoy a retirement well deserved, Lynn! Lynn is pictured here with retired union representative Vinny Murolo.

'Tis the Season

HOLIDAY EXPRESS LOAN

3.99% APR*

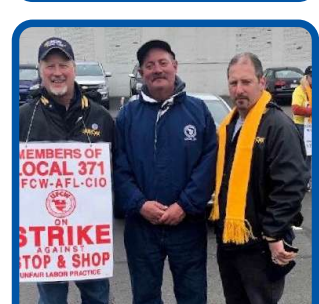
\$2,500 - \$40,000

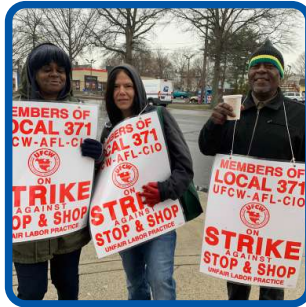
Apply Online at
finexcu.org

For more information:
Contact Mary Sullivan
860-282-0001, ext 138
msullivan@finexcu.org

fineX
CREDIT UNION

*APR (Annual Percentage Rate) Rates and terms subject to change without notice. This offer is extended to Finex Credit Union members only. New Money Only. 3.99% APR rate is based on an initial FICO score of 740 or higher. Finance Account membership required. An Annual Member rate as low as 3.99% APR. 24 month term. Maximum loan amount \$40,000. Maximum loan amount \$40,000. Other rates and terms are available and are subject to normal credit approval. Member's credit and financial information will be reviewed. \$50,000 loan term requires 1200 credit score. (01/19/2020)





AFL-CIO CONVENTION



The new AFL CIO Executive Board was sworn in. Keri Hoehne replaced President Tom Wilkinson as the First Vice President, and Brian Truini became the UFCW's newest Executive board member, joining Ronny Petronella and Jessica Petronella.



Keri Hoehne presented along with Adam Verga, a 919 member, about the preparations for the strike and what it was like to be on the picket line.



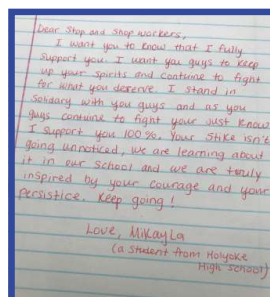
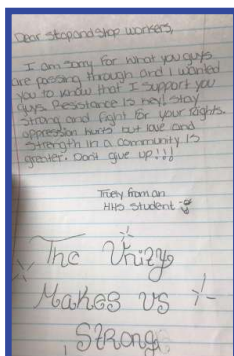
Foxwoods Beverage Department Steward Jennifer Serafin, joined by lead steward Dana Douchette and steward Allan Martell, welcomed delegates to the State AFL-CIO Constitutional Convention in October.



UFCW International President Mark Perrone was the keynote speaker at the CT AFL CIO Convention.



MANY CHILDREN IN OUR COMMUNITIES LEARNED FROM AND SUPPORTED OUR STRIKE.



Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. —Nelson Mandela

In 2020 the UFCW Charity Foundation will award several SCHOLARSHIPS, up to \$8,000 each, to UFCW members or their unmarried dependents under the age of 20.

For more information, and to find out if you are eligible, please visit:

www.ufcwcharityfoundation.org/scholarship

The scholarship application will be available online from February 10-May 10, 2020.

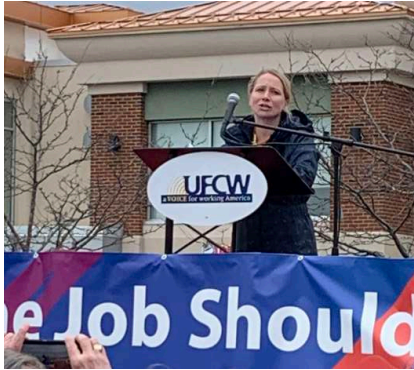


If you are unable to apply online, you may request an application by mail at UFCW Charity Foundation, Attn: Scholarship Program, 1775 K Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006 or by e-mail at cfcscholarship@ufcw.org.

If you need the scholarship rules or an application in another language, please contact us at 1-800-551-4010 and we will obtain assistance for you. UFCW employed officers, staff, and their immediate families are not eligible.

BOSTON RALLY

Local 371 Executive Board Members Joe Jarmie and Brian Simmons shared their picket line stories and their thoughts on the strike at a rally held to support striking workers in Boston. They were joined by Keri Hoehne, who emceed the event, and Vice President Joe Biden, who was on hand to share his support.



UFCW NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL

It Pays To Belong

UNION DISCOUNT PROGRAMS

MOST Services apply to members, retired members, and members' children and spouses.

www.myufcw.org

\$1100 off of child care, pet insurance, up to 40% off of car rentals, up to 45% off of theme park discounts, cruise, hotel, and entertainment discounts, Student Loan Assistance, \$2 magazine subscriptions, and shopping discounts.

www.unionplus.org

Free legal consultations, free document review, 30% discount on most services and free follow up services, 15% off of cell phone plans, homeowners' insurance, layoff assistance, debt management, bankruptcy counseling, retiree health benefits, dental, vision, hearing, and prescription coverage, up to \$2,250 cash back at closing on home purchases, personal loans, and student loans.



In November, the UFCW New England Council swore in their Executive Board. The UFCW New England Council consists of six UFCW Locals and the RWDSU, and its purpose is to work together to increase our strength in contract bargaining, union organizing, and political campaigns.

A Special General Membership Meeting will take place on Wednesday, March 25, 2020 @ 6:30 PM at the Local 371 UFCW Headquarters, 290 Post Road West, Westport, CT.

The Agenda for this Meeting will be to report on and vote on adoption of the Local 371 Executive Board's recommendations of Amendments to our Local 371 By-Laws, per the UFCW International Constitution.

SHOP STEWARDS CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Ronald M. Petronella,
Secretary-Treasurer, Local 371



Brian P. Truini, Executive Vice
President, Local 371



Keri Hoehne,
Executive Assistant to the
President, Local 371



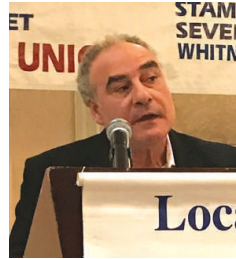
Mark Perrone,
UFCW International President



William Tong, Attorney General



Richard Blumenthal, U.S. Senator



Sal Luciano, AFL CIO President



Mark Espinosa, President
of Local 919 UFCW



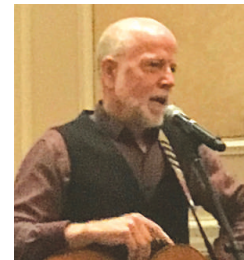
Dave Young, Regional Director



Susan Bysiewicz,
Lieutenant Governor



Rodney Butler, Mashantucket
Pequot Tribal Chair



John McCutcheon,
Labor Singer

17 Minutes

words & music by
John McCutcheon

written in honor of UFCW Local 371

17 minutes is all it took
17 minutes and the whole world shook
No one left to stock the grocery shelves
'Cause we took the power for ourselves
In 17 minutes
Only 17 minutes

17 minutes and we were on our feet
17 minutes we were on the street
For our families, for our town
We stood and stared the company down
17 minutes
17 minutes

Bridge

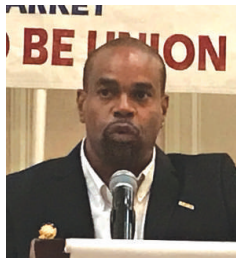
11 days we walked the line
11 days is a long damn time
But justice is a mighty prize
It didn't take us long to realize
Just 17 minutes
17 minutes

17 minutes and we answered the call
17 minutes we were standing tall
No retreat, no surrender
We know our children will remember
17 minutes
17 minutes

October 2, 2019
Mashantucket, CT
©2019 John McCutcheon
/Appallsongs (ASCAP)



Tim Melia, Local 328 President



Tyrone Housey,
Local 1459 President



Mark Mead, Fund Manager,
UFCW National Pension Fund



Tony Speelman, UFCW Local
1500 President



Joe Courtney, CT 2nd District
U.S. Representative



Julie Kushner, State Senator



MEMBER STRIKE PANEL

Local 371 members Debbie Dumaine, Brian Simmons, Joe Randall, Mary Jane Massimino, Andy Royce, and Bill Robataille shared their personal strike stories as picket captains. They spoke about the community support, the support from politicians, how they dealt with police, how they developed members into leaders on the picket line, and the sense of family they developed in their 11 days outside together.



A SNAPSHOT OF 2019 GRIEVANCES RESOLVED

Your union representatives each field dozens of calls each week with individual member's concerns and grievances. Here is a sampling of some that were resolved over the past year.

While servicing her members in the Stop and Shop in Windsor, CT, Union Representative Michelle Duncan discovered that a full time member with less than one year of service was getting the \$1.50 per hour Sunday premium that is part of the contract for employees with less than one year, but was being cheated out of eight hours of work. The union contract guarantees forty hours of work from Monday through Saturday for all full-time workers, regardless of years of service. Upon a further audit of all employees in the Windsor store, it was discovered that six employees at that store were not receiving their proper hours. Employees received back pay awards of \$720 to \$2448, for a total of \$7920 in back pay.

Union Representative Keri Hoehne received a call from our union steward Mark Stannard about managers doing work that belongs to our members at Stop and Shop in Torrington, CT. The store managers had u-boats of product and were stocking the shelves in the holiday and candy aisle for several hours over several days. Our union contract dictates that store managers may not do work typically assigned to our members. Representative Hoehne worked in conjunction with the union representative for that store from UFCW Local 919 to recover fourteen hours of backpay for the most senior part time member working in the grocery department.

Union Representative Susan Warzecha received numerous complaints from our members at Foxwoods regarding poor air quality and exposure to chemicals inside of the service bars at Foxwoods Casino. Representative Warzecha pursued the complaints to the Tribal OSHA and it was determined that the dishwashers were malfunctioning and Food & Beverage management was instructed to develop a testing protocol to identify and correct the problem prior to employees being exposed to strong chlorine odors.

Union Representative Jeff Horvath represented our long-term shop steward Andrew Royce in a grievance hearing at the Manchester CT Stop and Shop. Andy was suspended for his conduct in his personal life outside of Stop and Shop. The company wanted him to be removed as steward and transferred to a different store. Representative Horvath had to conduct first, second, and third step meetings to win the grievance. Andrew won his

grievance and remains a strong Local 371 Steward in Manchester.

Executive Vice President Brian Truini represented Mike Gargiulo, a Full-time meat cutter in Monroe Stop and Shop, in a grievance over manager's relief pay. According to our union contract, when a member relieves a meat manager, they are to receive \$7.00 per day in relief pay. Brian was able to recover \$900 of back pay for Mr. Gargiulo.

Union Representative Richard Johnson helped a Shop Rite member who was falsely accused of falsifying his punches and therefore stealing company time. Representative Johnson successfully proved that the member was in fact punching correctly according to his schedule, and the member was reinstated.

Two Local 371 members signed up for extra shifts at their job at one of Local 371's bus companies. When the members arrived at work, the employer told them they were no longer needed. Union Representative Jessica Petronella grieved the change in schedule and the employees were both paid for their full shifts.

AMALGAMATED WELFARE TRUST FUND LOCAL 371 SUMMARY ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 2018 TO DECEMBER 31, 2018

TO: FUND PARTICIPANTS

FROM: THE TRUSTEES

This is a summary of the annual report for the Amalgamated Welfare Trust Fund Local 371, EIN 06-6069081, Plan No. 501, for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

INSURANCE INFORMATION

The plan has contracts with the Reliance Standard Life Insurance Company to pay certain life insurance claims and accidental death and disability incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending December 31, 2018 were \$80,638.

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The value of Plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$38,545,127 as of December 31, 2018 compared to \$38,320,782 as of January 1, 2018. During the year ending December 31, 2018, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$224,345. During the Plan year, the Plan had total income of \$29,088,333 including employer contributions of \$27,746,959, participant contributions of \$1,553,104, realized gains from the sale of investments of \$503,192, and losses from investments of \$(714,922).

Plan expenses were \$28,863,988. These expenses included \$26,148,525 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries and \$2,715,463 in administrative expenses.

YOUR RIGHTS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- An accountant's report.
- Financial information and information on payments to service providers
- Transactions in excess of 5% of plan assets
- Insurance information, including sales commission paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report or any part thereof, write or call the office of the plan administrator:

AMALGAMATED WELFARE TRUST FUND LOCAL 371
290 POST ROAD WEST
WESTPORT, CT 06881
(203) 226-4751

The charge to cover copying costs will be \$0.25 per page.

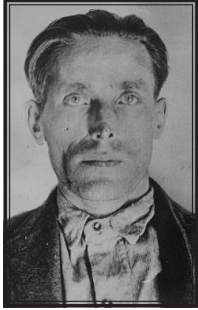
You also have the right to receive from the Plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of the income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report.

You also have the legally protected right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan, which is indicated above and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to:

Employee Benefits Security Administration
Public Disclosure Room N-1513
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue
N.W., Washington, DC 20210

JOE HILL: “DON'T MOURN FOR ME. ORGANIZE!”

A tribute to one of labor's great song writers who was shot down by a Utah firing squad in 1915 to become one of labor's most famous martyrs.



Joe Hill – poet, rebel, creator of the songs of workers, and labor martyr. He was born on October 7, 1879 in Gavle, Sweden, and he died in Salt Lake City at the age of 36, executed by the State of Utah for a murder most union people feel he never committed. When he was 23, Hill came to America, seeking a new life. His reasons for leaving were summed up in the lyrics of a Swedish farmer's lament:

It makes my heart ache to leave this land
Which our fathers have cultivated so diligently;
Yet I must seek a sheltering shore
Where I may keep my crop for myself,
Where I will not be forced to give away food
To sheriff and constable, to preacher and soldier, as
in Sweden.

For Joe Hill, as for the millions of European workers and farmers who made the long, difficult sea voyage, America was the land of opportunity; a new country, free, with good, cheap land, and plenty of good, well-paying jobs. But by the time Hill arrived, in 1902, the cheap land was gone and the only available jobs were mean and hard. You worked in crowded sweatshops, in noisy textile mills breathing cotton dust, in hazardous coal mines, in steel mills, or in lumber camps – or you didn't work at all. It was 10 hours or more a day, six days a week, no safety, no health benefits, no insurance, no compensation. And if you didn't like it, then buddy, you could take your hat and scrounge for a job in the next town or the next state. Like many immigrants, Joe Hill drifted from job to job, from state to state.

Unions? They were for skilled craftsmen like carpenters, printers, and machinists. Factory workers, especially the newly arrived immigrants who spoke little or no English, were unorganized. They were at the mercy of tough, hard-driving employers who exploited them and busted any organizing attempts. In junctions stopped strikes and picketing cold, yellow dog contracts forced workers to swear they would never join a union – these were the everyday tolls that keep the immigrants down at the bottom of the heap.

Gradually, Hill worked his way to California, where he became, for a while, a sailor and a dock hand. Like his fellow immigrants, he was frustrated, voiceless, and bitter at not being able to make it in the land of opportunity. But there was a ray of hope, which he readily turned to: The Industrial Workers of the World, a militant, radical union, preaching industrial organization. It was known to everyone as the Wobblies, and in 1910, Joe Hill became one of them. Joe Hill and the Wobblies were a marriage made in heaven. Hill was a song maker of the first order, and the Wobblies, besides being militant, loved to sing.

They roared out their rage and defiance in songs like “The Commonwealth of Toil,” singing of the day “when the earth is owned by labor and there's joy and peace for all in the Commonwealth of Toil that is to be.” They blasted bosses and government bureaucrats, businessmen and clergymen who justified existing conditions. And Joe Hill found this fertile ground for his creativity. He just loved to scribble verses of venomous satire about pillars of the establishment. In fact, his most famous song, The Preacher and the Slave, took a devastating swipe at what the Wobblies called “pie-in-the-sky-preachers.”

You will eat, bye and bye
In the glorious land in the sky.
Work and pray, live on hay
You'll get pie in the sky when you die
(That's a lie!)

Hill loved, too, to parody scabs, as in his well-known song, Casey Jones – The Union Scab, written in 1911. This song was a deadly jab at the engineers on the Southern Pacific Railroad who had continued to run the trains after their fellow workers in railroad shops had gone on strike:

Casey Jones, kept his junk pile running,
Casey Jones, was working double time.
Casey Jones, got a wooden medal
For being good and faithful on the S.P. line.

His songs were especially popular among the construction workers, metal miners, sailors, longshoremen, and migratory workers in the West; and in the East, among the immigrant textile workers.

It is truly amazing that Hill, who came to America at age 23 with only a smattering of English learned in YMCA classes in Sweden, mastered so thoroughly the American idiom. His songs rang true, goth in language and in reflection of the lives of the “working stiffs.” And they helped workers, too. One of Hill's biographers reports that Casey Jones was printed on small colored cards and sold for 10c each to help food strikers. A primitive strike fund, but it worked in its day.

Then came January 13, 1914. Early that morning, Joe Hill was arrested in Salt Lake City, on a charge of murdering a grocer and his son during a hold-up of the

store. As the prosecution's case unfolded, it was obvious that the powers-that-be in Sale Lake were determined to execute Hill even though the case against him was based on circumstantial evidence, some of it flimsy indeed. Today, any judge would throw it out of court, on the grounds that there was no fair trial and that Hill was never proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

In any case, that was 1914, not 1979. But Hill had allies too. There were protest meetings and rallies everywhere, even overseas. The Swedish Minister intervened with the American government, requesting that Hill's life be spared. President Woodrow Wilson himself intervened twice with the governor of Utah. Sam Gompers, a president of the American Federation of Labor and no friend of the Wobblies, asked that Hill be given a new and fair trial. But William Spry, governor of Utah, would not be moved.

On November 19, 1915, at eight in the morning, after 22 months in prison, Joe Hill's voice and pen was stilled forever by a five-man firing squad.

He was the romantic rebel to the end. One of Hill's last messages to Wobbly headquarters was the famous lines, “Don't waste any time mourning. Organize!” And he told his Wobbly buddies to haul his body 100 miles across the Wyoming border, “because I don't want to be found dead in Utah.” His will, an eight-line poem written the night before his execution, gives us a powerful example of his lyrical, romantic nature:

My Last Will
My will is easy to decide
For there is nothing to divide
My kin don't need to fuss and moan, “Moss does not cling to a rolling stone.”
My body? – Oh! – If I could choose I would to ashes it reduce
And let the merry breezes blow
My dust to where some flowers grow.
Perhaps some fading flower then
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my Last and Final Will.
Good luck to All of you.
Joe Hill

Hill's wishes were carried out: on May 1, 1916, his ashes were scattered across the oceans, in foreign lands, and in every state of the union except Utah.

On November 18, the night before Joe Hill was killed, an unknown speaker at a rally in Salt Lake cried out: “Something is going to happen. But Joe Hill will never die, do you hear it everybody? Joe Hill will never die.”

The words rang out and became the basis for one of labor's most moving and immortal songs: The Ballad of Joe Hill, composed by Earl Robinson and Alfred Hayes.

Union members should remember not only this labor martyr, but others too: the workers who gave their lives at Homestead in 1882; at Lattimore, Pennsylvania in 1897, where 19 coal miners were shot down in cold blood by sheriff's deputies; at Ludlow, Colorado in 1913; at Marion, North Carolina in 1929, where 6 striking textile workers were shot in the backs by state militia; at Chicago in 1937, where 10 steelworkers were gunned down by the police. The list is long, too long. But Joe Hill would not have wanted any commemoration without sharing it with all the others who fought – and are still fighting – for the underprivileged and down-trodden workers in America and throughout the world.

INTERNATIONAL RETAIL CONFERENCE

President Tom Wilkinson joined the other New England UFCW Presidents to discuss the importance of bargaining all of our union contracts together as one. In bargaining as well as in the strike, the unity and strength of all of our Stop and Shop sisters and brothers is what helped us win.





Pictured from left to right:

Back Row: David Nardi, Brian Simmons, Luis Rivera, Patricia Rider, Mark Dahl, Douglas Senn, Jon Tracey, Patrick Curley
 Middle Row: Paul Church, Lorenzo Mancuso, Peter Carvalho, Joseph Jarmie, Eileen Antolini, Mary Jane Massimino, Denise Tartaglia
 Front Row: Fred Musante, Keri Hoehne, Thomas Wilkinson, Ronald Petronella, Brian Truini, Bruce Cook

The Local 371 Executive Board

CALLING ALL NEW MEMBERS



Meet and greet for new members (\$25.00 to attend)
 Special orientation meetings for new full and part time members with under a year of service are held prior to all quarterly area membership meetings between the hours of 5:30 and 6:30. New members are encouraged to attend. Talk to your union representative or call the office for the next scheduled meetings. New members who attend will be reimbursed a one-time payment once their initiation fee is paid in full.

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BRIAN P. TRUINI
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