

# **UE EASTERN REGION NEWSLETTER**

**March 2026 - Philadelphia PA.**

## **PREAMBLE to the UE Constitution**

We, the Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) realize that the struggle to better our working and living conditions is in vain unless we are united to protect ourselves collectively against the organized forces of the employers.

Realizing that the old craft form of trade union organization is unable to defend effectively the interests and improve the conditions of the wage earners, WE THE ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS (UE) form an organization which unites all workers on an industrial basis, and rank-and-file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed, or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions.

We pledge ourselves to labor unitedly for the principles herein set forth, to perpetuate our union and work concertedly with other labor organizations to bring about a higher standard of living of the workers.

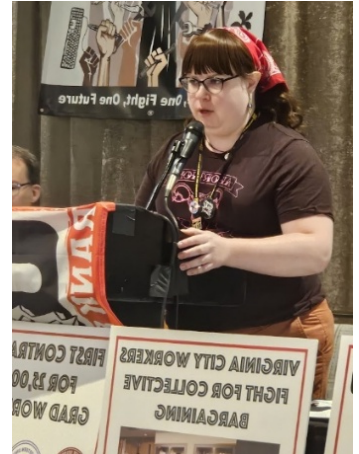
This QR Code is priceless for all members. It takes you to all 80 of our UE stewards. A UE steward is a 25-minute read on fundamental and critical topics for all union members. If you want a place to quickly research an issue you're dealing with then check here.



**THE MEMBERS RUN  
THIS UNION.**

**A New Chapter for UE: Growth and Leadership at the National Convention.** The recent UE national convention marked a significant milestone for our union, ushering in a new era of unity and progress. Over the past two years, our organization has experienced rapid growth, welcoming new unions that are now fully engaged in both the national and regional activities of UE. This expansion has brought fresh energy and perspectives to our movement, as new leaders from both large and small locals have stepped forward to contribute at the national level. These leaders have found a sense of belonging and empowerment within our community and strengthen the collective voice of our union.

**Empowering New Leaders.** Among the notable moments at the convention was the participation of Sophie Nighswander from UE Local 696, Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania, attending her first national convention. Sophie is currently serving as the interim Vice President of the Eastern region, having stepped in after a vacancy was left by long-time UE 610 President and Eastern region Vice President Antwon Gibson's departure. Sophie's contributions were substantial; she spoke frequently and passionately from both the podium and the convention floor, addressing a wide range of topics and resolutions. Her remarks reflected a deep and thoughtful understanding of the key issues facing our union, our communities and earning the respect and appreciation of all those in attendance.



UE Local 203 Vice President Gary Stuard attended his first national convention, representing City Market Co-op in Burlington, VT. Throughout the event, Gary welcomed the chance to become actively involved in the proceedings. He stood multiple times to address resolutions that were meaningful to him, not only as a union member but as someone deeply invested in the welfare of the wider human community. His statements resonated with sincerity and conviction, demonstrating a strong commitment to the union's mission and its guiding principles. Gary's participation underscored his dedication to fostering unity among workers and advancing the ideals that bind the union together.

Gary and Sophie were among several dozen Eastern region delegates whose passionate and emotionally charged statements resonated with everyone present. Their expressions of hope, pain, determination, commitment, and empathy deeply affected fellow delegates. The intensity of their words often moved participants to tears—tears of sympathy, understanding, and joy—celebrating both the victories achieved and the ongoing struggles faced by the union, the working class and the labor movement.



The Eastern region achieved a record level of representation, with an unprecedented number of delegates attending over the past three decades. Delegates consistently articulated thoughtful and impactful perspectives that reflected positively on the region. Beyond their remarks, representatives contributed valuable experiences and insights that enriched discussions. The debates covered a wide range of topics, elevating understanding and fostering appreciation among colleagues. Many delegates addressed the significant impacts experienced by coworkers, friends, and families because of the current political environment, particularly within communities of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, immigrants, and those affected by issues such as genocide, Islamophobia, ICE policies, healthcare, fascism, racism, sexism, radical Christian nationalism, and antisemitism to name a few.



### UE National Convention: Standing Against Injustice in Chicago.

During the national convention in Chicago, UE 150 delegate and local Financial Secretary Dominic Harris delivered a compelling speech at a march and rally. The group marched to the office of a prominent Trump-affiliated oligarch, demanding an immediate end to the deployment of Federal ICE troops in the city. Harris specifically addressed Valor Equity CEO Antonio Gracias, noting his close association with Elon Musk

and his support for DOGE. In his remarks, Harris condemned the kidnapping of citizens, the use of Alligator Alcatraz, the ongoing persecution of the Cuban people, and the continued operation of Guantanamo Bay. He challenged the crowd, asking whether these actions had ever benefited them or their families. The resounding answer was a clear and emphatic “NO!”

### Cultural Inspiration: The Fruit of Labor Singing Ensemble and Recognition of Leadership

The convention was enlivened by the spirited performance of



the “Fruit of Labor” singing ensemble, whose music both entertained and invigorated the delegates. The group features prominent members such as UE 150’s Nathanette Mayo and Angazza Sababu Laughinghouse, along with Leander Tate. These individuals have been deeply involved in labor activism for decades, holding key leadership roles in both “Black Workers for Justice” and UE 150 since the organizations’ formative years. Their steadfast commitment and leadership continue to be invaluable assets in the ongoing work to



organize labor efforts in the South. Angazza was also recently awarded the prestigious “Discount Foundation’s 8th Annual Legacy Award” at the 2023 Eleanor Roosevelt Human Rights Celebration. The ceremony was sponsored by Jobs with Justice. Former UE Director of Organization Bob Kingsley (on right) gave the introduction speech outlining Angazza’s many significant contributions.

**Virginia municipal workers fight for recognition and Justice.** Two workers from Virginia, Angerio Curtis of Streets and Bridges in the City of Norfolk and Tangela Randall from Social Services in the City of Portsmouth, attended the UE convention as guests. Both are municipal employees actively organizing in their neighboring cities.

Since the convention, Angerio Curtis’s journey has been marked by significant challenges. After being suspended from his position, he successfully appealed the suspension with the union’s support and had it overturned. However, he continues to fight for the suspension to be fully removed from his record and to receive back pay for the period of suspension. Despite these efforts, Angerio faced ongoing threats at work and was offered a promotion as an incentive to halt his pursuit of justice. Refusing to abandon his fight, he was ultimately fired a second time. The union remains steadfast in supporting his grievance process. Notably, there is no contract in place for these employees, and collective bargaining is currently prohibited, a central issue driving their ongoing struggle.



Tangela Randall has been at the forefront of organizing efforts within her department, leading bold campaigns that have resulted in tangible victories for her coworkers. Her dedication was evident last spring when she worked diligently to collect signatures for a petition, ultimately securing the addition of a new “Step pay plan” to the city budget—a significant win for municipal employees.

In recent developments, the fight for collective bargaining rights has gained momentum in Virginia. There are now two competing bills before the Virginia General Assembly that would allow public employees to engage in collective bargaining. While both bills require further refinement, their advancement represents a groundbreaking step forward, especially given the increased likelihood of passage and the probability of the governor’s signature.



**Craig Brown UE 150 city of Charlotte, Chief Steward (in yellow) and UE Eastern region President George Waksmunski spent about a week in Virginia signing up municipal workers to demand the cities agree to allow union recognition.**

## Sub Region 4 Training with Labor Notes in North Carolina

The Sub Region 4 training was held in collaboration with Labor Notes in North Carolina, bringing together nearly twenty dedicated members of UE 150. Participation was strong across all divisions of UE 150, demonstrating the commitment of local members to ongoing education and organizing. The training was further strengthened by the presence of the UE Eastern region President, whose support underscored the importance of the event. In total there were nearly 100 attendees from about a dozen organizations.



Throughout the day, participants engaged in two interactive workshops designed to enhance their skills and knowledge. In addition, several topics were discussed, providing opportunities for meaningful dialogue, peer learning, and the exchange of strategies relevant to union activity and member advocacy. This collaborative environment helped foster a sense of unity and collective purpose among attendees, further energizing

everyone for the work ahead. Nyssa Tucker (NC State University) and retiree Bonita Johnson (seated l to r) listened to guest speakers talk about local struggle and effective organizing campaigns that were fighting back.

**Durham, NC.** On September 23rd, UE 150 President Willie Brown addressed around 200 people at a rally highlighting Duke University's alleged hypocrisy regarding workers' rights, wages, healthcare, and treatment of immigrants. The event, a response to Duke's Durham Days, criticized the university for deflecting blame on insurance companies for rate increases and for setting poor standards for labor conditions. Brown referenced civil rights history, discussed issues like poverty wages and inadequate benefits, urged ending the "plantation mentality," and encouraged boycotting local spending to prompt change.



**Eastern Region Outreach in North Carolina** Members from the Eastern region conducted outreach visits across multiple Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) sites in North Carolina, focusing on engaging workers, distributing informational leaflets, and recruiting new members to strengthen union presence.

At Obery Hospital in Goldsboro and Cherry Hospital, the team persevered through extreme heat to ensure their message reached as many workers as possible. Despite challenging weather conditions, they handed out materials and spoke to employees about critical state budget issues, with particular emphasis on stagnant wages and significant increasing costs of healthcare. These discussions helped raise awareness and fostered important connections for ongoing advocacy.

Throughout their visits, the outreach team actively collected contact information from workers to facilitate follow-up and sustained communication. Team members took practical steps to remain hydrated and sought shade when necessary, demonstrating care for one another amidst their organizing efforts. They also spent time together reflecting on their progress, sharing experiences, and strategizing for future actions.



### UE 150 CAAMWU chapter: North Whitakers, NC.

The ongoing tour included a significant stop at one of the often-overlooked shops of UE 150—CAAMWU, the Carolina Auto, Aerospace and Machine Workers Union, near Rocky Mount, North Carolina. This chapter holds historical importance as a pre-majority union and is located near the longtime home of Saladin Muhammad, the visionary former UE International representative. Rocky Mount is recognized as the birthplace of the initial struggles that contributed to the founding of Black

Workers for Justice and UE 150.

The CAAMWU chapter, despite being a pre-majority union, has achieved substantial victories, securing several multi-million dollar settlements in disputes against their employer, Cummins Diesel. During the visit, chapter Vice President Tim Hunt shared the current hardships facing the chapter. He explained that work has slowed considerably, and there is a growing expectation that layoffs may be imminent.

Tim Hunt identified the imposition of tariffs during the Trump administration as a major factor contributing to the slowdown in business. Despite these challenges, he expressed hope for better days ahead and emphasized the need for renewed energy and commitment to organizing among the chapter's members.



**Durham NC.** The last piece of business before returning north was a stop to drop off materials for International representative Dante Strobino. During the stop I found a small business tattoo shop. The business is owned by a young lady named Leota Strobino. We talked union and class struggle. I was shown a catalog of tattoos for next to nothing. Leota was quite knowledgeable about her craft. I had never had a tattoo before, so I was nervous. She walked me through the process and calmed me down. She said it would not hurt. It didn't take long and didn't hurt a bit. Soon after I started my long journey home. One more satisfied customer. Thanks Leota.



**UE Local 613: Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children** based in Pittsburgh, PA, serves as the representative body for teachers, speech language pathologists, audiologists, and registered nurses at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children. The members of this local are known for their enthusiasm and high level of organization. Their commitment to union activity is reflected in their energetic and militant approach to advocacy. While their camaraderie is evident in group photos, they are equally formidable when negotiating with the employer.



UE Local 613 meetings are conducted with efficiency and precision, ensuring that business is handled smoothly. Members take charge of their own training initiatives, occasionally receiving support but primarily relying on their internal expertise. The union officers are recognized for their strength and leadership, and the broader membership provides unwavering support. Altogether,

the local operates in a manner that approaches perfection, consistently achieving its goals and maintaining a strong presence within the school community.

**NO KINGS** In Pittsburgh one of the largest crowds ever seen that wasn't for a championship sports team showed up for the "No Kings" rally. The energy and anger were through the roof. Several thousand Pittsburghers came out and marched in the streets. The different groups covered the spectrum from ICE to fascism to anti-corruption and everything else we are dealing with daily. Everyone can see the erosion of our constitution and constitutional rights.





**UE Local 197 TRU UE Baltimore MD. TRU – Teachers and Researchers United.** The grad workers at UE Local 197 TRU – UE had filed a grievance over “interference of union business and illegal investigation”. It started as a result of a non-member demanding access to a union meeting where the local was conducting a vote to align their finances in compliance with BDS. It’s a complicated situation. A complaint was filed with Johns Hopkins office of institutional equity (their fancy word for HR) alleging religious discrimination saying that religious beliefs were the

reason a worker was not allowed to attend the meeting, when in truth, it was their non-member status. TRU – UE filed a grievance over the institution getting in our business.

The University was being their typical adversarial selves. Refusing to stand by the principles and standards they say they espouse too. On October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the workers rallied and had a march on the boss. Well over 150 folks joined the march. The administration really took a stand. They tried to stop the rally and failed. They tried to intimidate rally participants and failed. In this picture you can see an administrator walking among the workers and a second taking photos.. They were taking pictures of workers and telling workers they could not be there. They were asking people for their student ID. TRU UE had prepared members for this and were there to tell workers not to be intimidated and they were not obligated to show ID. These are blatant violations of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRB) for surveillance and intimidation.



**AS UE 197 - TRU UE** ended their march at the Wyman Park Building. This is where the office of institutional equity is housed. We had one last set of members that spoke. Administration set up a perimeter and security as if they were a throwback to the French

revolution. You would think we were getting ready to storm the Bastille. They refused to allow TRU UE to enter the building on their own campus. The local is pursuing this case to arbitration and we are currently waiting for dates to be set.

**UE Local 667 East End Food Co-op. Pittsburgh PA.** Our members at the Co-op are very active in their local and in their community. Their employer is a member-run organization

that sometimes doesn't live up to the values they claim to. The local is regularly dealing with disciplinary, attendance and language issues. Just recently they were able to win the reinstatement of a previously terminated member. It didn't happen because the Co-op suddenly found religion. It happened because rank and file members fought the boss and demanded the member's return. The local wanted to send a special shout out to Iris Wylde, Breezy Mueller, Erin Neszpaul, Jeffrey Fisher and Ben Wilson UE International representative.



UE 667 is passionate about certain items and justifiably so. The genocide in Gaza and the United States complicity is one of those topics. The union, working together with the larger Co-op member-owner community, has created a coalition called Co-ops Against Genocide, campaigning for an ethical and resistant food infrastructure at the co-op by removing Israeli-sourced products from the shelves.

Members of UE Local 667 began collecting signatures demanding a referendum vote on the question of whether the store should carry Israeli sourced products. Months of petitioning took place. The local was relentless and never stopped collecting signatures. They faced harassment, threats, intimidation and their character called into questioned simply for calling for an end to genocide. Finally, the day came, the signatures were in hand and a meeting was set.



Current UE 667 President Fritz Geist formally delivered over 500 signatures at the Co-op's annual Meeting in November 2025. Fritz also spoke as a member owner of the Co-op. The store manager looked like he just swallowed a rat. The procedure going forward was for a special session to occur where Co-op members actually got to vote to remove the Israeli product from their shelves. After some review, the elected leadership of the Co-op held a follow up meeting. They put undemocratic restrictions in place to limit discussion and force feed their opposition. The public meeting was a sham and a disaster.

The union in coalition with Co-op members put forward their 5 allotted speakers who made compelling, passionate and intellectually honest arguments. They were met with accusations of antisemitism and a suggestion that the workers needed re-education. WTF does that mean? A lot of Co-op members that signed the petition showed up and left disgusted with their organization because they were denied a chance to speak. Further they were insulted by the conduct of their elected leadership and the opposition. The Co-op members supporting the petition made up a significant part of the room and felt their elected leadership belittled and disrespected them.

As of now a formal “ADVISORY REFERENDUM VOTE” is being scheduled but it is a sham because the board still gets the final say. The logistics of this sham vote are still to be determined. Either way UE local 667 and their Co-op partners plan to win that vote.



### UE Local 123 Staunton Virginia

**Daiken International.** UE Local 123 is currently navigating considerable challenges, largely due to its location in a “right to work for less” state. The local has seen a decline in membership, primarily because of long-time members retiring and a surge of new hires entering the workforce. In response to these trends, the local took decisive action, launching a robust membership drive that lasted several weeks and, in some cases, months. The effort proved effective: membership increased by 10%, with new members continuing to join each day.

To support these efforts, the UE Eastern Region President visited the site twice within a short period, lending assistance to the card drive campaign. During these visits, tours of the plant were conducted on both shifts, allowing for meaningful conversations with many workers. These interactions highlighted the deep passion that members have for their union, as well as their determination to rebuild the membership base. Included in the photos are local officers and members from both the first and second shifts. The local is now preparing for upcoming negotiations and is committed to securing a strong contract. Additionally, plans are underway to schedule a stewards training to equip and retool union stewards for the work ahead.

**UE General Executive Board (GEB)** met in Pittsburgh PA. on January 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>. It was the first meeting of the GEB with new officers General President Scott Slawson and Director of Organization Kim Lawson in place. **Pictured here are the UE Eastern region (ER) GEB members** (l to r) Dean Pacileo UE local 243 Assa Abloy, Sophie Nighswander UE local 696, Planned Parenthood of Western Pennsylvania, ER Vice President, Mike Giles UE local 506, Wabtec ER Secretary Treasurer, Margaret Dabrowski UE local 222 sub local 25 New Britain CT - 911 dispatchers, Bud Decker UE local 329, Kennedy valve, Elmira NY, Tony Hall UE local 690, Kenson plastics, Lauren Chua UE local 256, M.I.T. George Waksmunski UE local 150, UE ER President.





## **A Rally for RALLE: Building Power at Johns Hopkins Hospital**

Workers at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore MD. are coming together to organize a new bargaining unit comprised of nearly 3,000 full-time employees. This group, known as RALLE—Research and Lab Labor Empowered—is actively working toward union representation to strengthen their collective voice in the workplace.

On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, RALLE launched their campaign with an energetic rally, marking the

official start of efforts to secure a supermajority of union card signers among the workforce. The campaign has seen encouraging momentum, and organizers are optimistic. Success in this election would mark the largest full-time worker election victory for UE in recent memory, representing a significant and positive shift for the future of the union.

The campaign is receiving enthusiastic support from UE Local 197 TRU UE. During the rally, UE Eastern region President George Waksmunski delivered a message of solidarity and encouragement, also sharing words of support from UE Local 256 at M.I.T. Following this, the UE Eastern Region Executive Board sent a further message of solidarity to RALLE, reaffirming the union’s commitment to supporting workers in their organizing efforts. The rallying call is clear: WHO ARE WE? – UE!

## **UE Local 684 – The Electric Materials Company (TEMCO),**

**Northeast PA.** UE Local 684 is currently experiencing a turbulent period characterized by both positive developments and significant challenges. On the positive side, the company has initiated new hiring, resulting in growth for the bargaining unit as more workers join the ranks. However, this



growth is being overshadowed by ongoing instability within management. Upper-level managers are frequently hired and fired, leading to a situation where those in charge lack sufficient experience and knowledge about the company’s operations. This management turnover has created an environment of uncertainty and confusion.

Compounding these issues, workers are also facing terminations, and corporate leadership has failed to conduct a proper audit necessary for distributing profit-sharing payments. As a result,

many members are growing increasingly frustrated with the lack of progress and transparency. If management does not resolve the profit-sharing payments soon, morale among the workforce is likely to deteriorate further.

In response to these challenges, the Eastern Region is collaborating closely with local leadership to develop strategies for aggressive action. The region has requested research about sister shops to inform potential campaigns, and there is consideration of targeting specific entities to send a strong message to corporate management that improvements must be made.



**UE Local 329 – Kennedy Valve, Elmira NY.** The regular membership meeting for UE Local 329 at Kennedy Valve in Elmira, NY, was filled with single or soon to be single members who thought they would go to a union meeting rather than stay with their significant others on Valentines Day.

The meeting followed standard union procedures, beginning with the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the reading of the minutes, a review of grievances, discussion of picnic planning, and addressing new business.

Among the new business, there was discussion of an anonymous OSHA complaint that had been filed regarding dust in the air. The company is reportedly working on solutions to address this concern. Another topic of concern was a poorly conceived letter from management, which was seen as potentially creating a hostile work environment. The letter encouraged workers to confront each other if they felt someone was taking advantage of or exploiting a benefit.

Despite these challenges, the meeting clearly demonstrated the strong sense of family and camaraderie among the members—a closeness that is not always found in other workplaces. The gathering was also marked by the presence of retired UE Director of Organization Gene Elk, whose expertise in analyzing employer communications was both evident and inspiring to those in attendance. Local Vice President Alonzo Roberson took the opportunity to sternly remind members to be “punctual” in their attendance of union meetings. (An inside joke)

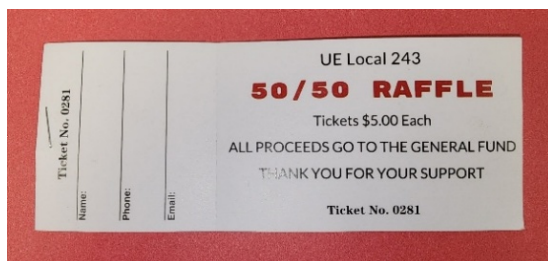
**UE Local 275 – Viking Kitchens, New Britain CT** Business at Viking Kitchens remains robust, evidenced by the recent hiring of four new workers—a notable increase of about 15% to the workforce. On the day of the visit, the employees were out on their delivery runs. Nevertheless, a meeting was held with three senior members of UE Local 275 and one newly hired worker. The new hire was introduced to union principles and received the “Them and US Unionism” booklet. He expressed enthusiasm for his first union job and shared that he was

enjoying the work environment. Senior members appeared generally satisfied but raised questions regarding their health care coverage. Rising costs have been a source of concern and discomfort, prompting members to consider addressing these issues during their next round of negotiations. Pictured left to right: Jose Santiago, Khale, and Ruben Santana.



**UE Local 243 – Assa Abloy, New Haven CT.** Assa Abloy, known historically as Sargent Lock, has a long-standing presence in New Haven dating back to 1864, with origins as far back as 1810. Uniquely, it is the only location in the area with its own dedicated interstate exit on I-95. Visiting UE Local 243 at Assa Abloy offers a glimpse into a workplace environment that is rarely seen—one marked by a remarkable spirit of mutual respect between management, labor, and the union. This respectful dynamic is reciprocated by all parties.

While occasional issues do arise, they are resolved constructively and collaboratively. When the Eastern Region President visits the facility, both the Plant Manager and union officers are quick to greet visitors warmly at the door. There is an open atmosphere, allowing union representatives and officers to freely walk the premises, accompanied or unaccompanied, without haste. The plant itself is thriving, with new work opportunities, fresh investments, ongoing innovation, and a strong competitive edge. Assa Abloy has invested millions in state-of-the-art technology, effectively keeping competitors at bay. According to Plant Manager Jeff Granath, these investments have positioned the company to potentially secure lucrative government contracts, putting the plant in an enviable situation.



In the restaurant-style lunchroom, UE members are approachable and friendly, often coming from all areas of the facility to greet their Eastern region President. Adjacent to the lunchroom is a spacious, comfortable area with floor-to-ceiling windows, offering workers bright natural light, and a relaxing retreat from the shop floor to enjoy their meals. The local union has also established a fundraising committee, which has recently

launched a 50/50 raffle. Tickets are priced at \$5, and it is anticipated that sales will reach at least \$1,000, with the proceeds split between winners and the local. Raffle drawings are held onsite during shift changes so all members can witness the event, ensuring transparency and engagement.

## UE Local 222 – Sub-local 88, Paraprofessionals Branford CT.

At their recent meeting, Branford paraprofessionals gathered to discuss the newly initiated negotiations. Members acknowledged the significant challenges faced by public employees in Connecticut, noting that complex state laws demand both resourcefulness and determination from workers. The regional message delivered at the meeting aimed to inspire action, emphasizing that the frustration felt by many members is warranted and understandable.

While encouraging member activism and motivation, leadership highlighted the importance of adhering to the “ground rules” established by the State. These rules place restrictions on fundamental rights such as free speech, assembly, and press during negotiations. The Eastern Region is actively sharing these ground rules with the National union to review their legality and to explore potential strategies to turn these limitations to the members’ advantage.

The meeting was conducted effectively by President Pam Van Winkle and the local officers, who began with a warm welcome to all attendees. Members received informative handouts and research materials, which provided valuable context by comparing Branford paraprofessionals to other bargaining units within the district. Notably, attendance at the meeting was double what was depicted in the accompanying photo, reflecting strong engagement and interest among the membership.

**UE local 222, sub local 88, Branford Paraprofessional members.** Seated left to right in the meeting were: Secretary Matt Perone; UE International Representative Annie MacDonald; President Pam Van Winkle; Member-at-Large Jenn O’Neil; and, standing behind her, Vice President Dana Parena.



## UE Local 248 – Old Rochester Regional, Mattapoissett MA.

A recent lunch gathering brought together a group of custodial staff members, including a couple new hires. The meeting served as an introduction to the principles and values of UE, with hopes that these newcomers will soon become union members. The atmosphere was noticeably positive, marked by an eagerness to address workplace challenges and a sense of camaraderie among the team.

As the conversation continued, participants became increasingly comfortable and engaged, demonstrating genuine care for their union and its importance in their work lives. A central concern raised was an ongoing vacancy, unfilled for several months. The employer has responded by hiring temporary workers to cover the duties, rather than filling the

position with a full-time union member. The group discussed the possibility of filing a grievance and collaborating with their International representative Sherry Bryant to ensure the vacant position is filled appropriately, with union members.. Throughout the meeting, the UE Local 248 charter was prominently displayed (also in photo) in the lunchroom, serving as a symbol of collective solidarity and union pride.

**UE Local 261 – GOLD UE, Dartmouth, Hanover NH.** Members of the C.A.T. (Collective Action Team; core organizers from across departments) gathered for an intellectually stimulating discussion focused on strike preparations as they look ahead to upcoming bargaining. Having secured their first contract following an extended strike, the group reflected on the lessons learned and expressed a commitment to ensuring that members are better prepared to take ownership of what may be an aggressive struggle. Organizers emphasized the importance of fostering a "Stronger together" mentality among members. They discussed not only what this phrase means but also how to encourage broad participation and commitment within the union.



The group recognized the need to be transparent with members about what it takes to win a strike. They agreed it is vital to educate members on how and why the union might transition from collective bargaining to striking. Additionally, they acknowledged that victories may not occur on expected timelines, and patience is required to wait for Dartmouth to yield,

Leadership stressed the importance of facilitating thought-provoking discussions rather than dictating priorities to members. They aim to create spaces where members can honestly express what matters most to them. Initial conversations about the union are framed as introductions, leading to more in-depth discussions about collective power, aggressive struggle, militancy, escalation of tactics, and ultimately, the exercise of the union's ultimate weapon. The session concluded with a reaffirmation of their identity: **WHO ARE WE? GOLD UE!**

**UE Local 255 Hunger Mountain Co-op, Montpelier VT.** The local union is making significant strides to build activism and increase participation. Efforts have been focused on improving communications, preparing meetings more effectively, providing snacks, supporting solidarity with external organizations, and generally invigorating union activity. These initiatives have resulted in a notable increase in meeting attendance—from just a few members previously to an average of over a dozen, with peak attendance reaching twenty members regularly.

**“Hire Genesis” Campaign.** A major issue facing the membership is the ongoing campaign to secure a promotion for Genesis Van Dyke. Genesis has worked in the kitchen for seven years,

mastering every role and displaying a thorough understanding of the deli's operations. When a Production Cook position was posted in October, Genesis was the most senior bidder and well qualified for the job. According to the union contract, she should have been awarded the position at the close of the bidding period. However, management delayed the process, citing irrelevant reasons, and ultimately awarded the position to a new hire with only four days of service—an action seen as unjust and insulting to the union. In response, the union organized a petition, garnering signatures from 84 workers in support of Genesis. Genesis designed a button featuring a Ginkgo leaf—symbolizing longevity—which staff and customers are proudly wearing throughout the store. The campaign continues to gather momentum, with both employees and customers advocating for Genesis to be rightfully awarded the job.



**UE Local 203 City Market Food Co-op, Burlington VT.** The Northeast road trip concluded at City Market Food Co-op, providing a powerful reminder of the significance of union work. During the visit, two new hires were met on the shop floor, both exemplifying the energy and optimism that new members bring to the union. Emily Stoneking, (pictured) a recent hire who was just finishing her probationary period, expressed her enthusiasm about officially joining the union. While stocking shelves, she shared that she is a history major with a strong interest in labor history. She was provided with a rank-and-file democracy booklet and was promised that a “Them and Us” book would be mailed to her. Both educational resources were intended not only for her personal growth but also to be shared with her coworkers. Another new hire, Michelle Finnelly, was approached at the checkout line, where she was proudly wearing a UE 203 T-shirt. Michelle explained that, although she had lived in the area her entire life, this was her first experience working in a union shop. Her excitement stemmed from her family background—her mother was a teacher and her father served as a lobbyist for the AFL-CIO. Michelle described herself as a dedicated worker and recounted her experience at her previous job, where a permissive attitude toward racist comments led her to speak out. She believed that her advocacy cost her that job, in the absence of union protection. Now, at UE Local 203, Michelle expressed deep appreciation for having a union steward to support her and provide a sense of security. At the main store, two employees, Josh and Dell, welcomed the opportunity to meet, discuss regional updates, and receive union democracy booklets. Their positive response reflected the ongoing commitment among the workforce to union education and engagement.



**THE MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION!**

