

In the Past 4 months...

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

- **Strategic Contract Campaign**
IBEW Local 1837
Nashua Teachers Union
- **Union-Building During the Term of the Contract**
IBEW Local 1837
- **A Strategic Approach to the Media**
Organizers Roundtable
Inter Valley Project
- **Changing the Future of Work: A Workers' Approach**
UMass Dartmouth Students
- **Public Sector/Anti-Privatization Workshop**
North Shore CLC Education Conference
- **Popular Education Techniques**
WILD
- **Changing Technology in Health Care**
Maine State Nurses
- **Talking Union Values, Leverage and the Workplace, Protection vs Solidarity**
New York State AFL-CIO/Cornell Union Leadership Institute
- **Globalization for Healthcare Workers**
SEIU 1199-NE Leadership Institute
- **Talking Union Values and Leveraging Workplace Power**
Vermont State Employees Association

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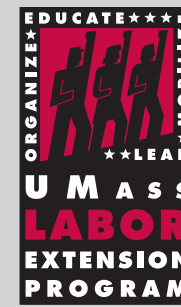
- **Popular Education Refresher**
The New England Consortium HAZWOPER Trainers
- **Workers Rights**
E-Team
YouthBuild/Nueva Esperanza
ARISE for Social Justice
Smith Vocational H.S.
Worthington St. Shelter
- **WILD Women's Solidarity Breakfasts**
Eastern & Western Massachusetts
- **Stewards Training**
USW Local1357
- **Corporate Research**
MassCOSH
- **Communication for Organizing**
UMass Dartmouth Alternative Spring Break
- **Basic Unionism**
Students Against Sweatshops, Smith College
- **Assertiveness**
MNA Franklin Medical Center
MNA Valley Regional Hospital
- **Mobilizing**
Tent State, UMass Amherst
- **Shrink-Shift-Shaft**
Tent State, UMass Amherst
- **Council Building**
Pioneer Valley AFL-CIO
- **Bargaining**
Forbes Library Employee Association

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UMASS AMHERST ■ UMASS BOSTON ■ UMASS DARTMOUTH ■ UMASS LOWELL

VOLUME 7 ■ NUMBER 2 ■ SPRING 2006

Framing the Discussion on Immigration Reform

In April, and again on May Day, millions of immigrant workers, students and children, and their allies in over 200 cities across the country chose to skip work, school and the normal daily routine and take to the streets. They rallied in favor of legalization of undocumented immigrants and an end to exploitation of all immigrant workers. Some have called this a new civil rights movement. Might this also be the beginning of a new labor movement?

These marchers are workers and their families. Other workers can either compete with them for jobs and wages and let employers pit us against each other in a race to the bottom, or we can work together to confront employers and fight to raise wages and improve working conditions. The choices we make today as organized labor will define the labor movement of tomorrow, or possibly determine whether or not there is a labor movement tomorrow.

Our challenge as activists and educators is to use labor education in the struggle to build the unity essential to a new labor movement. We need to reframe the discussion. Our problem isn't immigration. Our problem is corporate globalization, roving the world in search of high profits and cheap labor. Our problem is growing economic inequality inside the US and globally. Our problem is the assault on labor and wages and working conditions. Our problem is racism, against Blacks, Latinos, Asians and others, inside and outside the labor movement. Our problem is a corporate policy that uses immigrant workers to undercut the wages of jobs traditionally held by African-Americans and previous waves of immigrant workers. Our problem is an immigration policy that makes some human beings "illegal." Our problem is also a lack of unity among workers - among our members. In this process of reframing we need to recognize the tensions among workers, challenging the anti-immigrant sentiments of many of our members, and push our unions to take up this struggle.

We see educators using the tools of popular education to create dialogue and give workers the opportunity to unravel the tangle of causes and effects - NAFTA, war, global poverty, inequality, corporate restructuring, etc. We can create discussion spaces, in the

workplace, our unions and in the community, where immigrant and native-born workers can share their own stories in a setting of trust and safety. We can take on the thorny issues of competition for jobs and services between native born and immigrant workers, both documented and undocumented. We must pay particular attention to the experience of African-American workers, who have been hurt more than white workers by the decline in union jobs and competition with new immigrants. We can educate ourselves and our members about the various proposals calling for immigration "reform," and work together to shape our own approaches.

Imagine creating two timelines, one on immigration and one reflecting the African-American experience, as a springboard to discussion about discrimination and struggle. Consider using immigration reform as the topic for union-sponsored basic skills classes. How about a video capturing the experience of both immigrant workers and black workers as a way to start discussion? Think about the power of bringing the issue of immigration reform into our political and legislative education and mobilization.

We see this as an historical moment, a moment of opportunity, a moment that calls for the best the labor movement has to offer - solidarity, voice, and justice. It's a moment when we can choose to transform our movement and then use it to transform the reality for workers and their families.



Representative from Maya Kichee addresses the 500+ crowd at May Day rally in New Bedford.

Photo: Jose Soler

Around THE STATE

Labor Films: Global Issues and Hollywood's Treatment of Unions Mondays from 6:30 to 8:30, May 8 to June 26

Cost: Free, refreshments provided

Location: Greater Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council office, 43 Tower Dr., New Bedford

The UMass Dartmouth Labor Education Center and the Labor Council present a film series to explore labor issues affecting workers around the globe, as well as the American media's portrayal of unions. Lively discussion will follow the films and snacks are provided. For more information call the Labor Education Center, 508-999-8007.

Organizers Roundtable

2nd Tuesday of each month, 9:30 - 11:30am

Next meeting: June 13th

Cost: free

Location: IBEW Local 103

Roundtable discussion on topics of interest to union organizers.

Contact: Tess Ewing, 617-287-7352

Workers Rights Training of Trainer

Full day in June. Date TBA

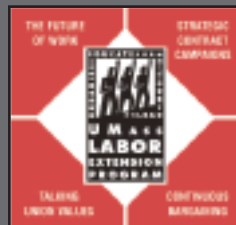
Cost: No charge, but participants must have participated in a Workers Rights workshop and be committed to conducting the workshop for their union, organization or agency.

Location: UMass Amherst, Gordon Hall, third floor conference room, 418 N. Pleasant St., Amherst.

Contact: Dale Melcher, 413-545-6166 or dmelcher@lrrc.umass.edu

SPOTLIGHT

SPOTLIGHT ON UMASS LOWELL



Is your union facing...

...job combination, de-skilling, work restructuring?

...tougher contract bargaining?

...ideological attacks with management stealing members' hearts and minds?

...outsourcing, automation, monitoring?

The Labor Extension Program at UMass Lowell offers a comprehensive training package that helps unions examine the changing workplace, the attacks on unions, and develop union-building strategies in response, including the following topics:

The Future of Work explores how work is changing including new technologies and new forms of work organization, and what that means for workers and their unions.

Talking Union Values explores how right-wing ideologies are being used to change our society and move us away from a "take care of each other" society.

Strategic Contract Campaigns helps prepare for contract bargaining, with a focus on research and analysis, mobilizing the members, uniting with allies and exercising leverage.

Continuous Bargaining takes on management changes in the workplace and work process, inserts a collective voice and makes union-building an ongoing activity.

We can customize a training program for your local. For more information, contact Susan Winning (978/934-3127) or Mike Prokosch (978/934-3239)

The Resource Corner

Would you like new ideas and education strategies to help make the union more inclusive on work family concerns? The Labor Project for Working Families has introduced "Making it Work Better: A Work Family Educational Program". This new curriculum is available free, with online registration, at <http://www.laborproject.org/>. The curriculum engages union activists and leaders to identify work/family issues, explain the importance of work/family issues to the union and discusses how to integrate these issues into all aspects of union work. Included is a facilitator's guide and handouts for a 3.5-hour training. Flexible options are built in to tailor the training for however much time is available for your group.

Since 1992, the Labor Project for Working Families has been supported by many unions and foundations and receives in kind assistance from the University of California at Berkeley, Institute of Industrial Relations. In addition to the curriculum, visit the website to explore a range of publications and links of interest on working family issues.

For more information, please visit <http://www.laborproject.org/> or call 510-643-7088.

Program Notes

■ UMASS AMHERST

Immigration reform has been a hot topic and the focus for of a course for our graduate students on Immigration, Race and Gender. As part of our Future of Work project, we brought in speakers, both academics and activists, to inform our class work. We invited other students, colleagues and community activists to join us for spirited discussions of the implications of immigration and a changing and increasingly vulnerable workforce for the future of both work and the labor movement. Our guests challenged us to think about organizing immigrant workers and building unity among workers of all races and ethnicities. We continued to bring the Workers Rights curriculum to workers unfamiliar with their rights in the workplace, including YouthBuild, a project of Nueva Esperanza, ARISE, the faculty at Smith Vocational HS, and folks at the Worthington Street Shelter. Additional workshops on Assertiveness, Bargaining, Basic Unionism and Mobilizing were offered to unions and student groups.

■ UMASS BOSTON

In addition to our extension activities, the Labor Resource Center held a series of public events this spring. Our new Labor Studies Alum's Network hosted a book release party to celebrate Prof. Jim Green's new book *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing That Divided Gilded Age America*. A talk about "The Future of Work: The Labor Movement's Role in Workforce Development," featuring Nancy Mills, Executive Director of the AFL-CIO's Working for America Institute and Enid Eckstein, Vice President, Health Systems, 1199SEIU HealthCare Workers United East drew a crowd of over 100 university, union and community activists. Finally, Labor Studies students at UMass Boston presented their original writing on Values at Work as part of the Celebration of Labor Arts at CPCS. Registration is now open for the fall semester in Labor Studies Program at UMB. Contact Wally Soper at 617-287-7426 for more information.

■ UMASS DARTMOUTH

SE Mass is a region known for our Portuguese immigrant roots, and today we welcome many newcomers from Central America and beyond. Recently, two rallies of over 500 people were held in New Bedford to recognize, honor and respect the work of immigrants. The Labor Education Center played a contributing role in these events, as we continue our worker rights education outreach. We also have offered in the Spring and Fall of 2006 the credit course, Introduction to Labor Studies, and continue to encourage student organizing and support of the labor movement. Education and organizing around health and safety continues through our strong relationship to MassCOSH. We assisted in three Worker Memorial Day observances this April. Through work on the Board of the Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, our program is helping plan a retreat in June to bring together union activists with environmentalists to explore our common interests.

■ UMASS LOWELL

As its contribution to the Future of Work project, UMass Lowell is bringing an analysis of technology changes and work restructuring to new ears. We led a jam-packed class called "Leveraging Workplace Power" for the Labor Guild of Boston and got rave reviews. We pulled together labor, university, and community activists in Lowell for three "dinner conversations" on changing workplaces and organizing strategies. And this summer we will take the Future of Work/Continuous Bargaining message to rank and file leaders in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. Closer to home, we'll be working with an AFSCME local in Lynn to develop a strategic contract campaign and fight the mayor's attempt to split the union. We are planning to expand this work to a broader public sector initiative, led by the North Shore CLC.

Summer Opportunities

The Women's Institute for Leadership Development (WILD) announces its 20th Annual Summer Institute, *Moving Forward in Unions, our Communities and the Political Arena*, June 23 - 25, Wheaton College, Norton, Mass. Join women from around the state, from unions and community and immigrants rights organizations for a weekend of education and networking. Program is fully bi-lingual in English and Spanish. Cost: \$190 for double room, meals and materials. \$20 extra for single room. Childcare and partial scholarships are available. For more information, contact the WILD office at 617-426-0520 or Labor Extension coordinators.

The Center for Popular Economics 27th Annual Summer Institute, with a special track on *Economic Alternatives*, will be held July 23 - July 29, 2006 at Amherst College, Amherst, MA This week-long intensive training in economics for activists, educators, and anyone who wants a better understanding of economics will focus on the how the economic system impacts our lives, communities and work every day. No background in economics is required. Cost for tuition and meals is \$750 and the fee for lodging in dormitory facilities at Amherst College is \$150. Scholarships are available. For more information, call CPE at 413-545-0743.

The 31st Annual Northeast Regional Summer School for Union Women, *Union Women: Change Starts Here!* will be held July 30 - August 4, 2006 at Rutgers University Labor Education Center, New Brunswick, New Jersey. This five day residential school, sponsored by the United Association for Labor Education (UALE) and the Coalition of Labor Union Women, brings together rank and file union members, staff and officers to understand current challenges and issue of the labor movement and develop skills to help them be more active union members. Cost: \$570 double room and board; \$670 single room and board. Limited childcare available. For more information, Call Dale Melcher, Susan Winning or Tess Ewing.

