

CLUWnews

Sept/Oct 2002, Volume 28, No. 5

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Empowering Women Through the Labor Movement

Women Share Their Stories and Help Young Workers "Design Their Own Future"

Philadelphia

From working women, to elected leaders, to champions of women's rights, CLUW members and special guests shared their stories at the Young Women Workers' Conference and NEB held here in September. Organized by the Media/Communications Committee and the Young Women Workers Task Force, young women learned important lessons from the histories of some of those who have reached new heights with the help of union women.

"We all know that unions empower workers, but we need to do a better job of showing young people how

unions empower women," said Kelsa Smith, co-chair of the CLUW Media and Communications Committee.

"We are not the women's auxiliary," explained CLUW President Gloria Johnson who recalled that line from a speech delivered at CLUW's founding Convention in 1974. Far from the women's auxiliary today, females now comprise over 42 percent of the labor movement.

"The issues important to women today are issues that affect the workplace, our families, our health, the economy and the nation," Johnson said. "Young women are our future."

continued on page 3



Pennsylvania State Legislator Babette Josephs gives a special "issue hour" talk at the NEB. Josephs (left next to CLUW President Gloria Johnson) is the ranking Democrat in the Pennsylvania House, having served her Philadelphia district since 1984.



CLUW women held a protest in support of Wal-Mart workers in coordination with the National Organization for Women, while at the National Executive Board Meeting on Sept. 28. CLUW continues to support UFCW's "People's Campaign: Justice @ Wal-Mart." This campaign is intended to make Wal-Mart respect the values and respond to the needs of their workers. CLUW members also joined the campaign's National Day of Action on November 21. For more information, go to www.walmartdayofaction.com

Don't Forget

November

American Indian Heritage/Alaskan Native Month

November 21, 2002

Justice@Wal-Mart Campaign (see photo this page for more information)

December 1st

World AIDS Day for more information: www.unaids.org

Save the Date

National Executive Board Meeting

March 13-16, 2003
Crowne Plaza
Phoenix, Arizona

National Executive Board Meeting

June 5-8, 2003
Washington, DC
details will be forthcoming

12th Biennial Convention

October 9-12, 2003
The Westin
Seattle, Washington

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CLUW Point

PUT WORKING FAMILIES FIRST

With the November elections squarely behind us, it's time for all women to send a clear message to both our new and old leaders in Washington, "no more business as usual."

We've witnessed a year like none other when Americans lost faith in companies and the Wall Street traders who helped direct billions of investment dollars into companies with little net worth and low earnings. We've seen modern-day robber barons inflate earnings and hide bad business practices that stole the dignity and retirement security from tens of thousands of workers

The AFL-CIO's corporate accountability agenda demands that politicians put workers first in corporate reform, hold CEOs accountable, put integrity back into corporations and the capital markets and end corporate corruption of politics.

But that is just for starters. The 107th Congress has been called the "do-little" Congress because it failed to accomplish even modest goals that would make health care more affordable and accessible for millions of Americans. Congress failed to provide seniors with a Medicare drug benefit and patients with a managed care bill of rights. When it comes to preserving Social Security for future generations, the 108th Congress is going to have to make some tough decisions so that we can ensure that this vital retirement income is there for our children and grandchildren.

Another big health issue is safety. Each year more than 1.8 million workers are injured and crippled by on the job hazards. But instead of protecting workers, the Bush administration joined ranks with the most extreme elements of the business community, killing the OSHA ergonomics standard. Since that time, the administration has done nothing to protect workers from ergonomic hazards. With a worker being injured on the job every 18 seconds, we must fill the void left by bad political ideology.

Another important need to protect is public education. CLUW remains committed to public education because working families have a stake in public schools. But today, thousands of kids attend school in overcrowded classrooms in substandard buildings. Working families and their unions must continue to campaign to help local school districts build, modernize and repair public schools to reduce class sizes, enhance learning and wire classrooms for 21st century technology.

Our wages and earnings continue to trouble many working families. Pay equity remains a huge issue for women whose earnings still lag behind, as does the need to raise the minimum wage and stop sweatshops that have led to the loss of our jobs. In October, three more clothing manufacturers shut down their U.S. production. Wrangler, Lee and Hathaway, all closed their American operations in favor of low-wage, no benefit workers abroad, leaving thousands of Americans without jobs and communities without the lifeblood that supports them.

The mid-term elections traditionally serve as a checkpoint in the direction of the nation. Regardless of who serves in the 108th Congress, it is time to change our course. CLUW members will help put our issues on the legislative agenda. No more excuses and finger pointing in Congress. We will make sure those we elect are responsive to the needs of working women and families.

Empowering Women, cont'd

CLUW has been aggressively seeking ways to attract younger members to help empower them around important issues to younger and older workers alike. With more women working than ever before, CLUW wants to develop young leaders to continue women's extraordinary progress.



Above: Candi Kaplan (AFSCME, bottom), Kelsa Smith (CWA, right), and Royetta Sanford (IBEW) at the Young Women Workers Conference.



Above: Catherine Browder (UAW) conducts a workshop on political action at the NEB. Browder also received a "Success Story" Award at the NEB.

Below: CLUW in its fight for global justice, welcomes special international guests. Rachna Choudhry, AFL-CIO Department of Civil, Human and Women's Rights, introduces Cristina Alves Campelo (Brazil) and Nyameka Mafani (South Africa), both who have overcome extraordinary odds to organize unions in their workplaces.



Choudhry



Mafani



Campelo



Above: Young Women Workers Task Force Co-chair Toni McBroom (IAM) helped organize an afternoon of workshop issue stations that engaged participants around some critical issues for women. CLUW HIV/AIDS Project Director Karen McMillan (left) and Carol Rogers (AFSCME), Physician Assistant, Philadelphia Department of Health, discuss HIV/AIDS, what every woman needs to know.

Thank You

To become a contributing (\$50) supporting (\$75) or sustaining member (\$150) of CLUW, please make checks payable to CLUW Treasurer Susan Phillips at the National CLUW Office. Your generous contributions will help empower women through the labor movement.

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New State Law Mandates Health Services for Women

Did You Know?

Women aged 15-44 spend 68% more in out-of-pocket expenses for their health care than men do, largely to cover the costs of birth control and related reproductive health needs.

Although most insurance companies cover prescriptions, many exclude coverage for birth control—a prescription needed exclusively by women. Coverage for contraceptives means an end to a discriminatory health practice.

In a major victory for working women and families, CLUW helped secure the passage of the New York Women's Health and Wellness law. The legislation, taking effect on January 1, 2003, will make basic health services a right for all New York State women. CLUW President Gloria Johnson said "This is a precedent-setting victory for the nation as New York sets an

example to which all states should aspire."

While other states require insurance companies to provide coverage for contraception or mammograms, none has legislation like New York's that covers such a wide range of women's health needs in one law.

The new legislation:

- Prohibits insurers from limiting a woman's right to access primary and preventive obstetric and gynecological care without going through a gatekeeper;
- Requires insurers to cover annual mammograms for women beginning at age 40. (Previous law required annual mammogram coverage beginning at 50.);
- Requires that all medical insurance coverage include coverage for osteoporosis (declining bone density) detection, prevention and treatment;
- Establishes a statewide breast cancer detection and education program known as the Healthy Women Partnership Program.



(left to right) Jean Hervey (UNITE!) CLUW Recording Secretary, Janet Ryder (AFT), Linda Rhym (AFSCME), Kathy Black (AFSCME) Phila. Chapter President, Debbie Bell (AFT) with the National UNITE! Board protesting sweatshops in Philadelphia.

Johnson pointed out that "New York women who belong to unions have an advantage over their unrepresented counterparts because unions make sure that their members' insurance plans cover the mandated services," she said.

Join the Campaign for Contraceptive Equity

- Review your health plan. Are contraceptives covered?
- If not, bring inadequate coverage to your employer's attention and remember:
- Insurers can voluntarily change their prescription plans to include contraceptives.
- Legislators can pass laws preventing insurers from excluding coverage for birth control.

For more information, contact Carolyn Jacobson, Director of the CLUW Campaign for Contraceptive Equity.

Global Justice for Garment Workers Campaign

Stopping Gap Sweatshops

In addition to exposing serious mistreatment of U.S. Workers at Wal Mart, CLUW has joined UNITE's national campaign to stop Gap sweatshops and the exploitation of workers overseas.

Fact: Gap sales totaled close to \$14 billion last year. Yet workers in El Salvador were paid 64 cents for each pair of Gap khakis that sell for \$39.00

Fact: Many Gap workers in Guatemala, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic are paid so little that they live in shacks with no running water or electricity.

Fact: Gap says it respects workers' rights in its supplier factories. Yet in Latin America and Africa, Gap workers who have stood up for their rights have been harassed, fired and attacked.

Take Action: Send a message to the Gap! Get involved by contacting the Global Justice for Garment Workers Campaign at www.behindthelabel.org

In Memoriam—Patsy Mink and Paul Wellstone

Patsy Mink

U.S. Congresswoman Patsy Mink was a friend of the poor. At a time when politicians insisted that welfare recipients "go to work," Patsy Mink helped women meet this challenge because she knew everyone did not have the same ability. Mink worked tirelessly to promote policies that truly addressed the realities of poverty and last year won the support needed in the House of Representatives to pass legislation to provide additional education and skills training that supports true self-sufficiency.

Patsy Mink was a friend of CLUW's and was the featured conference speaker at CLUW's June NEB Meeting, "Mobilizing and Organizing for 2002."

According to the National Organization of Women, the world lost one of its greatest citizens in September with the death of Patsy Mink. Mink was a leader in shepherding the passage of Title IX in 1972 to promote educational equity.

According to NOW President Kim Gandy, "Every woman today who is enjoying the fruits of her education and job opportunities, and every girl



NOW President Kim Gandy, a special speaker at CLUW's Young Women Workers' Conference, stressed the importance of women organizing around common issues.

who has a chance to play sports in school, owes a nod to Mink who challenged old stereotypes about a 'women's place' and helped engineer the steady progress for women over the last four decades."

Like CLUW, Mink understood the value of education and helped make it more accessible for those who needed to develop, foster and maintain skills for the workplace and the future.

Tragedy in the Senate

Working women and men lost a true champion with the death of Senator Paul Wellstone. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in honoring the great Senator from Minnesota said, "Senator Paul Wellstone stood up for the little guy, but he never had small thoughts. He was tireless and unapologetic for championing the rights of working men and women - even when he stood alone. He was an outspoken advocate of legislation to give workers a stronger voice on the job, despite the current legislative odds that favor corporate special interests. Paul Wellstone refused to shrink his vision or abandon his principles, and our nation's workers are the better for it. America's working men and women had no better friend."

At the time the CLUW News went to press, hundreds of union members have been sharing their sympathy with the Wellstone family.



Philadelphia

CLUW showed young women the meaning of union action when it demonstrated against unfair labor practices at the nation's largest retailer Wal Mart stores. While at the NEB, hundreds of union women and supporters marched in front of a downtown-area store chanting their support for fair pay and the right to organize. In addition to educating the public about the need for Wal Mart to treat its workers with respect and dignity, CLUW's support of UNITE!'s Stop Sweatshops Campaign is alerting people about the Gap's use of sweatshops and child labor across the globe (see box, p. 4)

Feeling good about standing up for Wal Mart workers are scores of CLUW women riding to and demonstrating outside a Philadelphia area Wal Mart store.



CLUW Welcomes It's Newest Chapter

Genesee County Michigan was chartered as CLUW's newest chapter at the Philadelphia NEB meeting. Joining a network of local CLUW chapters from throughout the Midwest, working women will have a stronger voice in Flint area workplaces while keeping them informed on important issues in Lansing, Congress and the courts. Accepting the chapter charter are Pat Manzo (left) and Jeri Cooper (UAW).

California

The California Labor Federation, Labor Project for Working Families and other members of the Share the Care coalition which included CLUW members, union members, academics, business leaders and other advocates deserve congratulations on obtaining passage of the most comprehensive paid family leave legislation in the country. State Senator Sheila Kuehl sponsored the legislation, signed by Governor Gray Davis that goes into effect in 2004. The new law provides up to 6 weeks per year to care for a newborn, newly adopted or foster care placed child or a seriously ill parent, spouse, domestic partner or child. This benefit would be paid solely out of employees' contributions (about \$27 per year will be paid into

the State Disability Insurance Fund) and will compensate the employee on leave at 55% of salary not to exceed \$728 per week. The law requires a 1 week waiting period and may require that 2 weeks of earned vacation leave be used prior to accessing the fund.

SACRAMENTO

Capital Chapter CLUW has been looking for ways to grow and was visible at several events this summer and fall. The Chapter staffed tables at the Women's Peace Event, an annual memorial to the atomic bomb dropping; Cal Expo—the State Fair; and the annual "Women Take Back the Night Rally" at the State Capitol, an event protesting violence against women, which culminated in a march through Sacramento's downtown area.

Minnesota

State VP Janet E Nelson became National Vice President (AFSCME) in September. Bev Hall (UAN) is the new Minnesota State VP.

Chicago

Chicago is rich in labor heritage and working women have long been part of its struggles and triumphs. To help honor this legacy, the Chicago CLUW Chapter was a cosponsor of "Women of Heart and Steel," the story of three union women. As part of the Working Women's History Project and the Chicago Labor and Arts Festival, the show was a musical, multi-media performance that spotlighted the stories of Alice Melickian Puerala, president of Local 65 of the United Steelworkers; Sylvia Green Woods, successful labor organizer of laundry workers and UAW; and Florence Criley, a union activist who moved from Ohio to Chicago and was a founding member of CLUW. It was written by Joan McGann Morris and Lisa Layer and was inspired by the reference book "Women Building Chicago, 1790-1990: A Biographical Dictionary, (Indiana University Press, 2001).



Mary Bonnett plays the role of Florence Criley in "Women of Heart and Steel."



Left: CLUW has been empowering women politically since 1974. Pictured here are Illinois CLUW Vice President Delores Wasmund (AFSCME) and Lisa Madigan, Illinois Attorney General candidate.



Susan Holleran (AFSCME) and fellow protesters at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center. Holleran was arrested for standing up for a worker who was fired for her union organizing.



Washington, DC

Women's Equality Day—DC CLUW led a rally against Trade Center Management Associates at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center. The actions protested TCMA's firing of Dawn Caby for her active role in helping her co-workers organize into HERE Local 25 to improve their working conditions.

On August 26, a crowd of about 20 filled TCMA's office demanding Dawn's reinstatement. Susan Holleran (AFSCME) DC State Vice President, Julie McCall from the Labor Heritage Foundation, Deborah Davis from Union Privilege, and HERE Local 25 Business Agent Jennifer Vasquez were handcuffed and jailed when they refused to obey security's orders to leave the premises. They were released late in the afternoon.

"Every day, workers are fired or intimidated when they try to form a union," said Holleran. "We were proud to stand up to TCMA and demand fairness—and to show Dawn that her union sisters are with her."

Detroit

Metro Detroit CLUW was saddened by the passing of a long-time CLUW member and Detroit City Councilwoman Brenda M. Scott. Scott was a member of the Detroit City Council since 1993.

The chapter also held its membership meeting in October and received updated information from National CLUW HIV/AIDS Project Director Karen McMillan on how HIV/AIDS relates to women; Assistant Director of UAW's National CAP Department Catherine Browder on getting out the vote; UAW International Representative Rose Quintana on domestic violence; and Area Executive Director of the American Cancer Society Donna Clarke on breast cancer prevention, early detection and treatment.

Coalition of Labor Union Women

Membership Application

I want to help empower women through the labor movement by becoming a member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Enclosed are my CLUW dues for one year.

\$30 \$15 (retiree)

I am a member of a bona fide collective bargaining organization.

Signature _____

Date _____

MAIL TO:

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c/o CLUW
1925 K Street, NW, #402
Washington, DC 20006



CLUW President Gloria Johnson swears in new Corresponding Secretary Royetta Sanford (IBEW) and New York State Vice President Eleanor G. Bailey (APWU) with Secretary-Treasurer Susan Phillips as one witness. CLUW bid a sad farewell to Josephine LeBeau—a lifetime activist who will remain dedicated to CLUW. LeBeau stepped down as CLUW's Corresponding Secretary in September.

CLUW Health Tip By the Women's Health Task Force

PAP Tests and HPV

PAP tests are important in finding cervical cancer at an early stage when it can be cured. In fact, if all women obtained PAP tests on a regular basis, it is possible to eliminate almost all deaths from cervical cancer. This disease is highly preventable if its early cell changes are detected and treated promptly.

However, PAP test results are not always clear. More than two million women each year are informed that their PAP test shows dysplasia, or abnormal cells in their cervix. The abnormalities may be minor and their significance unknown. But when testing positive or inconclusive, women now have one simple follow-up test to be certain there are no cancerous cells.

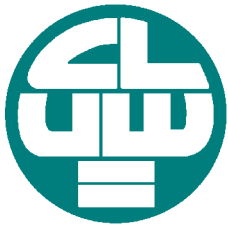
A test for HPV or the human papillomavirus is very similar to the PAP test with cells collected in the same manner. HPV is the sexually transmitted virus that causes cervical cancer. If the test is negative, the woman can be assured she does not have cancer or a pre-cancerous condition.

However, even if a woman is found to have HPV, it does not mean she has cervical cancer. HPV infections are very common and most infections get cleared spontaneously by the body's own immune system. However, if a woman is infected with HPV, further evaluation is in order. If the cervical cells undergo significant change, treatment will be needed to prevent cervical cancer.

HPV and Me?

HPV is the second most common sexually transmitted disease in the U.S. (Herpes is the most common.) HPV infection may occur during a woman's very first sexual experience. Most women with HPV do not have symptoms and will not develop cervical cancer. Symptoms may develop after weeks, months or even years after initial infection. If HPV infection is persistent, there is a greater chance of developing cell changes that may lead to cervical cancer. HPV can also appear as visible genital warts. There are several effective wart therapies and standard treatments to remove them are often performed in the doctor's office.

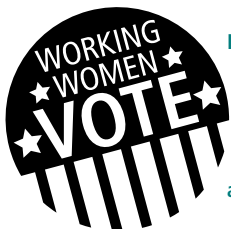
PAP tests are currently recommended every one to three years. Sexually active persons and those who have had abnormal test results should be tested each year. Women who have had three consecutive annual tests with normal results can be tested at their doctor's discretion every one to three years. The National Women's Health Resource Center, in consultation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, has stated that there should be no stigma attached to the acquisition of HPV infection. They are concerned that HPV, like many other sexually transmitted diseases, is a hidden disease and they encourage better communication between partners, doctors and patients.



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