

THE **voice**

October/November 2017



Organizing around the issues

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WHAT'S INSIDE

this issue



COVER PHOTO BY
KAREN L. MATTISON

Members front and center

7—Statewide MDO Tom Hoey, left, and Lin Xia Jiang of Buffalo State went door to door talking with members. Albany Chapter member Daphne Jorgensen agreed to put a sign on her lawn urging people to Vote No! to a constitutional convention. More on the convention can be found on pages 8-9.

ALSO:

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The VOICE is the official publication of United University Professions (UUP), bargaining agent for the more than 35,000 academic and professional employees of the State University of New York.

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United University Professions

The union that makes SUNY work

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- Enrollment opens for flex spending accounts. Find out more at <http://bit.ly/2ybd3bn>
- U.S. Congressman Paul Tonko and UUP President Fred Kowal speak at a Sept. 19 rally at UAlbany calling for the Perkins Loan Program to be extended beyond its Sept. 30 deadline. <http://bit.ly/2hlryCp>
- Hope you didn't miss the last issue of *The Echo*, which features articles on pay equity and a faulty charter school plan, as well as information on unemployment insurance for contingent members and Snapshots from the chapters. <http://uupinfo.org/flipbook/EchoVol4Issue1/#/0>



AFTCN

The times they are a-changin’

There’s something very special about the fall.

At campuses across the state, it’s a time of new beginnings for students, for academics and for professionals.

For me, there was always an air of excitement at SUNY Cobleskill, where I taught political science and Native American studies before leaving the classroom to lead this union. The students were back, and it was time to update coursework and get back to work.

This year, there are new beginnings at SUNY, and the changes are positive.

A POSITIVE FORCE

Dr. Kristina Johnson is SUNY’s new chancellor, and I believe she is a smart choice—and the right choice—to lead the University.

In an April press statement, I called Dr. Johnson an innovator who understands the importance of augmenting SUNY’s depleted full-time faculty ranks. As dean of Duke University’s Pratt School of Engineering, Dr. Johnson hired more full-time faculty and significantly increased research spending as part of an ambitious expansion plan.

Actions speak louder than words, and it’s obvious that Dr. Johnson is a person of action.

Already, I have had more phone conversations with her than I had with Nancy Zimpher in her eight years as SUNY chancellor. Earlier this month I emailed Dr. Johnson asking how UUP and SUNY could help the victims of Hurricane Harvey. She responded quickly. We spoke several times before Dr. Johnson reached out to the governor’s office to get involved.

The result: the SUNY Strong fund, which has collected more than \$30,000 in disaster relief donations for victims of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. In September, sisters and brothers from SUNY Maritime were sent to Texas aboard the college’s training ship, *Empire State VI*, which was loaded with \$14,000 in supplies purchased with SUNY Strong donations.



MICHAEL LISI

UUP PRESIDENT FRED KOWAL JOINS ALBANY CHAPTER MEMBERS AT A RECENT RALLY TO DEMAND THE PERKINS LOAN PROGRAM BE EXTENDED BEYOND SEPT. 30. FOR MORE, GO TO [HTTP://BIT.LY/2HLRYCp](http://bit.ly/2HLRYCp)

Dr. Johnson has already proven that she’s someone we can work with. We won’t agree on everything, but I am optimistic that SUNY is firmly on the right path with Dr. Johnson at the helm.

UNIONS UNDER ATTACK

I wish I could be as positive regarding the future of organized labor nationwide.

As *The Voice* went to press, the U.S. Supreme Court added *Janus v. AFSCME* to its merits docket. *Janus* is the latest challenge by union-busting billionaires and CEOs to weaken unions by barring them from collecting fair share fees from bargaining unit members who haven’t signed up to be union members.

With its 5-4 conservative majority, the court may very well affirm *Janus* if it asks for the case. And that’s bad news for unions, which depend on those fees to help cover collective bargaining costs and provide on-the-job protections for union and nonunion members alike. You can read more about *Janus* in this issue of *The Voice*.

By now, you’re probably asking yourself if UUP will be able to weather this latest challenge. I’m proud to say that the answer is yes. We are prepared, and this union is stronger than it’s ever been.

Since 2013, your union’s leaders and activists have been working tirelessly to grow UUP, and our efforts have been successful. We have increased membership to 95 percent among full-time workers, and activists are actively recruiting part-time employees to sign union cards.

But much work lies ahead. To truly be successful, we need our members to stand firm and be proud to be union.

Most importantly, we need all of you to get involved.

If you know someone who isn’t a UUP member, talk to them and tell them about all the positive things UUP brings to its members. Ask them to join their union or send them to www.uupinfo.org, where they can sign up online.

If you’re a member who wants to do more, go to your campus UUP office and volunteer. Or call us at 1-800-342-3406.

There is no time to lose. We either work to strengthen this union, or we risk losing this powerful force for our members, SUNY and social justice that has stood for 45 years.

And I hate to lose.

Members front and center

It's come to this: Strengthen and grow the union, or watch it die.

Under the leadership of President Fred Kowal, UUP has taken mammoth steps to increase its membership, as billionaire-backed, anti-union forces once again prepare for a U.S. Supreme Court battle set to strike at the foundation of organized labor.

This time, it's *Janus v. AFSCME*, which challenges the right of public sector unions to collect fair share, or "agency fees," from anyone who benefits from collective bargaining. Basically, *Janus* contends that it's unconstitutional for everyone who enjoys benefits and protections of a union-negotiated contract—unionists and bargaining unit members alike—to pay their fair share of the cost for that work. You can read a detailed discussion of *Janus*, below.

Because of these threats (*Janus* is the latest in a long line of union-busting legal challenges moving through the courts), UUP has been focused on strengthening membership and using every union action—from parades and rallies to advocacy events—as an opportunity to engage and activate members.



In September, Kowal and UUP's statewide officers began a series of "Meet the Statewide President" forums at chapters to provide information and hear what's on members' minds. Kowal wants members to understand that they have the power and the responsibility to strengthen their union—and they must get involved to make that happen.

The UUP Presidential Strategic Planning Committee (formerly the Outreach Committee) has set up regional networks of activists who will focus on in-district advocacy, signing up new members, and activating members interested in becoming involved in their union.

UUP members also participated in the first phase of NYSUT's Education Autumn: Member Organizing Institute, with training for member engagement, communications skills, leadership, and union and community issues.

Read on to find out more about how you can get involved this fall, from taking part in Campus Equity Week, to working to defeat a November referendum for a state constitutional convention.

Latest U.S. Supreme Court case aimed at dismantling unions

BY MICHAEL LISI

A well-paid child support specialist in Illinois could play a pivotal role in forever changing how public sector unions operate.

Mark Janus, a \$71,000-per-year Illinois government worker irked over having to pay fair share fees to AFSCME—the union that represents him—has filed suit to compel the union to stop collecting those fees.

Bankrolled by a well-known pair of anti-union organizations, the National Right to Work Foundation and the right-wing Liberty Justice Center, *Janus v. AFSCME* contends that it's unconstitutional to compel workers to pay fair share fees as a condition of employment.

These and other anti-union forces claim that, via fair share fees—called agency fees in New York state—workers are forced to support union activities, which are almost always political in nature. They contend that's a violation of their free speech rights.

FRIEDRICHS REDUX

Sound familiar? *Janus* is almost identical to 2016's failed *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association*, a union-busting case that ended in a 4-4 deadlock after the unexpected death of conservative Justice Antonin Scalia in February 2016.

Janus makes the same argument; it directly challenges *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*, a landmark 1977 Supreme Court case that required workers who refuse or don't join their union to

pay their share of collective bargaining costs through fair share or agency fees. By law, a public employee union must represent everyone in its bargaining unit.

"This is yet another attack on working families and the ability of the middle class to stand up and be heard," said UUP President Fred Kowal. "Anti-union forces have twice failed to abolish *Abood*, and they will be doing all they can to ensure that the third time is the charm."

PAYING THEIR FAIR SHARE

Labor has long supported *Abood*, which eliminates the inevitability of "free riders"—people who pay nothing while receiving the same union representation that dues-paying members get. It also ensures that fee payers contribute only

see SUPREME COURT, page 22

A straightforward intro to UUP yields 1,000 new members

BY DARRYL McGRATH

Four years ago, Ken Kern asked how he could get more involved with his UUP Buffalo Center Chapter.

Nearly 1,000 membership cards later, you might say that Kern has found his niche.

He holds a dual role in his chapter, as vice president for professionals and membership development officer. Some MDOs at other large UUP chapters, which often have satellite campuses and buildings in several locations, have department representatives to help with membership development in their assigned areas.

Given Kern's two significant chapter responsibilities and his full-time job in the university's residence life department, he has found success in a unique approach.

FACTS, FIGURES AND PASSION

Instead, he has signed up more than 200 members each year through a straightforward, simple method: a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation about UUP and what it can do for its members, which he developed. He has given this presentation so many times during the university's orientation sessions—nearly 40 times last year alone, for nearly 300 new employees—that he has it memorized.

Kern also shows prospective members a brief but impassioned video produced by the union and titled, "UUP: We Open Doors," in which President Fred Kowal explains the purpose of UUP as scenes unfold of members engaged in their jobs. The video originally aired as a TV ad in 2013, and Kern says it does an excellent job of introducing people to the concept of a union, without overwhelming them. (Watch it at <http://bit.ly/2gQpPVf>)

A cooperative campus administration makes him feel welcome at these events. But as you watch Kern go through a prac-



DARRYL McGRATH PHOTOS

BUFFALO CENTER CHAPTER VP FOR PROFESSIONALS AND MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OFFICER KEN KERN IS ENGAGING AND ANIMATED—AND HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AT SIGNING UP NEW MEMBERS AT HIS CHAPTER.

tice session for this year's round of orientations, it's clear that his engaging and animated delivery, coupled with his obvious sincerity, are the real keys to his success.

"I'm not here to change your perspective on unions. ... (But) let me show you where your money goes."

— Ken Kern
Buffalo Center

"Ken is a people person," said chapter assistant Kristen Rinker-LaBerta, whom Kern credits as an invaluable source of good feedback and technical assistance. "He connects with people at all levels."

A PRACTICAL APPEAL

Kern said he realized that he is not always, as the saying goes, preaching to the choir when he stands before a couple dozen new employees. So he opted for the practical approach on the belief that if he can't always win over hearts and minds, he might win over material interests.

"I'm not here to change your perspective on unions," he tells his captive audience. "But the cold, hard fact is when you get your paycheck, you'll see that about 1 percent goes to UUP. So let me show you where your money goes."

Three-fourths of his presentation emphasizes the negotiated benefits that UUP has achieved for the bargaining unit.

But he also stresses that members can continue to enjoy many of those benefits

after retirement. As he puts it, "You might as well call those benefits for life."

A WELCOMING PLACE

Kern's willingness to take on membership development coincided with other positive changes at the chapter, said Tom Tucker, statewide vice president for professionals, who was Buffalo Center Chapter president when Kern first got involved.

A couple of years ago, the chapter moved its office to a more visible location on campus, in a courtyard of retail space at the university's Amherst site. The larger space doubles as a chapter office and a drop-in center for members, and includes a room that can be used for private discussions of grievances. The chapter named that room after Al Ermanovics, the chapter's longtime grievance chair who died a year ago.

"With 3,100 members, it's difficult for us to know every-

one," Tucker said. "But we do make an effort to know as many of our members as possible, and part of that approach means having a welcoming space for them to use."

"Ken has done such a great job at signing people up that this was all the more reason for us to have an office that could double as a drop-in center for members, and especially those new to UUP:"



TUCKER

UUPers to unleash inner artists for Campus Equity Week

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

UUP members will celebrate contingent employees in SUNY in October with Campus Equity Week observances, as they remind colleagues, students and administration of the vital work performed by part-time and full-time contingent instructors and staff.

For nearly two decades, faculty teaching off the tenure track have used the last week in October to protest the unfair employment practices that harm the profession and the students enrolled in college and universities, said Anne Wiegard of Cortland.

“Because student learning conditions depend on faculty working conditions, optimal educational experiences for students require equitable institutional support of all faculty,” she said.

UUP’s Campus Equity activities will take place on SUNY campuses Oct. 23-31. Contingent employee leaders in the union are also calling for chapters to participate in a national one-day observance, Oct. 31, by wearing masks that will be made during consciousness-raising activities on campuses. The masks, part of the mAsk4CampusEquity campaign being organized nationally, will symbolize the dual sides of working as a contingent—a position that is sometimes invisible, but always essential.

“We’re really hoping that people who want to see something happen will reach out

to the artists on their campuses—and there are artists on every SUNY campus,” said Wiegard, who is on the board of directors of the New Faculty Majority Foundation, the research and fundraising arm of a national activist organization for contingent employees.

More information on the mAsk4CampusEquity campaign can be found at www.campusequity2017.com. The website has toolkits, project ideas and historical information about contingent workers in the United States. The mAsk4CampusEquity logo was designed by Albany Chapter UUPer Rebekah Tolley.

Members of UUP’s Contingent Employment Committee, co-chaired by Benjamin Allocco of Oswego and Jacklyn Pittsley of Cortland, are urging all UUP members to promote the mAsk4CampusEquity website through Facebook and to use the hashtags #2017CEW and #mask4ce on Twitter.

SPEAK UP FOR CONTINGENTS

One goal this year is to raise student awareness of contingents, Pittsley said. Students sometimes do not realize their instructors are contingent employees, often working part time and with little, if any, job security.

“We would really like to increase student awareness and participation,” said Pittsley, a contingent academic since 2005, who has been a full-time contingent with a renewable three-year appointment for the last seven years, and is now a salaried lecturer.

Cynthia Klink, an adjunct lecturer at Oneonta since 2004 and a member of the statewide [Contingent Employment Committee](#), said that while a great deal of work remains to be done to improve the position of contingent employees at SUNY, the issue has provided a terrific opportunity for membership engagement across the full spectrum of UUPers on her campus. The Oneonta Chapter contingent concerns officer is a full-time tenured professor, Mark Ferrara, whom Klink described as “very, very concerned about contingent issues.”

“He’s got our back,” she said.

Wiegard, a contingent academic, said she is heartened to see more coverage of contingent issues in mainstream media.

“A lot of credit goes to grassroots adjunct faculty who have stepped up,” she said. “It is really heartening to see.”

WHAT’S HAPPENING

Some of the Campus Equity projects planned around the state include:

- An afternoon March for Equity at Cortland, Oct. 27, with tables all day on campus where students and employees can pick up literature on the contingent issue and broadcast a supportive message through a social media campaign labeled Trick or Tweets;
- Distribution of materials on contingent issues at SUNY Polytechnic Institute;
- Awareness campaign using outdoor exhibits, games, and other activities at Oneonta, Oct.30; and
- A display of contingent artwork and readings of contingents’ work Oct. 31 at UAlbany in a fine arts building gallery.



mAsk4CampusEquity

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Support your union in planning or attending a CEW event
- Introduce yourself to contingent faculty and staff
- Staff an information table on campus or in your community

- Distribute fliers at campus and chapter events
- Write an article in your chapter newsletter
- Speak up for part-time employees in your department

- Wear a button or sticker to show your support
- Serve on the chapter committee dealing with contingent employee issues
- Write letters to the editor on the plight of adjuncts

Get more CEW ideas and resources at:

www.campusequity2017.com



KAREN L. MATTISON

EDUCATION AUTUMN PARTICIPANTS, FRONT ROW, FROM LEFT, ARE: TYSHENA HUNTER, ALBANY; KIMBERLY WARREN, ALBANY; CHARLENE FOLEY-DENO, ONEONTA; KAREN HILDEBRAND, PLATTSBURGH; AND MERCI DECKER, NEW PALTZ. BACK ROW, FROM LEFT, ARE: STATEWIDE VP FOR ACADEMICS JAMIE DANGLER; STATEWIDE MDO TOM HOEY; DAVID KISTLER, POTSDAM; DOUGLAS HEMPHILL, OSWEGO; LIN XIA JIANG, BUFFALO STATE; UUP ORGANIZER ROB TRIMARCHI; AND FAHEEM HAIDER, NEW PALTZ.

UUPers train to approach, educate, activate union colleagues

BY KAREN L. MATTISON

Approaching members to find out how they feel about their union isn't for everyone. It takes unflinching grit and determination.

About a dozen UUPers wanted to know if they've got what it takes to educate and activate their union colleagues. So they signed up for "Education Autumn," a UUP/NYSUT Member Organizing Institute training program designed to empower members to engage their colleagues in conversations about UUP.

"There are a lot of things I don't know about the union," said Albany Chapter member Kimberly Warren, who works as a human resources professional in facilities management at UAlbany. "And the more I know, the better I can assist employees on my campus. It's important for people to know their rights."

Warren joined nearly a dozen other UUP members and officers Sept. 23-24 for a series of workshops that ranged

from member engagement and communications skills, to leadership and role-playing, to contingent-specific breakout sessions and learning how to reach members. Their training culminated with an afternoon of door-to-door canvassing of UUP households.

POUNDING THE PAVEMENT

The newly trained organizers braved 90-degree temperatures to meet with their colleagues and listen to their stories.

Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey and Lin Xia Jiang of Buffalo State knocked on the door of Albany Chapter member Daphne Jorgensen, an assistant dean in UAlbany's College of Engineering and Applied Sciences, who welcomed the organizers into her home. They spoke about the value of being a union member, and listened as Jorgensen discussed issues that affect her professional work.

After Jiang spoke about the pitfalls of a state constitutional convention, Jorgensen agreed to put a "Vote No! to

Con Con" sign on her lawn.

Also going door-to-door were Karen Hildebrand, Plattsburgh; Faheem Haider, New Paltz; Douglas Hemphill, Oswego; Charlene Foley-Deno, Oneonta; David Kistler, Potsdam; Merci Decker, New Paltz; Tyshena Hunter, Albany; state-wide Vice President for Academics Jamie Dangler; and Warren.

Education Autumn participants have agreed to keep up the momentum through 12 or 18 four-hour shifts over the next six weeks. While they build the movement to support public education and unionism, the organizers will also identify other grassroots leaders. A mandatory daylong debriefing is scheduled for Nov. 11.

"We're trying to grow our network of union organizers, to promote our members' rights and to engage all of our members in the work of our union," said Hoey, who served as UUP's point person for the Education Autumn campaign. "This training helps our organizers understand their role in strengthening UUP."

Spread the word: Vote No! to a constitutional convention

BY KAREN L. MATTISON

When Jamie Dangler warns people about the risks of a New York state constitutional convention, she isn't doing it just for the union; she's doing it for herself.

That's because Dangler, UUP's statewide vice president for academics, knows that she *is* the union—and so are the 41,999 others who make up the active and retiree membership of UUP.

And every one of them could lose some of their basic rights and protections if voters opt to hold a [constitutional convention](#) in 2019. At stake are collective bargaining rights, environmental protections, pension security, and the use of taxpayer dollars to fund private schools, among other issues.

Dangler is doing her part to mobilize others in opposition to the Nov. 7 referendum vote—she has addressed dozens of union and community organizations over the last six months—and she's hoping more of her union sisters and brothers will join in the effort (see related story, page 9).

“We need to engage every member to



KAREN L. MATTISON

VPA JAMIE DANGLER ADDRESSES MEMBERS OF THE STONY BROOK CHAPTER ON THE DANGERS OF A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION. THE PUBLIC WILL VOTE NOV. 7 ON WHETHER TO HOLD A CONVENTION.

defeat this referendum,” she said. “A constitutional convention could become the vehicle to continue the attacks on public education and public sector unions.”

POWERFUL FORCES AT WORK

One need only look at what's been happening around the country to understand that the threats are real.

Wisconsin now prohibits bargaining over anything but wage increases based on inflation; and requires annual union elections. Tenure protections were removed from state law in 2015, and Regents now require mandatory post-tenure review.

Iowa requires unions to hold annual elections and to recertify before every contract negotiation. A bill was introduced to prohibit hiring a faculty applicant at a public college or university whose most recent party affiliation would “cause the percentage of faculty belonging to one political party to exceed 10 percent” of the percentage of the faculty belonging to the other dominant party.

North Carolina introduced similar legislation, to require tenure-track and tenured faculty members to “reflect the ideological balance of the citizens of the state” so that no campus has “a faculty ideological



AT THE CHAPTER

- Set up a Vote No! table and distribute materials
- Write letters to the editor
- Encourage your chapter Executive Board to adopt a Vote No! resolution and promote it in newsletters

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Work with organizations that are opposed to a con con
- Host “house parties” to discuss the issue with family, friends and coworkers
- Spread the word on social media; use #NYConCon

GET OUT THE VOTE

- Work with your chapter on voter registration and GOTV drives on campus
- Participate/encourage others to participate in NYSUT phone banks
- Offer to drive people to the polls

Get UUP's constitutional convention toolkit at:
www.uupinfo.org

UUP CREATED VOTE NO! MATERIALS—SUCH AS THE POSTER AND DECAL, BELOW—FOR MEMBERS TO DISTRIBUTE. THEY CAN BE ORDERED ONLINE AT [HTTP://UUPINFO.ORG/DEFENDUNION/CONCON.PHP](http://uupinfo.org/defendunion/concon.php)



Taking up the con con challenge

BY KAREN L. MATTISON

Empire State College Chapter President Pamela Malone spoke with certainty when she firmly stated that she is opposed to a [New York state constitutional convention](#).

Malone was one of three UUP members to take part in a panel discussion about the political, legal and economic impacts of a constitutional convention. The question of whether to hold a convention will be on the Nov. 7 ballot.

Malone and fellow ESC UUP members Al Lawrence and Edward Warzala shared their thoughts during a Sept. 18 teleconference from the Saratoga campus that included email and in-person exchanges. The event was sponsored by the college's Office of Collegewide Student Affairs.

"The reason I'm voting no is because a constitutional convention is not a quick fix, as many would like to believe," Malone said. "We have to remember that there is much at stake, that we have so many rights—as New Yorkers, as educators and as union members—that are guaranteed in the New York State Constitution and all of them would be at risk."

"If we need to add certain rights to the constitution, we have the legislative process to do it," she added.

Lawrence, a member of the criminal

justice faculty, gave an overview of previous state conventions. He noted that the greatest number of resolutions to pass—six—came following the 1937 convention, and that voters rejected all of the resolutions proposed during the 1914 and 1967 conventions.

Warzala, a political scientist, said he is watching as "political pluralism"—a.k.a. interest-group politics—unfolds.

"Who gets what, when and how is the definition of politics," he said. "The best organized, best able to communicate are the most effective and get what they want."

He pointed out how "politics make strange bedfellows," noting that organizations often at ideological odds have come together to oppose a constitutional convention. His example: Right to Life and Planned Parenthood. Both are on record against a constitutional convention.

Lawrence said that outside money will probably be used to influence the vote. He reminded people of the attacks on workers' rights in Wisconsin. Those attacks—and many more across the country that target public sector unions, pensions and tenure—continue to be largely funded by the Koch brothers and others of their ilk.

"Follow the money," Warzala said. "Look for a huge money dump; it could be from outside influences."

balance of greater or less than 2 percent of the ideological balance" of North Carolinians. The legislation was tabled, but it isn't too far of a stretch to believe that it could come up for a vote down the road.

GET OUT THE VOTE

The union is hoping New Yorkers will vote down the constitutional convention referendum, as they did in 1997, the last time the question was on the ballot.

"Many people believe that this will be an opportunity for average citizens to serve as delegates," Dangler said. "But we know that four out of five delegates to the 1967 convention were lawmakers, attorneys and other political insiders.

"We expect well-funded private interests to play a key role in delegate election campaigns, making it unlikely that ordinary citizens will be elected as delegates."

That's why Dangler believes it's important to work to get out the vote.

"People may agree that a constitutional convention is too risky, but it won't matter unless they get to the polls and vote down the referendum," she said. "Why not help yourself by helping your union spread the word?"

"It's worthy of our efforts."



KAREN L. MATTISON

ESC UUP MEMBERS AL LAWRENCE, LEFT, PAMELA MALONE AND EDWARD WARZALA PARTICIPATE IN A PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE NEW YORK STATE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION REFERENDUM.

Helping out after Harvey

Maritime members mobilize to help Texas relief efforts

BY DARRYL McGRATH

Five UUP members from SUNY Maritime College headed to hurricane-stricken Texas Sept. 12 with the college's training ship, *Empire State VI*, to help with relief efforts for Hurricane Harvey.

UUPers Dominick Valvo, Edward Madigan, Matt Mahanna, Ron Siegmann and James Carlucci are part of a crew of about 30 mariners from around the country that sailed to Texas to provide aid.

The ship is housing relief workers so that land-based emergency housing can be reserved for displaced Texas residents in the Houston region. The former cargo ship can hold up to 500 people.

UUP READY TO HELP

The U.S. Department of Transportation ordered the *Empire State VI* to activate for emergency duty Sept. 1. The ship is part of the National Defense Reserve Fleet and has responded to relief or combat support several times since becoming the Maritime training vessel. She was used to withdraw U.S. troops from Somalia in 1994, and she served as housing for relief and repair workers after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf Coast in 2005, and after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

It was not possible to speak with the members as they worked nearly 'round the clock to ready the ship, but Maritime UUP Chapter President Barbara Warkentine said everyone on the campus was with the crew in spirit. UUP



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUNY MARITIME

ABOVE, MARITIME WORKERS LOAD DONATED ITEMS ONTO THE *EMPIRE STATE VI*. THE SHIP IS HEADED TO TEXAS WITH SUPPLIES AND TO HELP WITH RELIEF EFFORTS FOLLOWING HURRICANE HARVEY.

BELOW, JAMES ROGIN, DIRECTOR OF CONTINUING EDUCATION AT SUNY MARITIME, IS SHOWN IN THE COLLEGE'S BOUCHARD TRANSPORTATION COMPANY INC., TUG & BARGE SIMULATION CENTER.



and the college stand ready to help the members' families during the activation. "We're here, and when there are national disasters, we are always ready and willing

to do our part," said Barbara Warkentine "Even when it's a few of our members going, they're representing all of us, and we know they'll do an excellent job."

TRAINING PAYS OFF

The rest of the crew would be made up of unionized mariners from around the country, said James Rogin, a UUP member at Maritime and director of continuing education there. He runs courses that mariners

must regularly complete to keep up with changes in technology and procedure in their profession.

Although Maritime students accompany



“... when there’s a national disaster, we are always ready and willing to do our part.”

— *Barbara Warkentine*
Maritime Chapter president

the ship to Europe on a training voyage every summer, they do not have the experience to go on an assignment like this, so the crew will consist entirely of professional mariners.

“We’re a very unique institution and we have a unique training base,” said Rogin, who explained that the crew would face “an all-hands effort” in keeping the ship and its residents safe during the assignment in Texas.

Safety was expected to become an even larger issue once the relief workers arrived on board, because the 565-foot cargo ship (200 feet longer than a football field) is a place of tight spaces and many corridors. It will take a while for the temporary residents to find their way around the ship without getting lost, Rogin said.

The crew is well prepared and extremely well trained to make the ship’s guest residents safe, he said, and the ship will provide workable accommodations.

“This ship travels to Europe every summer, so she’ll do great,” Rogin said.



Help hurricane victims and first responders

BY MICHAEL LISI

UUPers can help the victims of hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and the many volunteers and first responders providing aid to those recovering from the vicious storms.

Donate now to SUNY Strong fund, a joint effort by New York state and SUNY to collect donations statewide to buy supplies to help hurricane victims. Monetary donations will be used to buy water, towels, linens, canned goods, diapers and cleaning supplies.

To donate, go to <http://bit.ly/2gDottf>

Supplies purchased with early donations were loaded into the *Empire State VI*, a National Defense Reserve Fleet vessel used by SUNY Maritime to train students, and shipped to Beaumont, Texas, to aid in the relief efforts in Texas and Louisiana.

The ship was sent to provide power, housing, food and water to more than 1,200 first responders working to help hurricane victims (see related story, page 10).

“We are proud that UUP members are involved in this important mission,” UUP President Fred Kowal said.

Kowal recorded a Sept. 6 video urging UUP members to donate to the SUNY Strong cause. The SUNY Strong initiative came about after Kowal phoned SUNY Chancellor Kristina Johnson and asked her how UUP could work with SUNY to aid hurricane victims. Check out the video at <http://bit.ly/2w8IPla>

“Because of emails and phone calls from UUP members asking what we could do to help, I reached out to Dr. Johnson and we had a series of very productive conversations,” said Kowal. “She worked closely with the governor’s office, and together a plan was developed to help the folks most impacted by this devastating storm.”

Union fights two-tier teacher certification

BY DARRYL McGRATH

Disbelief and outrage continue to surround the SUNY Charter Schools Committee plan—some even called it a scam—to allow the creation of a substandard teacher preparation and certification process for SUNY-authorized charter schools.

With the close of the public comment period in early September, UUP, NYSUT and teacher education faculty and staff throughout the state await the committee's next step. The committee is comprised of four SUNY Board of Trustees members.

Opponents hope that the avalanche of opposition—by dozens of lawmakers, education advocacy groups, the state education commissioner and Board of Regents chancellor—will convince all SUNY Board of Trustees members that they need to get involved in the committee's decision on this issue.

ASSEMBLYMEMBER GLICK: PROPOSAL IS 'A SCAM'

"Aside from being an overreach by the Charter Schools Institute, my concern is this will undermine the teaching profession," said Assemblymember Deborah Glick, a Manhattan Democrat and strong supporter of UUP who chairs the Assembly's Higher Educa-



KAREN L. MATTISON PHOTOS

ABOVE, UUP MEMBERS FROM THE ALBANY, CORTLAND AND EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE CHAPTERS JOIN THEIR K-12 COLLEAGUES TO PROTEST THE SUNY CHARTER SCHOOLS COMMITTEE PROPOSAL TO LOWER TEACHER CERTIFICATION STANDARDS FOR THE STATE'S CHARTER SCHOOL INSTITUTE. UUP AND NYSUT VEHEMENTLY OPPOSE THE PLAN, AND THEIR MEMBERS SHOWED UP IN FORCE OUTSIDE THE SUNY BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING SEPT. 12 IN SARATOGA SPRINGS.



LEFT, ALBANY CHAPTER PRESIDENT AARON MAJOR PUSHES HIS SON EMILE ON THE PICKET LINE.

tion Committee. Glick spoke on Susan Arbetter's radio news show, The Capitol Pressroom, Sept. 21.

"The Assembly wholeheartedly rejects

the assertion that they have this authority," Glick added. "It is really, in my humble opinion, a scam."

Glick added that although teachers who

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Email the SUNY Charter Schools Committee at <http://www.newyorkcharters.org> and speak against creation of a substandard teacher certification process for SUNY charter schools

- Read UUP's comments, letters and other information on or about the SUNY charter school proposal at <http://bit.ly/2xBa0WV>

- Spread the word on social media that the SUNY charter school proposal undermines the mission of SUNY and the teaching profession in New York state—#NoEZTeach

Check out the video of VPA Jamie Dangler at the NoEZTeach rally:
<http://bit.ly/2xKLNzy>

Hundreds attend Albany Chapter picnic

Albany Chapter member Dafney Amilcar-Rodriguez, left, gets a scoop of coleslaw from Jack Gendron, right, as chapter member Mitch Aso, in red, serves others in line. Both servers are members of the Albany Chapter Executive Committee. More than 400 members signed up for the Sept. 7 picnic.

Chapter President Aaron Major, statewide Membership Development Officer Tom Hoey and VP for Professionals Tom Tucker addressed picnic-goers.

More photos from the picnic can be found at <http://bit.ly/2wqgjUc>

Check out photos from other UUP events at <http://bit.ly/2x3n1IG>



KAREN L. MATTISON

would be certified through this fast-track method would be intended as employees of charter schools, she predicts that in no time at all they will end up as applicants for teaching positions in non-charter K-12 schools. If that occurred, Glick predicted, it would be partly because of the notorious turnover of teachers and staff in charter schools, and partly because charter schools would see that expansion as a way to increase their hold in New York's public schools.

STANDARDS AT RISK

At issue is a proposal by the SUNY Charter Schools Institute to allow charter schools to develop and operate their own teacher preparation and certification, which would be far less stringent than the nationally renowned and extremely challenging certification process that every other public school teacher in the state must pass. It is clear that it would not begin to match the standards that future teachers must pass now to enter a classroom.

Currently, the Charter Schools Committee of the SUNY Board of Trustees has sole authority to vote on the proposal, without the approval of the full SUNY board. The committee will meet

again in mid-October, and in the meantime, opposition forces are speaking up loud and clear.

"Through UUP, teacher education faculty and professional members have been steadfast advocates for the teaching profession ever since we first raised questions about the poor design of the new certification exams, back in 2013-14. They have continued that advocacy for future teachers, and for the children of New York who deserve qualified teachers," said Jamie Dangler, UUP vice president for academics.

RALLIES, PROTESTS

NYSUT, UUP and representatives of dozens of other education advocacy groups rallied outside of the September Board of Trustees meeting in Saratoga Springs. Regents Chancellor Betty Rosa and State Education Commissioner MaryEllen Elia submitted strongly worded objections to the proposal during the public comment period.

"This is a rare case where many different parties who do not always agree on education issues have come together in a show of unity against this proposal," said UUP President Fred Kowal. "We see this proposal as nothing but a concession to

the charter school industry, which is a revolving door of teachers and now wants a deficient way to certify those teachers."

The debate over the Charter Schools Institute's certification plan unfolded at almost the same time as the head of one of the country's largest charter school empires found herself in the middle of a political flap that could not have won her any new friends in the Legislature. Eva Moskowitz, chief executive officer of the Success Academy charter school chain, took considerable heat after one of her board members posted a comment on Facebook about state Sen. Andrea Stewart-Cousins, leader of the Senate Democrats, which said that the senator's representation of her constituents had done more harm than "anyone who ever donned a hood"—a clear reference to the Ku Klux Klan.

UUP will continue the fight against a dumbing-down of teacher preparation and certification.

"It took us four years, but we got the Regents to take needed action on the poorly designed certification exams," Dangler said. "We have no intention of letting the teaching profession evolve into a two-tiered system, with one of those tiers so inadequate that it defies belief."

SNAPSHOTS FROM LABOR DAY 2017



Massena



Buffalo



Albany

Photographed at [Labor Day parades](#) around the state, clockwise from above left, are: Plattsburgh Chapter President Kim Hartshorn, Deb Zinser and Dave Curry, right, who marched in Massena; Buffalo State Chapter President Dean Reinhart, right, joins his chapter colleagues and dozens of other UUPers from the Buffalo Center and Albany chapters marching in Buffalo; UUP members, from left, Schaelon Davis of Environmental Science and Forestry, and Ibipo Johnston-Anumonwo and Anne Wiegard, both of Cortland, meet in the picnic area following the parade through the Great New York State Fair in Syracuse; UUPers from the Downstate Medical Center, Empire State College, Old Westbury, Stony Brook and Stony Brook HSC chapters line up before the Labor Day parade in New York City. In the blue T-shirt, center, is AFT President Randi Weingarten; and Albany Chapter member Alyssa Lotmore and her daughter Tessa, fore, and Albany Chapter President Aaron Major, carrying his son Emile, march through the streets of Albany. More photos can be found at <http://bit.ly/2w8U9Bv>



New York City



Syracuse

Union continues to press for fair, equitable agreement

BY KAREN L. MATTISON

The state in early September surprised members of the UUP Negotiations Team with an odd request that slowed contract talks.

“It’s not unusual for the state to put a new twist on a demand or to try to throw a wrench in the works,” said UUP President Fred Kowal. “Even though we’ve learned to expect anything at the table, it still gives us pause when it occurs after months of face-to-face bargaining and when real progress was being made.”

Contract talks continued in earnest, as union negotiators met in side meetings to discuss some of the sticking points. As *The Voice* went to press, UUP and state negotiators were scheduled to return to the bargaining table before the end of September.

The union’s five-year contract expired July 1, 2016, two weeks before the two sides exchanged contract proposals—which is the first step toward hammer-

ing out a successor agreement.

“Our members made it clear what issues are the most important in this round of talks,” Kowal said. He noted that the Negotiations Team spent more than a year soliciting members’ comments and concerns, including chapter-based meetings, an online survey, emails, and conversations with chapter leaders and members of statewide committees and task forces, among others.

The Team is able to hold fast in its demands, Kowal said, thanks to the ongoing support of the membership.

“The state understands that our members are willing to wait rather than ratify an agreement that doesn’t represent the work we do for SUNY students and for the patients at the University’s three public teaching hospitals,” Kowal said. “Member support is crucial in our contract talks with the Governor’s Office of Employee Relations and SUNY.”

UUPers who haven’t done so already are encouraged to wear and display “United for a Fair Contract” signs, bumper stickers and decals. They are

available at chapter offices or by contacting UUP organizer Rob Trimarchi at rtrimarc@uupmail.org.

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

- Be ready to participate in “Fair Contract” activities, if asked
- Attend chapter meetings to discuss the contract and other union issues
- Wear red on Fridays

Get up-to-date contract information at:

<http://bit.ly/2ytFGgK>

Your new UUP contract is being negotiated. Will you be able to vote on it?



Once a tentative agreement is reached with the state, UUP members must vote to ratify a new contract. It’s *our* union and *our* contract. **BE INVOLVED!**

Check your most recent pay stub. If it says “UUP Agency Fee,” then you are **NOT** yet a UUP member.

Thomas P. DiNapoli New York State Comptroller		JOHN DOE		Total Gross		Fed Taxable Gross	
				Current	3456.78	1234.56	
				YTD	45,678.90	34,567.89	
Advice #	789	Pay Start Date	02/01/2017	Net Pay 1,234.56			
Advice D#	016	Pay End Date	02/15/2017				
Department ID	98765	NYS EEMPLID	N12345678	Pay Rate 78,910.11			
EARNINGS							
Current				YTD			
Hrs./Days	Earnings	Hrs./Days	Earnings	TAX DATA			
Regular Pay Salary Employee	3456.78		45,678.90	Federal	State	NYC	Yorkers
Location Pay	56.78		678.90	4	4		
				Allowance			
				Add. Amt.	2	0	
TAXES							
Current				YTD			
				Fed Withholding	3,456.78	1,234.56	
				Medicare	45,678.90	34,567.89	
				Social Security	3,456.78	1,234.56	
				NY Withholding	45,678.90	34,567.89	
BEFORE TAX DEDUCTIONS							
Current				YTD			
				AFTER TAX DEDUCTIONS			
				Current			
				YTD			
Regular Before Tax Health				456.78	1,234.56		
Supplemental Ret. Annually Prog.				678.90	5,678.90		
TIAA Retirement Before Tax				56.78	1,234.56		
				UUP Agency Fee	34.56	456.78	

Are you a UUP member?
Only UUP MEMBERS can vote.

JOIN TODAY

- ▶ Go to uupinfo.org
- ▶ Click on “About UUP” at the top of the home page
- ▶ Click on “Welcome/Join”
- ▶ Scroll down to “Click here to sign up online”

On the front line

Below are your chapter presidents and how to reach them.



Albany
Aaron Major
(518) 442-4673



Alfred
Joe Patrick
(607) 587-4313



Binghamton
Sean Massey
(607) 777-2460



Brockport
José Torre
(585) 395-5698



Buffalo Center
Ezra Zubrow
(716) 645-0411



Buffalo HSC
Ray Dannenhoffer
(716) 829-2540



Buffalo State
Dean Reinhart
(716) 878-5508



Canton
Brian Harte
(315) 386-7967



Cobleskill
Bill Tusang
(518) 255-5205



Cortland
Joe Westbrook
(607) 753-5517



Delhi
Kelly Keck
(607) 746-4674



Downstate Medical
Rowena
Blackman-Stroud
(718) 270-1519



Empire State
Pamela Malone
(518) 587-2100



ESF
Scott Blair
(315) 470-4921



Farmingdale
Vicki Janik
(631) 420-2321



Fredonia
Ziya Arnavut
(716) 673-3864



Geneseo
Wes Kennison
(585) 245-5283



Maritime
Barbara Warkentine
(718) 409-7370



Morrisville
Steve Hinkle
(315) 684-6260



New Paltz
Beth Wilson
(845) 257-2783



Old Westbury
Martha Livingston
(516) 876-2748



Oneonta
Bill Simons
(607) 436-3498



Optometry
Kim Oliver
(212) 938-5515



Oswego
Bill Canning
(315) 312-3501



Plattsburgh
Kim Hartshorn
(518) 564-2478



Polytechnic Institute
Linda Weber
(315) 792-7323



Potsdam
John Cote
(315) 267-2730



Purchase
Joseph Germani
(914) 251-6465



Stony Brook
Kevin Moriarty
(631) 632-4614



Stony Brook HSC
Carolyn Kube
(631) 444-1789



System Admin.
John Leirey
(518) 320-1470



Upstate Medical
Carl Pettengill
(315) 464-7878

Four SUNY students receive UUP scholarships

BY AMY SHELDON

Three exceptional undergraduates and one post-baccalaureate student are the recipients of this year's UUP College Scholarship Fund awards.

The undergraduate recipients are Ivan Gubarev, a junior at Binghamton majoring in political science; Michael Hahn, a senior at Potsdam studying violin performance and music business; and Diane Mathews, a senior at Binghamton majoring in biological sciences with a minor in general anthropology.

Jessica Manry, a Ph.D. candidate in English at the University at Albany, is this year's recipient of the union's William E. Scheurman Post Baccalaureate Scholarship.



IVAN GUBAREV

Gubarev is using his experience growing up in Uzbekistan to motivate himself to reach his goal of becoming a diplomat.

"When individuals are struggling economically, they are forced to make immoral decisions," he said, reflecting on memories of his childhood. "I grew up with the view of social and economic injustice in front of me, and I told myself that whenever I will get an opportunity to, I will go out and fix that problem."

When he immigrated to New York City at the age of 11, Gubarev couldn't speak or write English. He is now a veteran intern at the American Civic Association, an organization that helps refugees and immigrants with their transition to living in the Binghamton area.

Gubarev's professors believe his international experience is one of his greatest strengths.

"Ivan thinks strategically about international relations, and he has a powerful desire to use his international experience and awareness to good ends," said UUP member Al Vos, an associate professor of

English. "As a result of his firsthand knowledge of corruption and bureaucratic ineptitude, Ivan has a passion for social and political justice."

Gubarev has a 3.86 GPA.

MICHAEL HAHN

Hahn is committed to using his leadership roles on campus to educate his peers and raise awareness around issues related to diversity.

In his position as a resident assistant on campus, he was selected to be the "RA Resource" for all of the college's residence life.

"This position allows me to help train new staff members, educating them on diversity and success, both professionally and personally," he said.

Hahn is president of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA), Crane School of Music Chapter, and he hopes to one day become a member of the American Federation of Musicians.

"I have made it a personal mission to aid every musician in need however I can, whether it be advising them on career development and contract consideration or helping create more leaders in the industry who will use their knowledge and skills to benefit the next generation of musicians," Hahn said.

As Hahn's advisor for ASTA, UUP member Jennifer Kessler said his determination was apparent from the start.

"Michael's positive attitude has created strong morale and pride among the organization's members," she said.

Hahn has a 3.83 GPA.



HAHN



MATHEWS

DIANE MATHEWS

Since she was a young child, Diane Mathews has aspired to be a doctor and has completed experiences in this country and abroad to prepare her for that career.

She has volunteered in Colombia,

assisting with physical therapy for elderly women and performed rotations through a premedical internship program at Guthrie Robert Packer Hospital in Pennsylvania. She also shadowed a radiologist, family practitioner, and pediatrician at the St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Utica.

"My dedication to the field stems from my desire to show appreciation for each life," Mathews said.

William Ziegler, executive director of Binghamton University's Scholars Program and a UUP member, commends Mathews' accomplishments.

"As an undergraduate, Diane has proven that she can perform in a medical facility, conduct research, work independently and, as a member of a team, communicate well with peers and professionals, and do it all with a smile," he said.

Mathews has a 4.0 GPA.

JESSICA MANRY

As an adjunct instructor, UUP member and organizer for the Graduate Student Employees Union/CWA Local 1104, Manry is committed to advocating

for equal rights on the UAlbany campus.

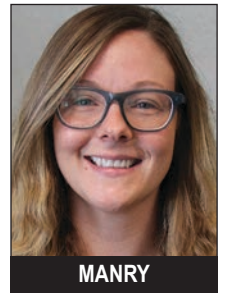
In her role as a graduate student employee organizer, she doubled membership in her GSEU local.

"Throughout my solidarity efforts, my proudest leadership moments have been those where I have successfully advocated for and organized with others," she said.

She also volunteers off-campus, visiting a local refugee family each week, and she has facilitated the New Sanctuary's writing campaign, where she helped volunteers edit and publish letters urging lawmakers to support sanctuary city legislation. Albany is now a sanctuary city.

Albany Chapter Vice President for Academics Paul Stasi describes Manry as someone who demonstrates "an impressive commitment to social justice and community building in her academic work and in her activities as a unionist."

Manry has a 4.0 GPA.



MANRY

Member swims to draw attention to lake pollution

BY DARRYL McGRATH

The surface of Lake Erie churned with six-foot mud-colored waves as Sherri Mason, a UUP member and chemistry professor at SUNY Fredonia, described the swimming stroke that would power her through that water.

It was Aug. 18, and in two more days, she would plunge into those waves and start across the lake. She had planned the swim to raise awareness about her professional passion: the plastic pollution of the Great Lakes and so many of the Earth's other waterways.

Now, as she reflected on the year of training, in which she swam hundreds of practice miles and spoke often and passionately about her cause, she had to raise her voice to be heard against the sound of ocean-like surf breaking against the nearby jetty.

"If it's still like this, then it will be canceled," said Mason, known as Sam to friends and family. "And if it gets canceled, then I tell Jeff it was an act of God," she added, referring to her fiancé, Jeff Bloodworth, who would be one of two kayakers flanking her in the lake to keep her aimed straight toward the opposite shore.

"The training for this was so intense that I can't put my family through this another year," Mason added. "We have to move on." And then she scanned the water.

"This is scary," she said. "That's not safe."

PLASTIC, PLASTIC EVERYWHERE

Mason took up the cause of the Great Lakes years ago, and led the first plastic pollution survey of their waters in 2012. In that survey, which received attention in Ohio as well as New York, one of the water samples the research team drew from Lake Erie, using a super-fine trawling net, contained 600,000 pieces of plastic per square kilometer. That was twice the number of plastic pieces found in what was then considered the most contaminated sample of ocean water ever recorded.

That plastic comes from shopping bags, drinking straws, food wrappers, beverage bottles, sunglasses and flip-flop sandals, cigarette filters, food containers and the myriad of other consumer products that get tossed or are lost in the lakes. But another major source of plastic pollution is microbeads, the tiny plastic particles used as abrasives in skin-care and home-care products.

Mason has received national acclaim for the attention she has drawn to this problem, and was a recognized advocate for the federal law signed under the Obama administration that banned microbeads from beauty and health products, such as toothpastes



DARRYL McGRATH

UUPER SHERRI MASON SPENT A YEAR TRAINING FOR HER LAKE ERIE SWIM TO DRAW ATTENTION TO PLASTIC POLLUTION OF THE GREAT LAKES.

and skin exfoliation creams. She led the research at Fredonia that highlighted the problem and which found high levels of these almost invisible particles in the Great Lakes. The microbeads enter the food chain and, by extension, potentially enter our own bodies.

While microbeads are still used in other products, such as abrasive compounds for industrial products, the federal Microbead-Free Waters Act of 2015 was hailed as an important first step. *The New York Times* quoted Mason on the topic.

"Start looking around, and you see how much plastic is

around," Mason said as she spoke on the lake shore in August. "It's just everywhere. None of us likes to think we're part of the problem, but if you use plastics, you're part of the problem, and that includes me."

ENDLESS HOURS OF TRAINING

Mason, 44, was a competitive long-distance swimmer in high school, but that was nothing compared to what she faced in this open-water endurance test. She spent endless hours in the pool, lifted weights, did strength training and all the while kept up with her academic schedule and her work as chair of the Fredonia department of geology and environmental sciences.

As she faced the rough water hours before she hoped to begin her crossing, she knew this was her one shot at this accomplishment. She has a teenaged daughter about to start college; she plans to be married next year to Bloodworth, a history professor at Gannon University in Erie, Penn. The swim had already been moved back a day to Aug. 19, in the hope that the water would be calmer.

Just the publicity that her training generated—along with her qualifying practice swim in June across the 15-mile-wide Chautauqua Lake—made Mason realize that she had achieved one goal, whether or not she swam Lake Erie: She got out the word about plastic pollution in every interview she gave.

"I think it's important to have goals and give it everything you have," she said. "The goal is an endpoint, but anytime you set a



5GYRES.COM

PLASTIC MICROBEADS, SHOWN ON THE PENNY ABOVE, ARE A MAJOR SOURCE OF POLLUTION IN THE GREAT LAKES.

Each year, hundreds of UUP members publish books and articles, and are recognized for accomplishments on campus and in their communities. *The Voice* is pleased to recognize three members in this issue.

Two SUNY Downstate Medical Center researchers are among the recent recipients of 19 awards from the National Science Foundation for research focused on neural and cognitive systems. Each award provides a research team with up to \$1 million over two to four years.

Stephen Macknik and **Susana Martinez-Conde** will work to genetically modify brain cells and stimulate them with light—a process called optogenetics.

Macknik and Martinez-Conde are professors of ophthalmology, neurology, and physiology and pharmacology.

Macknik's research seeks to understand the neural underpinnings of visual awareness and attention, and the role of magic in perception and neurological disease.

He is a member of several magicians' organizations, including the Academy of Magical Arts and the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

Martinez-Conde's research bridges perceptual, oculomotor and cognitive neuroscience.



MACKNIK



MARTINEZ-CONDE

Her work with Parkinsonian patients was recently honored with the EyeTrack Award, a global science prize given to a single cutting-edge publication in eye movement research. She has received many other distinctions, including a New York State Empire Innovator Award.

She complements her award-winning research with extensive science communication, education and public outreach.

Macknik and Martinez-Conde co-authored *Sleights of Mind*, an international bestseller recognized as one of the Top 36 Books of the Year by *The Evening Standard*.

Ramaswamy Viswanathan, an associate professor of psychiatry at SUNY Downstate Medical Center, received the American Psychiatric Association Foundation's 2017 Ronald A.

Shellow Award and the 2016 George Tarjan Award during the association's recent annual meeting in San Diego.

The Shellow award recognizes the enduring commitment and outstanding work through service to the APA; the Tarjan award, named after the APA's first international medical graduate (IMG) president, recognizes a physician who has made significant contributions to the enhancement of integration of IMGs into American psychiatry.

Viswanathan is also chair of the Psychiatry Grand Rounds Committee and director of consultation liaison psychiatry and psychosomatic medicine at Downstate.



VISWANATHAN

goal this far out, it's about the journey."

That journey included learning a wide-reaching long-distance overhand stroke, because the rapid, close-to-the-body stroke she used for competitive swimming events would have damaged her arm muscles if she had kept it up for eight or 10 hours. She paid careful attention to what she would eat in her brief resting periods during her swim (homemade smoothies loaded with fruit and peanut butter, which she would chug down from a wide-mouthed bottle while in the lake). She originally planned to swim solo, but decided it would be safer to join a group swim under the auspices of the Lake Ontario Open Water Swim Association.

Before planning Lake Erie, the longest distance Mason had ever swum was three miles.

"It's one of those things where it pops into your head and you go, 'Oh, no, that's crazy,'" she said, recalling when the dramatic idea of swimming across Lake Erie first came to her. "And then, all of a sudden, it's not such a crazy idea anymore."

It didn't seem crazy to her colleagues, who admire her discipline and devotion to the environmental issues that unions have long embraced.

"Sam Mason's commitment on freshwater microplastics pollution is matched only by her passion for making science matter to her students, to western New York communities, and in the broader sphere," said Bruce Simon, the Fredonia Chapter vice

president for academics. "Her long-distance swims are inspiring examples of the ways in which 21st century academic/professional union members can make a difference on issues that affect our health and quality of life."

LESSONS FROM AN UNFORGETTABLE YEAR

Mason started her crossing Aug. 19. She swam six miles—half the distance—when the sponsoring organization called the event and ordered all swimmers out of the water. Another swimmer had been lost in the tossing waves, and a search was underway. He was found uninjured, but the lake was deemed too dangerous for the group to continue.

Although Mason had thought this would be her one shot at a Lake Erie crossing, she had barely gotten out of the water before she starting musing over a second try in a couple of years—an idea her fiancé supports. She still thinks she could have completed her crossing this time, but she had to abide by the rules of the sponsoring group, and so she ended her swim.

As she contemplates a second attempt, she will draw on the lessons this past year taught her, and will continue telling the world about the need to reduce plastic pollution of the Great Lakes.

"This is one of those lessons: Figuring out how to be in the moment," she said. "The swimming has helped with that. I've had to do it in the pool, so I've learned how to do it in my life."

Fight for higher minimum wage continues around

BY DARRYL MCGRATH

If you want to see something get done, do it yourself.

This old adage illustrates the growing realization by many states—and now, some counties, cities and employers, as well—that if they believe workers should be paid more than the federal minimum wage, they will have to pass their own higher standards.

But, as some of those same places are learning, it's also not easy to oppose a longstanding view in the United States that a higher minimum wage might cost workers their jobs.

That belief may actually have some credence for the least skilled workers, according to an analysis by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco nearly two years ago.

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

Still, for unions, social justice advocacy groups and politicians with liberal leanings, a higher minimum wage is a morally and ethically sound goal. The federal minimum wage of \$7.25 was set

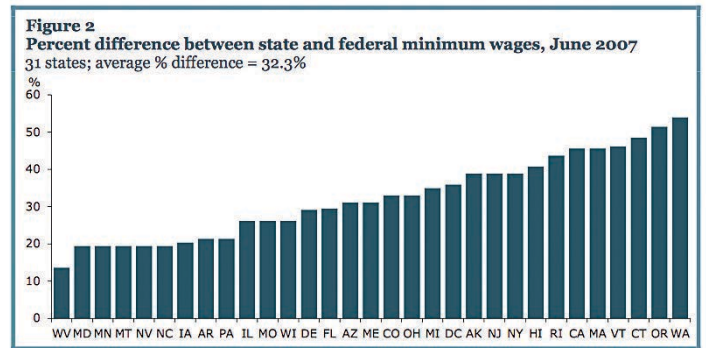
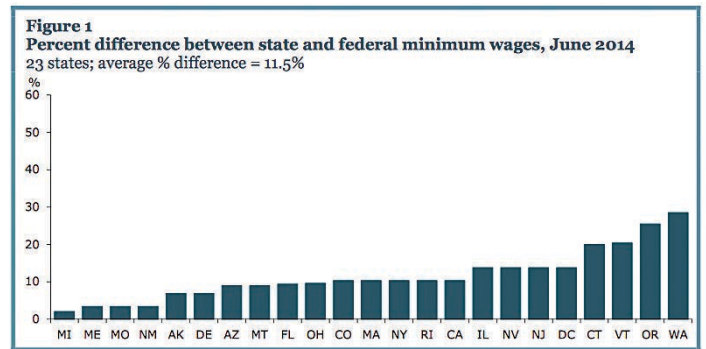
in 1969. No organization that advocates for working people could agree with the practice of paying them only slightly more for an hour of difficult, dangerous or simply exhausting work than most of us drop for a large cappuccino.

And it's also likely that most of the people who oppose a higher minimum wage would not be willing to stand on their feet for nine hours, five or six days a week, or try to live on the pay that kind of job earns.

At last count, 29 states and the District of Columbia had minimum wages higher than the federal government.

But when the difference is a matter of literally a few cents, "higher than"

becomes almost meaningless. That's why the minimum wage made headlines this summer, when a new Missouri law took effect that barred local governments from



SOURCE: FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF SAN FRANCISCO

UUP mourns death of activist, organizer

UUP has lost one of its most spirited, passionate and dedicated members.

Erik Colon, an academic advisor in Binghamton University's Educational Opportunity Program, died suddenly Sept. 3. He was 36.

"A union's strength comes from its members," said Binghamton Chapter President Sean Massey. "Erik brought to UUP the spirit and passion of a committed unionist. UUP has lost a champion."

From the moment he stepped on campus, it was clear that Colon would have a positive affect on students, faculty and staff. He was an EOP student at Binghamton, graduating in 2003 with a bachelor's degree in human development and a master's degree in social science in 2004.

He would soon become a vital part of the Binghamton campus community as an EOP counselor, as well as an advocate for union involvement as an AFT organizer for UUP and



COLON

a UUP Chapter Action Project leader. He was well respected as a person of action.

"Erik was someone who was always present, in both body and spirit, and who always engaged with the issues," Massey said. "He offered his experience and wisdom to the discussions, and his labor toward the work that needed to be done. He was someone the Binghamton Chapter could always rely on."

Colon was a member of the union's statewide Membership and Opportunity Program committees, and he would attend UUP Delegate Assemblies even though it meant finding a dialysis center nearby.

"I liked and admired Erik very much," said former Binghamton Chapter president Benita Roth. "His loss leaves a hole in our hearts."

Colon is survived by his wife Ivy, and young daughter Adrienne.

Members can support the family through a gofundme.com page at <http://bit.ly/2xBmMaQ>

— Karen L. Mattison

the country

enacting minimum wages different from the state minimum. St. Louis and Kansas City had passed laws approving a higher minimum wage; now, those cities will be prohibited from setting their minimum wage higher than the state's \$7.70 an hour. Businesses are free to pay a higher wage, and a number of mostly private, smaller employers have indicated that they intend to do so.

Read the full analysis at <http://bit.ly/1P0nXwY>

ON THE PROGRESSIVE EDGE

New York's new minimum wage law took effect at the end of 2016, and it means that most workers in New York will eventually earn \$15 an hour. UUP has long championed a living wage for workers, and included that goal in its legislative agenda last year, along with its support for the \$15 minimum wage.

UUP member Darlene Mercado, career services supervisor at the University at Buffalo's Educational Opportunity Center, invoked that law,

along with the state's new paid family leave act, when she delivered testimony on behalf of UUP in July about the gender pay gap in New York for the New York State Pay Equity Study. The study is co-chaired by Lt. Gov. Kathy Hochul and state Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon.

LINK TO GENDER PAY GAP

The minimum wage argument comes into play in any discussion of closing the gender pay gap, as numerous studies indicate that more women than men benefit from a higher minimum wage, because they form the larger portion of minimum-wage workers.

"Policies such as raising the minimum wage and paid family leave have been found to help close the remaining gap," Mercado said during her testimony. "Again, we commend the state on the steps it has taken in this direction, but it must continue to do more, particularly regarding paid family leave, which will truly help level the playing field for women of all races and ethnicities."



Did you know?

— 66 percent of 18- to 36-year-olds in the U.S. support labor unions.

— 63 percent of women in the U.S. support labor unions. That makes sense: unionized women earn 32 percent more than non-unionized women, or an extra \$212 a week, on average.

— 79 percent of union workers are more likely to have access to retirement plans than nonunion workers.

— African-American union members earn 33 percent more and Latino union members earn 42 percent more than their respective nonunion counterparts.

— Unionized workers are 58 percent more likely to have paid personal leave.

— Workers in education, training and library occupations have the highest unionization rate: 36.8 percent nationally.

Sources: Gallop Poll, 2015; U.S. Department of Labor, 2014 statistics

NEA grants available to faculty, staff

The National Education Association Foundation awards grants of up to \$5,000 exclusively to NEA members to enhance teaching and learning.

Student Achievement Grants support initiatives that improve academic achievement; Learning & Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development.



Active NEA members who are practicing K-12 public school teachers, education support profes-

sionals, and higher education faculty and staff at public colleges and universities are eligible to apply online.

Preference is currently being given to projects that incorporate STEM and/or global learning, as well as projects with leads/partners that are education support professionals.

For information about how to apply for a grant, go to <http://bit.ly/2h4RiTt>

The final application deadline for 2017 is Oct. 15.



Eastern Michigan U. union beats back brazen demands

After five months of bargaining against a 25 percent pay cut and other outrageous provisions, Eastern Michigan University Federation of Teachers/AFT members leveraged enormous community support to win a tentative contract in mid-September that they say is fair and completely free of concessions.

The agreement also provides a minimum credit-hour load for part-time lecturers, the right to be rehired if classes are available, and access to unpaid leave, allowing workers to take time for illness or pregnancy without losing their jobs. In fact, even the pay—instead of the 25 percent cut, the union won a 1.5 percent to 2 percent increase—improves job security; the cut would have been for new hires, which would have pushed out old lecturers in favor of new ones hired at lower rates.

The union represents about 100 full-time lecturers and library staff and more than 600 part-time lecturers.

SUPREME COURT

continued from page 4

toward the services that benefit them—such as negotiated salary increases, health benefits, disciplinary representation, job security and job protections.

In New York, it is illegal for unions to use dues to support candidates or other political activities. Instead, unions collect voluntary donations for political action funds, like NYSUT's VOTE-COPE non-partisan fund.

Still, *Janus* has a simple goal: to bankrupt unions by blocking their ability to collect agency fees, a major source of revenue for unions. Losing that funding would be a devastating hit for many unions.

The “powerful interests behind this case are asking the Supreme Court to further



SAUNDERS

rig the rules against working people and deny them the freedom to join together in a strong union to provide for their families, protect their communities and lift up the concerns of all working

families,” AFSCME President Lee Saunders told *The New York Times* in June.

BEING PREPARED

Kowal saw the potential for a post-*Janus* world three years ago, when he and the union's officers shifted UUP's priorities to organizing and activism. Since then, the union has increased membership among full-time SUNY employees to 95 percent, and is actively seeking out part-time employees to sign union cards.

The union has trained and mobilized member activists to sign up new members. Regional activist networks have been created to bring in new members and mobilize existing ones.

Kowal and UUP's statewide officers are holding open forums during a string of fall chapter visits to meet members and find out what's on their minds. And a group of new members participated in NYSUT's Education Autumn: Member Organizing Institute—funded by a grant from the AFT—where they were trained as activists. About a dozen UUP members

will immediately put their training into practice with door-to-door canvassing of union households.

While other unions scramble to shore up their memberships, UUP—one of the first unions in the country to make it a priority to grow membership—is stronger than ever.

“We have been reaching out to veteran and new members alike to let them know their participation is crucial to UUP's success,” said Kowal. He pointed out the need for members to remain supportive of UUP's Negotiations Team, which is negotiating a new contract with the state. “We are determined and dedicated to securing a deal that meets the needs and concerns of our membership.”

THE STORM APPROACHES

Still, union leaders across the country are readying for the worst, thanks in part to several not-so-subtle signals from the court's conservative majority regarding laws requiring nonunion members to pay fair share fees.

Justice Samuel Alito all but invited anti-union groups to challenge *Abood* in a 2012 ruling on *Knox v. Service Employees International Union Local 1000*.

The court nearly overturned *Abood* in 2014's *Harris v. Quinn*. In the decision, Alito called the *Abood* ruling questionable and said it did not apply to home health care workers who objected to paying union fees because those Illinois employees weren't “full-fledged” state employees.

And the court seemed poised to affirm

Friedrichs, 5-4, before Scalia's death.

Then there's Justice Neil Gorsuch, who was appointed by President Trump and confirmed by Congress in April. Gorsuch has already positioned himself even further to the right than Scalia, who many experts believed would have cast the deciding vote in *Friedrichs*.

During the court's final session of 2016, Gorsuch questioned the reach of a 2015 U.S. Supreme Court ruling on same-sex marriage, and favored President Trump's modified travel ban to go into effect in full.

“On the last day of the Supreme Court's term, we got a very good indication (Gorsuch) will be most like Justice Scalia, and often voting with Justices Thomas and Alito, making Justice Gorsuch one of the most, or most, conservative justices,” wrote Rick Hanson, a professor of law and political science at UC Irvine, in a June 26 piece for Election Law Blog.org.

Gorsuch was with Justice Clarence Thomas on every issue during the session, including voting to hear a case that challenged a California law barring people from carrying guns in public for self-defense.

Kowal was undaunted by Gorsuch's presence on the court, and said the union will move ahead with its plans to build and fortify the union.

“We have anticipated and have prepared for this possibility,” said Kowal. “We are well-braced for this storm, and I am certain that the UUP membership will continue to thrive no matter what the Supreme Court decides.”



Enrollment deadlines fast approaching

October and November are decision-making months for UUP members.

It's the time of year when members must make important decisions about their benefits, some of which are outlined below. However, not all enrollment deadlines have been released, so please go to the UUP website at www.uupinfo.org for updates.



Doreen M. Bango, Director,
Member Benefits & Services

FLEX SPENDING ACCOUNTS

The 2018 open enrollment period for the Dependent Care Advantage and Health Care Spending accounts runs through midnight Nov. 6.

The 2018 plan year is Jan. 1 through Dec. 31.

If you are enrolled for the 2017 plan year, you must re-enroll to continue your benefits in 2018.

Enrollment is paperless; apply online at www.flexspend.ny.gov or by calling toll free at (800) 358-7202. You will need to have your NYS EMPLID, department ID, and bargaining unit information available to complete your enrollment application. This information can be found on your most recent paystub.

Because of the tax advantages of the FSA, the Internal Revenue Service has strict guidelines for its use. One of these guidelines is commonly known as the "use it or lose it" rule. That is why it is important to plan carefully before deciding how much to contribute. With careful planning, you can minimize the risk of losing any of your contributions.

OPTION TRANSFER

Once the 2018 health insurance rates are approved, you will receive a *Choices Guide*, which includes a checklist to assist in the decision to keep or change your health care program. The option transfer period usually takes place in November or early December.

The new rates will be posted to www.cs.ny.gov; from the homepage, choose Benefits Programs, then NYSHIP Online, then New York State Active Employee (NY), and then select UUP. The new rates will be posted under

Health Benefits and Option Transfer. No action is required to keep your current health plan.

DENTAL PLANS

Open enrollment for the Delta Dental PPO and Delta Dental DHMO (Delta Care USA) runs from Nov. 1 to Dec. 15.

Enrollment forms are located online at www.uupinfo.org benefits menu.

Each year, UUP members have the chance to choose from two dental plans the PPO or the DHMO.

The PPO is a preferred provider network that allows treatment in or out of network. This program has an annual maximum of \$2,500 per eligible member and /or dependent.

The Delta Dental DHMO (Delta Care USA) works like an HMO with no claim forms. Members are subjected to co-payments. There is no annual maximum with this program.

Please refer to the *Benefits Booklet* at <http://www.uupinfo.org/benefits/pdf/benefits.pdf> for covered services.

HYATT LEGAL PLAN

The open enrollment for the Hyatt Legal Plan runs from Nov. 1 to Dec. 8.

The cost for the legal plan is \$15.75 per month for family status, and \$21.75 per month for parents plus.

For more information on the Hyatt Legal Plan, go to www.uupinfo.org. You must be a member of UUP to participate in this program.

If you have any questions regarding these or any other benefits, feel free to contact the UUP Benefit Trust Fund at (800) 887-3863.

CONTACT INFORMATION

UUP Benefit Trust Fund 800/887-3863

* Employees must be eligible for enrollment in NYS Health Insurance Prgm

Delta Dental 800/471-7093

Davis Vision (Vision Care) 800/999-5431

Laser Vision Correction
(Client Code 7512) 800/584-2866

Empire Plan (Select menu option) ..877/769-7447
Press 1.

- United HealthCare (Medical/Surgical)
- HCAP (Home Care Advocacy Prgm./Equip./Supplies)
- MultiPlan (Basic Medical Provider Discount Program)
- MPN (Chiropractic/Physical Therapy Managed Prgm.)
- Benefits Mgmt. Prgm. (MRI Pre-certification)
- Infertility Treatment (Centers of Excellence)

Press 2. Empire BlueCross and BlueShield
(Hosp./Inpatient/Nursing/Transplant Pre-certification)

Press 3. Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Press 4. Prescription Program

Press 5. NurseLine (Info/Educ./24-hour Support)

HMO Participants Call your HMO

Retirement Systems (Pensions)

NYS Employees' Retirement Sys. . . 866/805-0990

NYS Teachers' Retirement Sys . . . 800/348-7298

Optional Retirement Programs

ING 800/677-4636

TIAA-CREF 800/842-2776

Metropolitan 800/638-5433

VALIC 800/448-2542

Tax Deferred Retirement Savings

NYS Deferred Comp Plan 457(P) . . 800/422-8463

NYSUT 800/342-9810

Member Benefits 800/626-8101

AFT 800/238-1133 x8643

Workers' Compensation/SS Disability

Fine, Olin & Anderman 866/362-4887

Flex Spending Account

Dependent Care Advantage Acct . . 800/358-7202

Health Care Spending Account . . . 800/342-8017

NYS Dept. of Civil Service 800/833-4344

New York State/UUP Joint

Labor/Management Office 518/486-4666

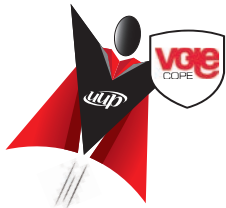
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Pensions/Annuities 800/225-5829



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Dues money is not used for political action.

Contributions to VOTE-COPE are not tax deductible.

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Address (Include Street, City, State, Zip) _____

Campus _____ Department _____

Non-SUNY Email _____

Effective no earlier than _____ (enter date), I hereby authorize regular payroll deductions from my earnings in the amount specified below as a voluntary contribution to be paid to VOTE/COPE, to be used in accordance with applicable law for the purpose of making political contributions in connection with Federal, State, and local elections. My contribution is voluntary, and I understand that it is not required as a condition of employment, and that I may revoke this authorization at any time by giving written notice to the Treasurer of United University Professions.

Contribution Per Pay Period (Circle One) Introductory/\$1 \$5 \$10 Other _____

Signature _____ Date _____