

## In the Past 4 months...

The UMass Labor Extension Program Has Provided Trainings On These Topics...

- **Advanced Stewards Training**  
PVCLC
- **Arbitration Training**  
APWU
- **Assertiveness**  
WILD in the Winter West
- **Bargaining Strategy**  
SEIU 211, MSP/MTA, SSEA
- **Building Up: Leadership Development for a Democratic Union**  
UALE Conference
- **Community Organizing**  
Student activists at UMass Dartmouth
- **Early Education and Care**  
AFSCME 24
- **Health and Safety Conference**  
S.E. unionists and undocumented workers
- **Labor Law for Union Activists**  
S.E. CLC class
- **Mobilizing to Build Power**  
MNA



**UMass Boston  
Labor Extension Program**  
CPCS Labor Resource Center  
100 Morrissey Boulevard  
Boston, MA 02125-3393

### To Contact the UMass Labor Extension Program:



■ **UMASS AMHERST LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
Labor Center, Gordon Hall  
418 N. Pleasant St.  
Amherst, MA 01002-1735  
**413-545-6166**  
Fax: 413-545-0110  
email: [dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu](mailto:dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu)

■ **UMASS DARTMOUTH LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
Dubin Labor Education Center  
285 Old Westport Road  
North Dartmouth, MA 02747  
**508-999-8781**  
Fax: 508-999-9168  
email: [kwilson@umassd.edu](mailto:kwilson@umassd.edu)

■ **UMASS BOSTON LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
CPCS Labor Resource Center  
100 Morrissey Blvd.  
Boston, MA 02125-3393  
**617-287-7352**  
Fax: 617-287-7404  
email: [tess.ewing@umb.edu](mailto:tess.ewing@umb.edu)

■ **UMASS LOWELL LABOR EXTENSION PROGRAM**  
1 University Ave.  
Lowell, MA 01854  
**978-934-3127**  
Fax: 978-934-4033  
email: [susan\\_winning@uml.edu](mailto:susan_winning@uml.edu)

- **Organizing For Change: Collective Approaches to Workplace Abuse & the Right to Organize a Union (in Spanish)**  
Workers Center of Merrimack Valley Project
- **Role of State Feds In Developing and Promoting Education and Training: The Massachusetts Experience**  
UALE Conference
- **Speaking Up! Speaking Out!**  
Women's Fund of Western Mass
- **Train the Trainers workshop for Stewards Training**  
SEIU 888
- **Unions 101**  
Statewide community action group
- **Voice@Work**  
PVCLC
- **WILD in the Winter East**
- **Your Rights as a Worker**  
Workers Center of Merrimack Valley Project



# Labor Extension Bulletin

A Publication of the University of Massachusetts Labor Extension Program

UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

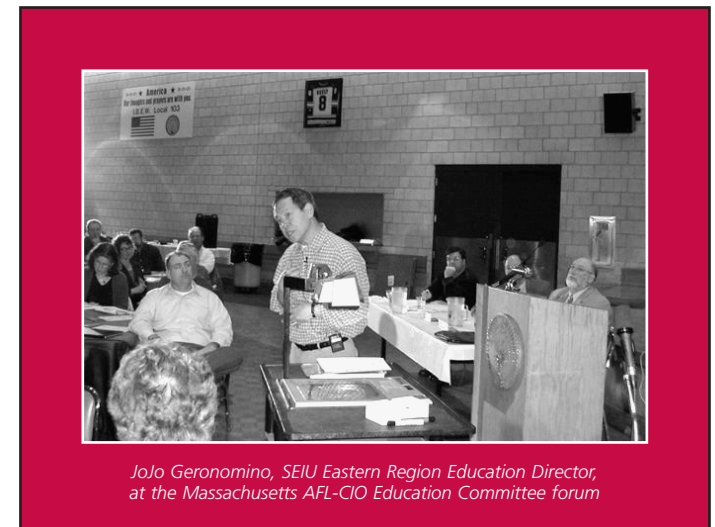
VOLUME 5 ■ NUMBER 2 ■ SPRING 2004

## Connecting the Dots: POLITICAL EDUCATION FOR THE LONG HAUL

**A**s we enter into another major election season the labor movement has moved into high gear to educate members about what's at stake in this election for working families, and to mobilize members and their families to vote. In addition to the usual efforts to inform members on where candidates stand on a variety of issues of deep concern to members and their families, there is a new initiative coming out of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) to broaden the kind of political education unions engage in. SEIU's program intends to make the connection between issues members face in the workplace, in their communities and in their families, and larger government policy decisions. It is political education for the long haul, as well as for the next election, and is based on encouraging member-to-member conversations to develop a greater political awareness of social realities and labor issues. The SEIU program, based on materials developed by United for a Fair Economy (see Resource Corner), helps members to understand the neoliberal ideology that provides the framework for public policy on both the federal level and, in Massachusetts, on the state level.

So what are the basic tenets of neoliberalism? There are five major assumptions.

- 1. The rule of the market:** eliminating barriers or restrictions on the way the market place operates and on the free flow of capital in the form of investments and trade in goods and services (like NAFTA and FTAA.)
- 2. Cutting public expenditure for social services:** (like education and health care) and reducing the safety-net for the poor, in the name of reducing government's role.
- 3. Deregulation:** reducing government regulation of everything that could restrict the free operation of the market and diminish profits, including protecting the environment, safety on the job and workers' rights to organize or be represented by a union.
- 4. Privatization:** selling state-owned enterprises, goods and services to private investors, including banks, key industries, railroads, toll highways, electricity, schools, hospitals and even fresh water.
- 5. Eliminating the concept of "the public good" or "community"** and replacing it with the notion of "individual responsibility."



JoJo Geronimo, SEIU Eastern Region Education Director, at the Massachusetts AFL-CIO Education Committee forum

This framework has the practical effect of shrinking the role of government, including labor protections and the size of the public sector, shifting the tax burden from the wealthy to working and poor people, and basically shafting unions and workers' rights, civil and human rights, immigrant rights, etc.

SEIU's education model sparked a lot of interest when it was presented by SEIU Eastern Region Education Director, JoJo Geronimo, last month at a forum sponsored by the Massachusetts AFL-CIO Education Committee. The labor leaders, educators, political directors and organizers who attended the forum recognized the opportunity we have to do in-depth political education to develop our members' understanding of the assumptions that shape the policies that affect our lives. The Mass AFL-CIO Education Committee will be sponsoring a follow-up session to train folks who want to deliver this program to union members and community groups. **For more information contact: Harneen Chernow, Mass AFL-CIO Education Director, (781) 324-8230 or [hchernow@massaflcio.org](mailto:hchernow@massaflcio.org).**

Material drawn from:  
*What is Neoliberalism? - Brief Definition for Activists*  
By Elizabeth Martinez and Arnolando Garcia, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, January 1, 1997, from CorpWatch at [www.corpwatch.org/issues/PID.jsp?articleid=376](http://www.corpwatch.org/issues/PID.jsp?articleid=376)

# Around THE STATE

## Mass. Organizes

**Second Tuesday of every month, 9:30 - 11:30am**

Cost: free

Place: IBEW Local 103

Roundtable discussions on topics of interest to union organizers.

For information, contact Tess Ewing, 617-287-7352 or Kathy Casavant, 781-324-8230

## Massachusetts AFL-CIO Gompers, Murray, Meany Educational Conference

**May 26, 27, 28, 2004**

**May 27th – one day program**

Cost: Basic registration is \$50 for all three days, extra for hotel, meals

Location: Seacrest Resort, Falmouth

This annual conference is dedicated to political education, within an analysis and the context of our current climate.

Building the capacity for organizing is another key component of the program.

For more information, or to register, call Dora at the state federation, 781-324-8230 x15

## Women's Institute for Leadership Development

**Friday and Saturday, June 25-26**

Cost: \$125 double occupancy

Place: Clark University, Worcester

Theme: "It's Time to Get WILD Again!"

For information, contact Tess Ewing, 617-287-7352, Dale Melcher, 413-545-6166, Susan Winning, 978-934-3127, or Kim Wilson, 508-999-8781.

## Summer Opportunities

**Once again, the summer months will bring some great educational opportunities for union activists and staff.**

"It's Time to Get WILD Again!" is the theme of this year's **WILD Summer Institute**, which will feature an exciting and totally new leadership curriculum focused on political leadership for this election year and beyond. The Institute will take place on June 25-26 at Clark University in Worcester. It will be shorter than usual, lasting only through Saturday. But it should be as jam-packed as usual with good information, thought-provoking workshops and fun. Classes in English and Spanish. For info contact Tess Ewing, Dale Melcher, Kim Wilson or Susan Winning. (See back page for contact information.)

### The Northeast Regional Summer Institute for Union Women

will be held this year at Penn State University in State College, PA, July 18-23. This week long school, similar to WILD, draws women unionists from all over the Northeast. For more information, contact Dale Melcher. (See back page for contact information.)

### Boston Social Forum

on July 23-25 at UMass Boston—just before the Democratic National Convention—a coalition of unions, community organizations and non-profits will host the Boston Social Forum. This regional forum is part of a movement that grew out of the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre, Brasil, in 2001. It will feature a series of workshops, cultural events, and plenary sessions across a broad range of issues including the economy, global justice, politics, healthcare, immigration and more. The goals of the event are to "encourage social movements to exchange information, network with one another, form new alliances, and push our movements forward...." For more information, visit their website at [www.bostonsocialforum.org/](http://www.bostonsocialforum.org/)

## The Resource Corner

A number of resources are available to educate members about what's at stake in this election for working families and to mobilize members and their families to vote.



**United for a Fair Economy** provides trainers and has workshops available for download on their web site. Many workshops address "shrinking" the services in the state and federal budgets through privatization, "shifting" who pays taxes from the wealthy to everyone else and thereby "shafting" working people. These include *War and the Economy: Too Many Guns, Not Enough Butter*, an interactive workshop about economic inequality; *The Massachusetts Budget Crisis: Who Hurts, Who Pays; Fair Taxes for All (on the federal tax cut)*; and *The Racial Wealth Divide*. Other workshops address Globalization, the Global Economy, and the FTAA. Contact 617-423-2148 for more information. A list of workshops offered can be found on their website at: <http://www.stw.org/econ/index.html>

### SEIU Political Leadership

For more information on the SEIU educational program featured on page one, please contact Annetta Argyres at SEIU 509 at 617-924-8509 or Tim Dean, SEIU 2020, at 617-442-4100.

## Program Notes

### ■ UMASS AMHERST

This winter the Labor Center increased its undergraduate offerings, including a course on Women and Work taught by extension staff, and hosted a reception in our new digs in Gordon Hall. In addition to working with the statewide program on the MNA leadership development curriculum, Amherst LEP offered bargaining strategy to SEIU 211, MSP/MTA and SSEA. We also conducted an arbitration training for APWU 497, assisted with advanced stewards training for the PVCLC, and presented a short workshop on early education and care to AFSCME 24. Other workshops included assertiveness training for WILD in the Winter West, Voice@Work for the PVCLC Education Conference, and Speaking Up! Speaking Out! for The Women's Fund of Western Mass annual conference. We continue to work with the Mass AFL-CIO Education Committee, the PVCLC, the HFCLC and WILD to build the capacity of the labor movement to grow and respond to challenges.

### ■ UMASS BOSTON

The UMass Boston Labor Resource Center, under its 2 interim Directors Karen Courtney and Jill Alexander, is working hard to build up our undergraduate Labor Studies program. One aspect of this effort has been to explore ways to give college credit for some Labor Extension offerings. This would give people who have attended some of our workshops, such as Corporate Research or Teacher Training, a head start in pursuing their B.A. degree in Labor Studies here at CPCS. Meanwhile, the search is on for a new permanent Director for the Center. The deadline for applications is May 19. Interviews with candidates will be conducted over the summer, and we hope to have the new Director in place at the start of the semester in September.

### ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

This Spring has been one of building relationships for the UMass Dartmouth Labor Extension Program. We have continued to work closely with the Greater S.E. Massachusetts Labor Council by coordinating the economic development committee, People First, organizing a Worker Memorial Day observance, and teaching through a four Saturday education program. In addition, we offered a Health and Safety conference with MassCOSH that brought together over 40 union activists and unorganized, undocumented workers. We continue to work with students on campus through advisor work with the Progressive Alliance and through partnership with the Unity House center for students of color. Work with the three other UMass Labor Extension Programs has helped in all of the work of UMass Dartmouth by joint creation of the Worker Rights Curriculum, curriculum development with the Massachusetts Nurses Association, and in sharing our work at the national meeting for labor educators held in Chicago last April.

### ■ UMASS LOWELL

Susan Winning spent time studying Spanish in Mexico and Guatemala preparing to do training in Spanish. We presented two successful events featuring Ellen Bravo, national director of 9 to 5, as part of Lowell Women's Week. We continue to work with the Workers Center, a project in collaboration with the Merrimack Valley Project, SEIU L 615, Painters DC 35, and Neighborhood Legal Services. We helped organize a legislative breakfast of the Merrimack Valley CLC and the Education Conference of the North Shore. We provided workshops on changes in technology and work organization to unions across the US and in Canada, including health and safety impacts. We are working with a MNA local facing video monitoring in the workplace and a Teamster local dealing with a new and highly automated warehouse operation. Charley Richardson, whose son is in the Marines, has been speaking to union audiences about the war in Iraq and its impact on working people. The H1B grant is coming to an end in June, and we will miss grant administrator Judy Coughlin and participants' coordinator Milt Taylor, as they move on to other work.

## S P O T L I G H T

### Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts

An important ally and partner to the labor movement is *Neighbor to Neighbor Massachusetts*. Their work is to build power in low-income and working class communities around economic justice issues. The organization has a staff of 12, working out of five offices across the state. The Coalition for Social Justice in S.E. Massachusetts is a sister organization. Neighbor to Neighbor does grassroots community organizing through voter registration and education, electoral campaigns, public policy advocacy, grassroots coalition building, and developing sustainable local leadership.

For the past two years, Neighbor to Neighbor has focused on the Stop the Cuts campaign, which is a coalition of community and labor groups who want to stop the deep cuts to core services and they are growing in their success with this work. The proposal of Stop the Cuts is to reverse some of the tax cutting of the 1990s and by closing corporate tax loopholes.

For more information, see their web site, <http://www.n2nma.org/>



*Neighbor to Neighbor activists Joe Garceau, Angela Estrada, Luz Ramirez and Marta Rivera.*