

UCATS **Momentum**

Union of Clerical, Administrative & Technical Staff at NYU, Local 3882, NYSUT, AFT, AFL-CIO

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Silver Anniversary Issue

UCATS celebrates!

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUARANTEES

PENSIONS

JOB SECURITY

SENIORITY RIGHTS

LIFE INSURANCE

RECLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

GUARANTEED RAISES

LIFE INSURANCE

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OVERTIME PAY

SENIORITY RIGHTS

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GET INVOLVED, NO EXCUSES

■ Stephen Rechner, Vanderbilt Hall



With this issue of *Momentum* we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of Local 3882 by kicking off a new campaign called **GET INVOLVED, NO EXCUSES**. The purpose of the campaign is to make it clear to each union member what we have to do **together** to get a good contract next year.

After the new year we will start the negotiation process in earnest. The operative word here is “process.” That’s what the **GET INVOLVED, NO EXCUSES** campaign is all about. Too many members

think that negotiating a contract is a spectator sport — one where you sit back and relax and assume that “somebody else” will do all the work.

Why not you?

Have you ever stopped to think who “somebody else” is? Somebody else is one of your coworkers. Everyone involved in getting the work of the union done is a coworker of yours who volunteers their time. Just like you we have children, family obligations, hobbies, social lives, and aspirations outside of our jobs like working toward degrees or being artists/actors/musicians. The one thing that motivates us to make time for union work is the realization that all of these other endeavors depend on the living wages and benefits that our union contract provides. Without living wages and benefits we wouldn’t have the resources to engage in these endeavors because we’d be working second and third jobs just to make ends meet.

I’ve been active in our union since 1988, and over the years I’ve heard every excuse under the sun for not being involved. The bottom line, however, is that we can all get involved and get a good contract, or

we can make excuses and settle on NYU’s terms, which will likely mean cuts in wages and benefits. Lucky as we are to have a union to protect and improve our wages and benefits, the union is only a tool at our disposal; if we don’t use it, if we make excuses not to get involved, or assume that “somebody else” will do the work while we sit back and relax, then we’re going to find ourselves in trouble.

Don’t count on the government

Although I stopped short of telling you who to vote for in the issues of *Momentum* leading up to the national presidential election, it was no secret that I supported John Kerry. The reason almost half the nation supported him is because we were concerned about job security, health insurance, and retirement benefits. With the reelection of George W. Bush, it’s clear that we have to look out for ourselves on these issues because the federal government is not going to do it for us. We can’t save the nation from

employers who are in a race to the bottom of the compensation barrel, but with a good union contract, we can protect good wages and benefits right here at NYU.

Since I got involved 19 years ago, Local 3882 has been negotiating great contracts for our members in good economic times and bad. With each new contract, our members rose to the challenge and got involved to do the necessary work. One thing is for sure — NYU doesn’t give up a dime without experiencing the strength of our members. Whether you’ve been a union member for a few months, or a few decades, your involvement in this process is crucial. A great contract in 2005 is up to you. ☘

UCATS Momentum

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The New Union Contract

What are you willing to do to get what you deserve?

■ Joy Young, *Housing-Third Avenue North*

We are the Union of Clerical, Administrative and Technical Staff at New York University. Our name is strong and elite. It informs the NYU community that we are an educated, talented, and unified group of professionals. We are teachers, thinkers, learners, listeners, helpers, and leaders. Our name gives us clout and our achievements are an inspiration to other unionized personnel and workers who are in the process of becoming unionized.

Ahhhh, this all sounds good and sweet but what good is all this clout and inspiration without a good contract? Just our name. Then, we are left with 1,500 unhappy clerical, administrative and technical staff. So the question of the day is (which you will hear often from our president, Stephen Rechner), **What are you willing to do to get what you deserve in the new union contract?**

I will make it easy on you by giving you the answer: **GET INVOLVED.**

Now is a critical time for the union. It is a time of analyzing, planning, critiquing, researching, and discussing our needs and wants. At the bargaining table between the union and NYU, contract talks begin from scratch. We should, as a collective unit, formulate a plan of how to bring all of our goals to the bargaining table. Here are some simple ways this can be accomplished:

1. **Attend general membership meetings.** Be aware of timelines, dates, and deadlines in regard to contract negotiations.
2. **Become a deputy steward.** A deputy steward may assist current stewards. Use this time as a trial run to experience what it entails to be a steward. Elections will be held sometime in mid-March. At that time, you may run for stewardship. You should

represent the area you work in because you know the issues (complaints, needs, wants, etc.) there better than persons outside your work area. As a steward you will bring those issues to the union so your area will be well represented.

3. **Volunteer on a team.** Join an action team or research group. These groups will assist in the preparation of contract negotiations. We want to be prepared and know our facts at the bargaining table. Action and Research teams are as follows: Dirty Laundry Team (research NYU board of trustees, NYU donors, and NYU's Finances); Health and Safety (improve safety conditions in the work place); Grievance/Quality of Life (keep track of NYU grievance procedures); Medical Insurance (to help prepare for NYU's likely demand for everyone to pay for health insurance); Internal Organizing (what we need to do to accomplish our goals). Note: these groups are subject to change.

4. **Help with the newsletter.** We need writers to contribute to *Momentum*. Since each writer naturally brings his/her own perspective to a particular topic, having different contributors makes our newsletter more interesting and diverse.

5. **Donate your specific skills.** Everyone has a quality they can contribute. Many people are good with organizing, planning, networking, computer skills, photography, and designing (for leafleting).

Spread the word to your union co-workers. If you decide to be involved, inform your union co-workers about what you learn. They may not have access to such information.

We have to make our contract strong by setting our own agenda for what we negotiate. We need to be involved. Be a contributor towards the outcome of our union contract — not just a recipient. ☘

Wages and benefits

■ *Diana Corzen, Health Center, and Stephen Rechner, Law School*

Two questions: when was the last time you read your UCATS Union Contract with NYU? Do you know how it protects your wages and benefits on a daily basis?

In the contract, you can find most of the answers to everyday questions about working at NYU. For instance, common questions such as how sick time is accrued, and how you are entitled to be compensated when you work overtime are answered.

Your supervisor isn't looking out for you

Although it might seem logical to ask your supervisor these types of questions, the problem is that they are not covered by our contract; even more surprising, they aren't required to know and understand our union contract even though they supervise union members. Subsequently, NYU supervisors have a wealth of misinformation about your rights and benefits.

In addition to general ignorance, many of our supervisors are under tremendous pressure to work within strict budget constraints, and it's not unusual for them to suggest, or even insist, that we forgo our contractual rights (especially our right to be paid for working overtime). They'll usually attempt it very nicely, with such statements as, "*we'd like to pay you overtime, but there's no money in the budget,*" or, "*we just don't 'do that' in our department.*" When they're not so nice, they'll suggest that the problem isn't that they assigned you 10 hours of work to do in 7, but that you didn't work hard enough, and that you should stay until the job gets done to make up for slacking off.

Knowing your rights and benefits is a matter of getting everything you **earn** from working at NYU. These aren't discretionary rewards given to us by NYU management for good behavior; they are entitlements hard won in negotiations with NYU by thousands of UCATS members, past and present. They were won by the hundreds of members who went on strike for three weeks in 1988, and by hundreds more who went on strike for half a day in 1996. Even more important were the countless lunch hours, evenings, and weekends

sacrificed by UCATS members who volunteered to be on our contract bargaining teams and those who were activists and shop stewards.

You only have the rights you know about

The UCATS leadership is committed to making every effort to educate each member about the rights, benefits, and protections guaranteed in our union contract. That's why our contract is posted on our website and given to every new employee. That's also one of the most important reasons why we publish *Momentum* and write this column each issue. If you've never read the UCATS contract, however, and if don't read *Momentum* and/or discard mail with our return address unopened, you are in effect choosing to be undercompensated because, at the end of the day, the **only** rights you have are the rights you know about. ❧

Did you know?

- ◀ More than 42 million Americans have no health insurance.
- ◀ In 2003, 2,866,000 New Yorkers had no health coverage.
- ◀ About 33 million Americans were officially poor in 2001.
- ◀ In New York, 2,707,000 people were poor in 2003, over 103,000 more than in 2000.
- ◀ Personal bankruptcies rose 29% in New York, from 57,210 in 2000 to 73,812 in 2003.

Sources: American Bankruptcy Institute, Economic Policy Institute, Center on Budget & Policy Priorities, U.S. Dept. of Labor.

THE *MOMENTUM* TEAM WISHES TO THANK JENNIFER HAUS FOR PROOFREADING EACH ISSUE THIS PAST YEAR, AND WE WISH HER THE BEST IN HER NEW CAREER AS A CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER.

THANK YOU JEN!

Health and safety in numbers

■ *Leslie Jenkins, Vanderbilt Hall*

It was about 6:15 on Tuesday, November 30, when I arrived at our union office. I really didn't know what to expect as this was my first foray into a Health and Safety "training" meeting. I didn't even know if it was OK to show up 45 minutes late, but I was curious so I got there as soon as I could. Besides, I heard that a guy named 'Dave', who was the guest speaker, was "really good." OK, but how "good" could someone be at a union meeting, really? We'll see, I thought.

Upon entering, I saw a flurry of activity, but it was quiet and with intention. I was welcomed, without question at the table, where a dozen members were engaged in discussions about ways to look at various H & S issues with respect to management and union membership. I recognized our president, Steve Rechner, and organizers, Greg and Linda. The rest of the group flashed warm smiles as they 'scooted over a bit' to accommodate another chair. I am not a shy person, but I do feel awkward and hesitant in unfamiliar territory, but the dozen of mostly strangers were immediately welcoming. Linda and others passed me the handouts, and told me that they were discussing a case study, as the flow of the discussion continued.

Our leadership and our colleagues have a warm and welcoming attitude, which I truly appreciate, and want you all to know this, in case you're not too sure about coming to a meeting. Those at the meetings are there to make a better place to work for all of us. And from what I've seen so far, we are going to need all the help we can get. For those of you who know me, you're probably wondering why I am like a born again Pollyanna. Blame it on dedication. I saw and felt the passion and dedication of a handful of members who were there to make things better.

Sharing the burden

As a worker at the law school, I am not exposed to the dreadful conditions at other university facilities. I had no idea my fellow workers were in hostile and unsafe environments. No one should have to work in oppressive situations, nor should one have to risk their health or their life, to collect a paycheck. It is just wrong. If I were running for Miss America, my platform would be the health and safety of the American worker (and world peace). Sure, there's plenty more wrong with NYU, like treating staff with contempt, but no one should ever have to suffer



Leslie got involved on November 30, when she attended a health and safety workshop in at the union office.

a sickening or dangerous work space. We all deserve the basics of a decent, clean and healthy work environment.

Back to the meeting. I listened to the various suggestions made by our members, as led by (the infamous) Dave, who was, as stated, "really good," without doubt. Dave Newman, a Trainer with NYCOSH, (New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health) was impressive in his skill to guide and lead us in various ways of looking at a point or issue. He showed us how to focus and how to keep focused on point. Doesn't sound like much, but if you're trying to be clear about your collective needs, you need to stay on point and be succinct. Dave showed he knows his stuff and that he can convey his knowledge.

I learned a lot in a very short time, but most importantly, I felt the strength and resolve of our members to pursue this one facet of the upcoming contract. I also learned that we are not expected to become 'living saints' or 'firefighters' in our mission to get a fair contract or in dealing with day to day problems. We have others who will stand with us and share the burden, but the burden is fundamentally ours, and we have to be there first and out front before others will join us.

There's safety, and strength in numbers, and we need those numbers to be visible to NYU. There's a better contract in our future if you participate and join in the struggle. I believe that NYU will come at the union with "guns-a-blazing" at the upcoming 2005 negotiations. We must be prepared. Having meetings with experts, like Dave Newman, is definitely a welcomed way to begin. We need to educate ourselves and to give some time to the contract needs. The time to get prepared is now! ❁

25th Annive

25 years of activism and achievement

Bill Isanberg, Dental Center:

I have been working for NYU's Dental Center for over 25 years. Prior to the union, the biggest increase in salary I can remember was \$10/wk. After the union was established there was an immediate change for the better, including reasonable raises and an expansion of many benefits. In the fall of 1990, I was terminated by a boss who happened to be a very vindictive individual.

Through the efforts of the union, we won at arbitration and I received most of the back pay I had lost during the time that I was unemployed. The union handled my arbitration against NYU very professionally. If there had been no union I would have had to hire my own lawyer, or maybe just say "forget it" and walk away. 🍀

*The next 25 years
for Local 3882
begins with fighting
for what we deserve
in Contract 2005!*

IN THIS ISSUE of *Momentum*, you'll hear from several of Local 3882's former presidents, activists, and long term members. Some have been in the union since it was organized in 1979. They've seen Local 3882 grow and they've all been part of making it strong and successful. What was it like on the job for clerical, administrative and technical workers at NYU 25 years ago?

25 years ago at NYU before Local 3882 was organized:

- ◆ No job security. You could be fired without a good reason.
- ◆ No guaranteed raises; wages were so low, many people qualified for food stamps.
- ◆ No dental or optical plans.
- ◆ No childcare fund.
- ◆ No protection from unfair discipline, no grievance procedure, no representation.
- ◆ No longevity increases.
- ◆ No seniority rights.
- ◆ No domestic partner benefits.
- ◆ No reclassification system.
- ◆ No time-and-a-half overtime after 35 hours.
- ◆ No health & safety guarantees.
- ◆ Less than \$100/mo. pensions for 20-year employees.
- ◆ Less life insurance, less vacation time, no use of sick time for a sick child.

We now enjoy these rights and benefits (and more) thanks to all the members over the past 25 years who participated and made Local 3882 a strong and active union. Every Local 3882 member who believed we were worth it and had the courage to fight a powerful employer like NYU contributed to our success. Through sharing their ideas, organizing together, supporting each other and acting

ersary



Trudy Rudnick

Twenty-five years of growth, at a time when many are facing job loss and cutbacks, is something I hope you are all proud of. I know that I am. I was a union member, union officer and organizer for many years. I learned so much during that time. Mostly, I learned that it is only a strong, informed and involved membership that can stand up to a huge institution like NYU. I learned that it's not how many grievances you file or how

you can 'catch' an NYU administrator in a lie, but the strength of the union membership that changes anything. When NYU attacked our (your) health benefits in 1993 or when they for so many years refused to have even one word about health and safety in the union contract, we never gave up. We organized building by building, office by office, and we stuck together.

When I left UCATS to organize unions at other universities, I took Local 3882 with me, in my heart and in my confidence and understanding about what it really means to have a strong union. After all, you have very little control over your landlord or the school system or your local hospital. But, during contract negotiations, especially, you do have control over your salaries and working conditions. Take that control. Good luck in your upcoming contract negotiations. Local 3882 is a great union with a strong leadership, but most of all, Local 3882 has you, the members! 🌿



Frank Santos

In 1973, when I started working for NYU the salary was so low for most secretaries, they were getting food stamps. We had a system called "merit" increases where your supervisor wrote a report about your work performance. You had to be on his or her "good side" to get just an \$8 to \$10 a week raise.

There were no medical or dental benefits. You had to pay for everything. Many people had to use fake names and addresses for themselves and their families if they had to go to the emergency room.

God forbid if you had a problem with your supervisor, there was nowhere to go except to Karen Bradley and Jo Katcher. You were heading into a dead end alley.

The word arbitration didn't exist in the NYU dictionary. When you were fired, for whatever reason, that was it for you because NYU would fight to the end so you wouldn't collect unemployment benefits. 🌿

collectively — including going out on strike in 1988 and 1996 — Local 3882 members fought and won all that we take for granted on the job today.

Soon it will be 2005, and before we know it, we'll be back at the bargaining table with NYU. What do you think will happen when our union contract expires in October 2005? What will happen to our health insurance benefits? What will it take to get the raises we deserve? How can we win stronger rights on the job? What will it take to protect everything Local 3882 members have won over the past 25 years?

Let's continue Local 3882's legacy as a grassroots union with a membership that stands up for what is fair. The next 25 years for Local 3882 begins with fighting for what we deserve in Contract 2005!

25th Anniversary

Thoughts from some of 3882's first members (con't)



Margarita Aguilar (with former NYC Mayor David Dinkins)

When I was first active in Local 3882, it was still a very young union (and I was a much younger woman). Although we had an active membership, we lacked the security that an agency shop gives a union. With every contract we negotiated there was a fear amongst the leadership that if we didn't succeed the union could just collapse. When we negotiated, it was always behind the eight ball of having an open union where not everyone had to contribute. Of course NYU used the non-members to their advantage. It's demoralizing to know that members did all the work and some people did nothing and yet received every benefit. It was also frustrating to know that we could have achieved much more if we had the non-members contributing.

Finally, in preparing for the 1988 negotiations we were convinced that NYU had to accept that Local 3882 was a fact of life at the university. We were determined to win the shop. We went on strike for 21 days. Our members showed incredible strength and determination. I believe NYU felt that if we

struck our organization would break down. But we didn't. We settled a contract that had many gains for the members. We didn't win a shop, at that time, but we came back strong. And we finally achieved recognition by the university that we were a force to be dealt with. It took a few more contracts and the shop was finally won. With that achievement, Local 3882 became a mature organization. Officers and activists could organize and negotiate without the fear of falling apart. In 25 years, this union has never taken a step backwards and it's the members that have made that possible. ❀



Ralph Simeron

I have seen in my 25 years a great deal of accomplishments that were gained in our union. Workers that were dismissed, regained their jobs, and received back pay for their time that was lost. We are still fighting for people that are doing higher grade work and not getting paid for it. As a union representative, I urge more people to get involved so that we can continue making gains for years to come. ❀

Joe Eversole

I'll never forget the day that Debbie Albin and Amanda McMurray cornered me in the basement stairwell of Main and asked how much longer I was going to take a "free ride." I'll never forget walking the picket line with Dolores Armstrong and Michael Richards. Entertaining ourselves (and others) made the three weeks go a lot faster. My membership and involvement with the union through the years has been very enriching and left me with life long relationships. ❀



Alecia Lewis Dore

I'm really proud of how far our union has come, all of the goals we have achieved, and the fact that in 25 years we have never had to give anything back. I'm also proud of the strong leadership we have, and have had, over the years. I remember when we achieved the dental plan, longevity increases, and the childcare fund; and I also remember improving each of those benefits in subsequent contracts. Our leadership is always there when our members are disciplined and they have always sacrificed their own time to give their all to support the staff. ❀

Twenty-five years of achievement!

IN THE BEGINNING — Prior to 1979, the clerical and technical workers of NYU did not have a union. Employees were on permanent probation and could be fired at any time. Raises were at the discretion of each worker’s manager, and were given only occasionally,

not every year. A grade 8 employee with 20 years of service retired in poverty with a pension of less than \$100/month. **There was no job security, no childcare fund, no dental plan, no optical plan, and no job descriptions.**

<p>1979 (first contract)</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Grade 4 makes \$145/wk. Free life insurance \$3000 Internal candidates interviewed for open positions Health insurance premiums reduced \$15/mo. family, \$5/mo. individuals</p>	<p>Contract 1980</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Union bulletin boards in univ. bldgs. Health insurance premiums reduced 7/mo. family, \$5/mo. individual Most employees get job descriptions</p>	<p>Contract 1981</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Add'l \$5/wk. for higher grade work Internal candidates interviewed for open positions first Health insurance premiums reduced \$5/mo. family, free for individuals All employees get job descriptions</p>
<p>Contract 1983</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees 3 wks. vacation after 3 years instead of 5 Union wins dental plan Layoff rights and sonority language added to contract</p>	<p>Contract 1985</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Grade 4 eliminated, raised to Grade 5 OT after 37 1/2 hrs./wk. instead of 40 \$5000 free life insurance Longevity increases won-\$5/wk. at 5, 10, and 15 years</p>	<p>Contract 1988</p> <p>3 Week strike!</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees OT after 35 hrs./wk. Right to request reclassification</p>
<p>Contract 1990</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Free life insurance increased to \$7500 Employee assistance program started 15 day parental leave added, totalling 135 days</p>	<p>Contract 1993</p> <p>Major union rally saves health insurance!</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees \$50,000 childcare fund starts Domestic partner benefits achieved Free life insurance increased to \$10,000 Code 104 grade system implemented</p>	<p>Contract 1996</p> <p>Half-day strike wins maintenance of membership!</p> <p>Salaries increased for all employees Maintenance of membership! Free life ins. increased to \$17,500 Longevity increased to \$9 after 5 years, and \$7 after 10, 15 & 20 years Optical plan achieved</p>

Contract 2000
(expires Oct. 31, 2005)

Union achieves Agency Fee Shop (i.e., membership and income stabilized so union can provide better services to all); 25 years of wage increases, dental and pension plans improved again,

childcare fund rises to \$95,000 by 2005, release time for union’s bargaining team, commuter spending accounts, grade 8 20-year pension over \$900/month by end of contract!

Decoding Sexton

■ Greg Succop, Organizer

While watching Frontline's *The Persuaders* (about the marketing of goods and politics) on PBS the other night, I was reminded of how words shape our perceptions and change how we think. One of those interviewed for the show was Frank Luntz, a corporate consultant, pollster and political consultant to Republicans. Mr. Luntz said that the words used to describe something are more important than the actual content when it comes to gaining people's support.

"Every time you use the words "privatization" and "Social Security" in the same sentence, you frighten seniors, and more of them turn against you. This is a specific and perfect example. Changing the word from "privatize" to "personalize," and you presumably have a "winner". It is true that there has been increased use of such market-tested language over the last several years. "Healthy Forest Initiative", "Clear Skies", "Climate Change", "Contract with America", suggest that Mr. Luntz has been very busy — and successful. As the Bush administration moves to "reform" Social Security, I wonder what words will be used to "sell" their new plan.

We are not financially equal

In an earlier issue of our newsletter, President Sexton's installation speech was covered. "The Enterprise Culture" is a centerpiece of the President's thinking, and is worth revisiting, in light of Mr. Luntz's observation about language.

"Enterprise" is a word with particularly positive connotations, while words like, "project",

"scheme", "development", and "venture" leave one feeling a little cold, if not downright oily. Mr. Sexton also said "each person who accepts the title "professor" simultaneously

Thinking about what he said, it sounds like he's suggesting that each of us at NYU have a financial duty to our employer.

accepts a fiduciary duty to the entire enterprise". Based on the rest of his speech, it is fair to say that Mr. Sexton includes all of those individuals that make up NYU, students, administrators, and employees as members of the enterprise.

Most of us think about the responsibility the employer has toward the employee. In his speech, Mr. Sexton turned the equation around. Thinking about what he said, it sounds like he's suggesting that each of us at NYU have a financial duty to our employer.

I think it's safe to say that all of the people covered by our contract are working at NYU because they need a job, and a job with health benefits. We're working to feed, cloth, and house our loved ones and ourselves. In a society that is increasingly divided between those that have a lot and those that are struggling to get by, the choices people make reflect the harsh realities of class, race, and gender. Mr. Sexton's fine words however, suggest that we are free and equal agents. The reality is that however

free we may be, we are not all financially equal, and that directly affects our ability to exercise our freedom. It's all well and good for someone of Mr. Sexton's stature to speak of sacrifice, especially when he can afford it.

Recently, the university commissioned a task force to address the issues of rising health care costs. The task force used language very similar in concept to Mr. Sexton's "enterprise" when they suggested that we would all have to contribute to a solution. While administrators have been contributing to the solution (via increased health care premiums and wage freezes) members of our Local have benefited from a contract guaranteeing yearly salary increases and medical benefits that are free for individuals, and just \$5 a month for full family coverage; and all of our plans have low co-payments.

Words matter

Many times when we speak with members and new hires, it's clear that words like, "union," "volunteer", "committee", "solidarity" do not have the same cachet as "enterprise", "personalize", "ownership" and so on. It's troubling to realize this, but critical to say so as we move into the final year of our contract. We live in a society whose paradigm is a consumer model and while some like to think that paying dues entitles them to services and products, dues alone fail, if the net result of our collective action is a weak contract with diminished benefits and stagnating salaries.

When the contract was negotiated five years ago, our community, the members of Local 3882, found common language and common

(Continued on page 12)

A union in Cooper

■ Stephen Rechner, Vanderbilt Hall

There's a new union in town! On Friday, November 5th, non-teaching employees at Cooper Union voted 5-to-1 in favor of union membership in an election supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The organizing drive was spearheaded by our very own Trudy Rudnick in her new position as a Labor Relations Specialist with our state affiliate, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).

The real key to success, however, was the active participation of Cooper Union's employees and their fantastic organizing committee. The Cooper Union workers effectively organized themselves by distributing leaflets, talking to their coworkers, and attending meetings with NYSUT representatives and yours truly. In short, *they were involved*.

Their decisive victory occurred in spite of a vicious anti-union campaign waged by the Cooper Union administration who hired the notorious union-busting law firm of Proskauer and Rose. As the NLRB auditor opened each ballot and read aloud, "yes or no" the attorney from Proskauer questioned each ballot that appeared to have additional markings. At that point the NLRB auditor read aloud, "*hell yes!*", and "*yes please*".

The new union at Cooper is especially significant for UCATS members because they are affiliated with NYSUT and they are a non-teaching, private sector, higher education union local, as we are.



Workers at Cooper Union observe NLRB vote count. Also observing are NYSUT organizer, Trudy Rudnick, and an attorney from Proskauer and Rose (wearing suit, looking constipated).

Everyone in the UCATS leadership is looking forward to working with the members of our new sister local. The Cooper organizing committee will be invited to our new office open house so UCATS members will have an opportunity to meet this dynamic group of new union activists. ☘

Area meetings for contract 2005 begin

■ Heidi Lubov, Law School

The first Area meeting for contract year 2005 was held at the Law School on Wednesday, October 6th. We had a wonderful group of attendees and it was a very positive and productive gathering. As you may know, the Law School's Vanderbilt Hall was closed for renovation this summer and many staff members had difficulties during the move out, and again moving back in, to Vanderbilt Hall. One of our objectives of this area meeting was to provide a forum for collective problem-solving for members by sharing

our recent experiences. Our main goal, of course, was to discuss our upcoming contract negotiations, the challenges that lie ahead, and how members have to get involved to continue our 25 years of achievements.

Your input needed

UCATS hopes to have similar Area meetings throughout the university during this important time. Area meetings are a crucial method of sustaining the union's relationship with the members and vice versa. The UCATS leadership needs your input to set our agenda for contract negotiations.

As shop steward, I also took this opportunity to talk about NYU and the changes that we may face in the near future. We need to work together, more so now than in this last year, to help make us strong, prepared, and poised for our next contract — and we need active union members, like you, to get UCATS members the contract we deserve next October 31st. If you and your coworkers would like to have your own area meeting contact your shop steward or the union organizers. Way to go Law School UCATS team! ☘

We're moving!



Our new office at 636 Broadway looks better each day as we unpack and organize. After the holiday break we will have an open house for members.

On Monday, December 1st, UCATS moved into a new office at 636 Broadway, Suite 614. This marks the first time in over 10 years that we will have our own office separate and apart from our state affiliate, the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT).

Our new office is a 1500 square foot L-shaped loft space with refinished hardwood floors, 14-foot ceilings, and five large windows. Located 1/2-block south of Bleecker Street, this location is in close proximity to more of our members, most of whom work in NYU buildings that are on the east side of Washington Square Park. Dental Center employees will also have better access because they can take the #6 train directly to the

nearby Bleecker Street subway stop.

We're growing

The move was precipitated by the fact that the NYSUT organizing staff, with whom we share our current office, has been hiring additional people to work on their campaigns, and we will be hiring additional people to help us with our contract 2005 campaign — 148 West 4th Street, however, just isn't getting any bigger.

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Although the new office will cost more per month than we currently pay, much of the increase will be offset by the fact that we will not have to rent space in NYU's Kimmel Center at \$200 a pop when we have meetings of more than a few people. There is also the potential to make the space available to outside groups, at a fee, which will facilitate community outreach, in addition to raising revenue.

Sometime after the new year, UCATS members will be invited to an open house reception. Stay tuned. ❀

Decoding Sexton

(Continued from page 10) cause. We have benefited from that endeavor. With the contract about to end, we face that challenge anew. What words will we use to bring us together to improve our working environment and gain for ourselves a future that is both healthy and financially secure?

E-mail your suggestions and thoughts to UCATS @erols.com as we begin to invest in our enterprise. ❀

GET INVOLVED, NO EXCUSES