



UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION
IS *M.A.D.E.* FOR YOU! *Making A Difference Everyday!*

Spring 2022

THE ADVOCATE

Ramsey White Collar Unit Secures New Agreement



UPSEU Representative Mark McCart commended the Ramsey White Collar Unit Negotiating Team. *L to R: Harold Scheideler (Crossing Guards), Mary Ann Lupo (Clerical Staff), Andrew Ferretti (Crossing Guards) and not pictured Jake Englishman (Dispatchers)*

UPSEU's Ramsey White Collar Unit members overwhelmingly approved a new multi-year agreement that increases wages annually, adds holidays for Crossing Guards, creates a new step grade for Dispatchers, accelerates the vacation schedule, equalizes time off benefits for part-time staff with full-time staff, and modifies health contributions for those paying the highest amounts.

"The Negotiating Team did a great job in ensuring a settlement that addressed the needs of the various titles within the unit", stated UPSEU Representative Mark McCart.



**United Public
Service Employees
Union**

*Making a Difference
Everyday*

Our Mission

UPSEU is committed to being the preeminent organization representing public sector employees by providing professional, on-site representation, superior negotiations, and adherence to democratic principles which maintain the integrity of the union for the benefit of our members and their families.

UPSEU Officers

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Gary M. Hickey
Executive Vice President

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Vice President

Randy Tillman
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Amanda Barker
Recording Secretary/Trustee

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A Message from President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr.



I recently saw a sticky note somewhere that urged something to the effect that folks should take their lunch breaks and enjoy their time off (evenings, weekends, holidays and vacations). The remainder of the note said "You agreed to a job in exchange for pay and benefits. You did not sign up to sell your soul and every moment of your personal time."

I know that I have said many times for members to take their breaks and that your work was worth being paid for, but not given away. If the employer doesn't value the work enough to pay you for your time, then it is up to you not to work for free. Too many members do just that and the employer pretends not to notice. Please reach out to your UPSEU representative if you are in that situation. As the end of the note mentioned, it is more than what happens at work, but how it affects you after hours, on weekends and other days off.

As a Union President my focus is on your time at work and that time being valued. I want you to take your breaks, and whether it is break time, evenings, weekends, holidays or vacations, it is also something you have earned. Too often stress from the workday spills into your evenings, weekends and other time off. I have seen members work themselves into a frenzy and stress 24/7 over the job. Ultimately, it affects their health, sometimes leading to a disability. One member in particular comes to mind. No matter how often we told her not to work beyond her hours without pay, she continued to do so. She ultimately had a heart attack and was out for many weeks. While she was gone, not everything got done. But guess what, the employer survived and made do. When she returned and couldn't wear those roller skates anymore, the employer complained about her not getting everything done. We stepped in to get them off her back and made the employer understand that she had been doing much more than seven hours of work in a seven hour day. The people most affected by her illness were her family members who worried and fretted over whether she would pull through. It put things in perspective for her and reprioritized her life to focus first on family and then to do only what she could during her working hours. Whatever got done, got done and the rest waited for the next day, unless the boss was willing to approve overtime. She learned the true value of her time was spent with family, friends or just relaxing.

Too often members stress about the job and in addition to the physical impact, it affects their mental health as well. You are not a CEO of a major corporation making millions of dollars each year. Those folks might eat, breathe, sleep and live for their business, and truthfully I feel sorry for them. I know you think that is crazy that the money must be worth it for them, but is it?

Life is short. Time with your good friends and family is never enough. Make a promise to yourself to value your own off hours and to use them well. How many summers and vacations seem to be over in the blink of an eye? Decide to enjoy yours to the max. Don't wait until the end of summer to put a summer's worth of fun into the last week. Spend time with your kids or grandkids and make some memories. Take time just for yourself.

A friend's husband was considering retirement but was unsure. His wife said, "No one gets to the end of their life and says I should have worked a few more years. Instead they wish they had taken more opportunities to enjoy life." So, whether we are talking about weekends, vacations, or retirement, make a plan to enjoy life to the fullest. It all begins with valuing your time, and planning accordingly. We aren't cats with nine lives, so enjoy and make the most of the ONE life you have! Lastly, remember that the Union is here to help you, as making a difference in your lives is what we are all about.

Welcome New Members

UPSEU Continues to Grow in Massachusetts



Back row, left to right: Ed Daigneault (Skilled laborer), Alex Page (Skilled laborer), Steve Barter (Skilled laborer). Front row, left to right: Travis Woelfle (Semi skilled laborer), Larry Roache (Skilled laborer), Juan Barrios (Skilled laborer) and Fran Flynn (Skilled laborer)

Proving that word of mouth and the importance of reputable work are invaluable, UPSEU has brought two new bargaining units on board in Massachusetts. Thanks to the relentless and dedicated service to members provided by Labor Relations Representative Roger Stolen, UPSEU continues to expand its presence in Massachusetts at an impressive rate. In the last five years, Roger has organized over ten separate bargaining units in the state, with the vast majority of them reaching out to him after hearing from the other groups in Massachusetts.

In January 2022, a group of previously unrepresented employees from the Boxborough Department of Public Works joined UPSEU through voluntary recognition by the town. It was a group that was previously unrepresented. Like many other groups taken advantage of by their employer, they decided that it was time to have someone defend their rights and protect their benefits. After doing their research and speaking to other bargaining units in the state, their choice was obvious. They reached out to Roger and requested that he meet with them. After the meeting took place, the group was so impressed with what UPSEU had to offer that they unanimously agreed that UPSEU was the representation they so desperately needed and wanted. UPSEU secured voluntary recognition from the town and the unit was born. The members are very excited to move forward with UPSEU and are eager to see their very first collective bargaining agreement, currently being negotiated by UPSEU and the Town of Boxborough.

Meanwhile, also in Massachusetts, the Hampton Wilbraham Regional School District Custodial/Maintenance Unit overwhelmingly decided to dump the current union and become part of the UPSEU family. In 2021, the unit leadership complained to UPSEU that being represented by this other union was akin to having an “absentee landlord.” One member stated that he had been a member of the Custodial/Maintenance Unit for over a year and a half and had not once met a representative from their union, despite all of the dues he had paid. He went on to say, in fact, that the first union representative he ever met while in that unit was from UPSEU.

UPSEU now represents bargaining units in western, southern and northern Massachusetts, and as word of mouth continues to travel around the state that UPSEU is now the choice for those who want a better union, this is sure to be only the beginning.

Welcome New Members

Stamford BOE Parent Facilitators Join the UPSEU Family

The labor movement continues to be alive and strong in Connecticut, and perhaps there is no better example of this than UPSEU's recent organization of twenty-two Parent Facilitators, employed by the Stamford Board of Education. The Parent Facilitators play a critical role in the public school setting, acting as the liaison between the school district and parents who are not English speaking or who face other barriers. They help foster communication and understanding in order to ensure all of the students and their families are being served properly. Despite this important role they play in the Stamford School District's education system, the Parent Facilitators have faced mistreatment by their employer including being hired at a certain rate, only to have it reduced by more than \$5,000. It was this treatment that convinced the Parent Facilitators to explore union representation. Before the Stamford BOE Paraeducators and Security Guards had organized with UPSEU over the past three years, the Parent Facilitators reached out to UPSEU to request to meet. Upon hearing their issues and concerns and the unfair treatment they have endured, UPSEU welcomed the opportunity to start the organizing process by filing a petition with the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations on their behalf and getting an election scheduled. The secret ballot election took place on April 20, 2022, at which time the Parent Facilitators voted unanimously to be represented by UPSEU.

This is the first time these employees will have the security and protection of union representation, and their enthusiasm as they came to vote was palpable. They are now eager for the negotiation of their first collective bargaining agreement to begin and are excited at the idea of seeing language in print that will cover job security and fringe benefits, which they never had and were not sure they would ever see.

Parent Facilitators Unit President Ximena Iparraguirre stated, "This is my first experience with a union, and while it always sounded a little intimidating to me, I can only say positive things about UPSEU. We have received the utmost professional advice and guidance, with a very quick response. We are looking forward to having UPSEU represent us in our first contract and for many years to come."

UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Nephty Cruz is thrilled to have organized this bargaining unit and looks forward to representing them. "This is a great group of individuals, who love their jobs and are dedicated employees, who were just being taken advantage of by the school district. It is an honor that they chose to be part of the UPSEU family and UPSEU looks forward to getting to the table with the BOE and getting these professional, hardworking individuals a fair contract," stated Cruz.

Three Village CSD Professional Nurses Vote to Join UPSEU

The unit, which was a longtime association, decided that they needed more general support from a union, and they determined that UPSEU was a great fit for them. UPSEU's Tom Watson and Amanda Barker met with the unit to discuss the group's concerns. The unit followed up with a unit vote in which the unit voted overwhelmingly to affiliate the association. We welcome the Three Village Central School District Professional Nurses to UPSEU.

UPSEU Hosts Workers' Comp Workshop



On April 27, 2022, UPSEU hosted a Workers' Compensation Workshop for our police members in the Niagara Police Department, as well as UPSEU members from the Western Region Off Track Betting in Buffalo, NY. The workshop was presented by Workers' Compensation Attorney Alex Dell, and covered all aspects of Workers' Compensation, Social Security Disability, General Municipal Law 207c and New York State Disability Retirement. This is yet another aspect of UPSEU's commitment to educating our members on pertinent laws that may affect their livelihood. The UPSEU COPS Division partnered with UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Antonella Rotilio to bring this valuable training to our members.

Welcome New Members

Brookfield Paraeducators Vote UNANIMOUSLY to Leave CSEA/SEIU and Join UPSEU

On May 18, 2022, as a result of a secret ballot election conducted by the Connecticut State Board of Labor Relations (CSBLR), the Brookfield Paraeducators unanimously voted to leave CSEA/SEIU and join UPSEU. UPSEU Labor Representative Colleen Ezzo stated, "The membership grew frustrated with the lack of representation provided by CSEA/SEIU not only in dealing with day-to-day issues, but also CSEA/SEIU's failure to begin contract negotiations on their contract that had expired in June of 2021." Following months of little to no communication with their union representative, the unit looks forward to the exceptional, knowledgeable representation of UPSEU, and hitting the ground running on unit elections and negotiating a successor agreement.



Brookfield Paraeducator Ilene Kramer and Unit President Tim Riddle

Brookfield Paraeducator President Tim Riddle stated, "I am the past president of the CSEA/SEIU Paraeducator Association. After a long relationship with CSEA/SEIU, your members unanimously voted in favor of changing our union affiliation to UPSEU. Our leadership met with UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Colleen Ezzo several times and came away impressed and excited about our future partnership with UPSEU. We are happy to join UPSEU, where our members matter and actually come first!" This sentiment was echoed by Ilene Kramer, former interim president/committee member who expressed, "I am so excited to be a part of a union that cares about its members!"

UPSEU COPS Division (NY) Holds Annual Law Enforcement Training

With COVID restrictions lifted, the UPSEU COPS Division (NY) was once again able to hold its annual Law Enforcement Training on March 31, 2022. The training included a lineup of outstanding guest speakers, who covered a number of significant topics. It was surprising but still wonderful to see that there was such a strong turnout. The thirty-seven UPSEU members who were in attendance represented thirteen different law enforcement agencies across the state, such as the Police, Sheriff's Road Patrols, Sheriff's Correction Officers and University Public Safety Officers.

The topics addressed and the respective presenters were Retiree Health Insurance presented by Mark Walsh, Esq. of Gleason, Dunn, Walsh and O'Shea; NYS Attorney General Executive Law 70-B presented by Nicholas Evanovich, Esq. from the law firm of LaMarche and Safranko; NYS Retirement (Police and Sheriffs) presented by Joseph Reynolds from the NYS Retirement System; and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder presented by Kim Cardona of the NYS Police.

Attendee President Jeff Fahey of the Herkimer County Corrections said, "The training was full of useful information. We would like to thank Kim Cardona for sharing her struggles with PTSD, while educating and breaking down the stigmas of a difficult topic. The information presented about the NYS Attorney General's investigations was very educational and will help our members be prepared and protected." Tony Natoli, a grievance committee member of the Cortland Police Benevolent Association, echoed these sentiments and said, "This was an extremely valuable training, with topics ranging from PTSD to legal protections with changing laws and the increase in the Attorney General's role in investigating police. I learned a ton and look forward to attending future UPSEU trainings."

With the event being so positive and so well received, UPSEU is already starting to plan the training for next year and is very much looking forward to expanding it to even more members.

UPSEU Fighting and Winning

City of Springfield Wrongfully Terminates Assessor II for Second Time

United Public Service Employees Union, who represents approximately 150 municipal employees throughout the City of Springfield, continues its winning streak against the City on behalf of its members.

It was only just over one year ago that UPSEU prevailed in a grievance arbitration against the City for wrongfully terminating a long-time Springfield employee, and former unit president, Timothy Woodward, resulting in Mr. Woodward being reinstated to his position with full back pay and restoration of all benefits. However, instead of learning from that experience, the City decided to take another crack at it and only a month and a half after Mr. Woodward was returned to work, the City terminated him again, on May 27, 2021, for what it alleged was inappropriate conduct in the workplace.

Upon Mr. Woodward's return to work on January 4, 2021, after winning his first termination case, the City immediately moved his work location and set conditions on and made changes to his employment to which he had not previously been subjected. However, when it became clear that the new space in which Mr. Woodward was expected to work was also being used as a training classroom for various City employees without any privacy or partitioned off workspace to separate him and his workspace from the training and trainees, Mr. Woodward objected. He reached out to both his supervisor and the City's Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations on multiple occasions and raised valid security concerns, as well as health and safety concerns over

others being in his working space and having access to his computer during the time of a global pandemic. After the City failed to address Mr. Woodward's concerns, and after finding, for the third day in a row, a trainee sitting at his workstation and on his computer, Mr. Woodward became visibly upset and verbally expressed his frustration with how he was being treated by the City. It was for this reason, the City put Mr. Woodward on paid administrative leave until ultimately terminating his employment again on May 27, 2021.

UPSEU viewed this second termination of Mr. Woodward as the City's continued campaign to get rid of Mr. Woodward and to retaliate against him for successfully challenging his previous termination, and consequently immediately filed a grievance. The Springfield Municipal Employee's bargaining unit UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Roger Stolen explained, "We felt that the City was setting Mr. Woodward up for failure from the day he returned to work after winning his previous termination case and that we had a very strong case for this second wrongful termination too. We wanted to send a clear message to the City that UPSEU will not stand for harassment and unjust termination of our members and that we will stand up and fight the City each and every time they try it."

With the City refusing to grant the grievance and bring Mr. Woodward back to work, a formal arbitration hearing took place on November 9, 2021, to determine whether the city has just cause for termination. During the hearing both parties

Continued on next page

Hamden Parks & Recreation Unit 36 Employees Proudly Participate in the Town of Hamden 2022 Memorial Day Parade



Bargaining unit member Ely Maldonado is driving the truck with member Jimmy Wilson, Jr. and Unit Vice President Tom Brown standing on the back. Unit President Jimmy Wilson, Sr. is driving the Zamboni.

City of Springfield continued

were represented by counsel, submitted evidence and offered witness testimony. The parties were then given an opportunity to submit respective post hearing briefs in further support of their respective positions.

When Arbitrator Lawrence T. Holden, Jr.'s decision was issued on February 3, 2022, it was a relief, yet unsurprising to Mr. Woodward and UPSEU that he found the grievant was, in no uncertain terms, terminated unjustly. In the award he issued, Arbitrator Holden stated, "The Employer must bear responsibility for the conditions it created and for its failure to take action once apprised of the circumstances; the Employer cannot abdicate its responsibilities, avoid accountability, and place all the blame upon the grievant. Thus, this discharge cannot be allowed to stand." As a result, the City was once again ordered to rescind Mr. Woodward's termination and to reinstate him to his position of employment with full back pay and benefits.

Attorney Chelsea K. Choi, outside legal counsel for UPSEU, did an outstanding job of outlining the events leading up to Mr. Woodward's termination and the City's lack of just cause for his second termination. In response to the arbitrator's decision and Mr. Woodward winning his job back, Attorney Choi had this to say, "As a labor union and labor attorneys, it is our job to zealously advocate for our clients, especially those experiencing the psychological and social impact of the pandemic. Special thanks to those willing to look at, listen to, and review the case to ensure that justice was done, and a man's livelihood was not unfairly taken away."

While Mr. Woodward has spent the better part of two years embroiled in legal action with the City in an effort to retain his job, the final outcomes in both termination cases, which corrected what the City got wrong in both instances from the start, made it all worthwhile. With the help of UPSEU and their professional outside legal counsel at Connor & Morneau, LLP, Mr. Woodward has prevailed against the City a second time and will once again be made whole.

Needless to say, Mr. Woodward, as well as the bargaining unit's local president, Sylvia Cotton, were thrilled with the result in this case and the fact that UPSEU was there every step of the way. Mr. Woodward said "I feel vindicated once again and very grateful that the arbitrator found in my favor. I will not tolerate being harassed and let the City run me out of my job and I'm grateful to UPSEU and its never-ending advocacy on my behalf." Ms. Cotton concurred and said, "As the Unit President for the past seven years, I am very pleased that once again UPSEU proved to represent their members to the fullest extent of the contract. Not only did we win a wrongful termination arbitration case again, but twice for the same member! I just want to thank our legal counsel John Connor and Chelsea Choi and our UPSEU Labor Relations Representative, Roger Stolen, who helped make this case a success."

Hamden DPW Tree Works Crew Receives Back Pay for Outsourced Work



Hamden Public Works Unit #1

L to R: President Brian L'Ecuyer, Steward Mike Pitcher, and Vice President Doug Fraser

Following tornadic activity in the summer of 2020, the Town of Hamden chose to outsource various clean-up projects in the following weeks at its schools and golf course to a private contractor, despite the availability of bargaining unit personnel in the Public Works Department who could have performed the work quickly, efficiently, and at a lower cost. Upon joining UPSEU in August 2021, Labor Relations Representative Scott Nabel made resolving this issue a priority for the bargaining unit. Nabel commented, "Once the Town of Hamden finally understood that UPSEU would not stop until members were fairly compensated, their tone changed and we made steady progress in righting this wrong on behalf of our members."

As a result of the tenacity of Unit President Brian L'Ecuyer, Vice President Doug Fraser and Steward Mike Pitcher, the Town of Hamden paid all eight of the impacted current members of the tree crew, as well as retired members, between \$1,000 and \$1,100 each for the lost overtime opportunity they incurred in 2020. Mike Pitcher, Senior Tree Climber and Unit Steward expressed his appreciation. "We have been trying to resolve this issue for over a year and a half, and I am happy and thankful that Scott and UPSEU never gave up fighting for a successful resolution."

Negotiations

Marbletown General Unit Members Ratify New 3 Year Deal

Labor Relations Representative Michael P. Kutski along with Shop Steward Jill McLean and Negotiating Team member Melissa Wright, worked with the town to secure a three year deal that includes wage increases, the addition of a new longevity scale, increased accruals, and the addition of compensatory time and cell phones for the Code Enforcement Department. Mr. Kutski stated, "This was one of the shortest negotiations I have had in a long time." Kutski would like to thank Jill and Melissa for their assistance with preparation prior to meeting with the town. An excellent job was done by all.

Sachem Central School District Ratifies 4 Year Contract



A new long-term agreement was unanimously approved by UPSEU's Sachem Central School District's Clerical Unit members. The agreement included annual wage increases, a significant longevity increase, additional time off by adding Christmas recess and Juneteenth, and an improved medical opt-out payout for current employees. Unit President Josephine Vasiento deserves much of the credit, as she worked diligently alongside the negotiating team, with guidance from UPSEU President Kevin E. Boyle, Jr. and Labor Relations Representative Tom Watson.

SACHEM CSD CLERICAL NEGOTIATING TEAM

Left to right: Jen LoSordo, Unit President Josephine Vasiento, Nancy Merkel, Laura Sager and Susan Signer

Marbletown Highway

The Marbletown Highway Unit secured a new three year contract that included annual wage increases. Unit members will as well see increased longevity, an increase in compensatory time, improved retirement payout of sick leave, and increases to uniform and boot allowances. Kudos to Shop Steward William Countryman and negotiating team member Douglas North for their great work throughout the bargaining process.

Suffolk County Park Rangers

UPSEU welcomes the Suffolk County Park Rangers unit to UPSEU. The Park Rangers are responsible for patrolling Suffolk County's vast parks system, and as well acting as backup to numerous police forces on the east end of Long Island. The unit, previously unorganized, is now in negotiations for a first contract. Welcome Suffolk County Park Rangers!



Steward Christine Del Valle (standing) leads the Herricks Monitors and Security Aides in contract negotiations preparation.

UPSEU Paves Twin Paths to Prosperity in Brookfield

Between March and April 2022, after long negotiations filled with frustrating delays, two separate Brookfield Board of Education bargaining units, the Brookfield BOE Nurses and Brookfield BOE Secretaries/Technical Employees, successfully concluded negotiations in mediation. The negotiating committees, led by UPSEU Regional Director and Chief Negotiator Matt Geer, took on the monumental task of reorganizing the broken, unfair wage charts that UPSEU inherited from the respective units' prior representation. UPSEU was successful, winning a clear pathway for members in each bargaining unit to reach job rate, as well as above market wage increases in each contract year. Additionally, both bargaining units were able to achieve substantial improvements to their respective contracts.

For decades both bargaining units had deeply unfair minimum and maximum hiring rate systems, where new employees could earn more than existing employees, and with no clear pathway to reach top rate. To fix this, UPSEU was able to negotiate a new step system, resulting in substantial increases for many members with seniority, and a path for all members to reach top rate. In future years, there will be no need to negotiate step increases, since step placement is now based on years of service.

Additionally, UPSEU achieved pay for work performed in a higher classification, increased the duration of recall rights, improved overtime language, introduced new bereavement and maternity leave provisions, callback pay, the right to use sick leave for an ill family member, increased compensation for nurses on overnight trips, among other contract victories. UPSEU successfully limited the increase in employee health insurance cost share percentage over the life of both contracts to a level far below the current average in the State of Connecticut.

Brookfield BOE Nurse Unit President Beth O'Connor said, "The Brookfield Nurses are pleased that this contract represents an important step forward in compensation fairness. We are looking forward to further progress in future negotiations. Matt Geer and Masjo Ward's guidance and representation during negotiations was a key factor in our progress towards equitable compensation." Brookfield BOE Secretaries/Technical Employees President Diane Cerasoli said, "Since UPSEU has been representing the Brookfield Secretaries and Technical Employees, Matt Geer has led our members in a positive direction. During COVID, he was able to secure us a favorable one year contract. In this most recent negotiation, he successfully guided us through mediation for a three year contract, obtaining positive changes such as bereavement leave, maternity leave, and implementation of a new wage structure, to name a few. As president of our bargaining unit, I am proud of this contract, as are the other members."

Matt Geer stated, "UPSEU would not stand for the Board of Education's delay tactics, and we would not stand for our members being disrespected. We were diligent in our efforts to move negotiations along and to reach a tentative agreement that our members would support. I would like to thank the members of both negotiating committees, led by Brookfield BOE Nurse Unit President Beth O'Connor and Brookfield BOE Secretary/Technical Employee Unit President Diane Cerasoli, for their incredible patience throughout the process. They were always prepared to advocate on behalf of their respective memberships and were never afraid to fight. While we are proud of the wins achieved, including new wage grids and bereavement clauses, the work of UPSEU is never done."



**BROOKFIELD BOE SECRETARIES/TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES
NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE**

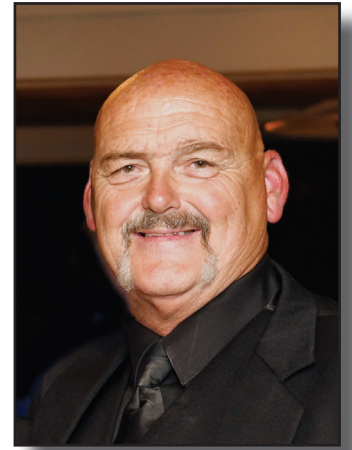
Left to right: Regional Director Matt Geer, Lisa Genovese, Diane Cerasoli, and Mary Negri. Missing from photo is Sandra Pflomm.

“Bobby” Schultz Day in the Town of East Lyme, CT

UPSEU member and Sanitation Foreman, Bob “Bobby” Schultz recently retired on May 13, 2022 After more than forty-six years of service to the Town of East Lyme. Bobby served as a laborer, sanitation worker, and most recently as the Sanitation Foreman for the East Lyme Highway Department. Counting the years his father worked for the Town of East Lyme, there has been a Schultz family member working for the town for the last ninety one consecutive years, a feat that will most likely never be repeated by one family. When Bobby started working for the town in September of 1975, over half of the current highway department employees had not even been born yet!

Because Bobby has always been a good friend to all of his fellow employees and is beloved by the citizens of the town, and because of Bobby’s forty six plus years of dedication, the First Selectman declared **Friday, May 13, 2022 as Bobby Schultz Day** in the Town of East Lyme, Connecticut.

Congratulations Bobby, and best wishes for a happy and healthy retirement!



Bobby Schultz

June Rydzik Named CAS Administrative Assistant of the Year



Woodland Regional High School Principal Kurt Ogren and Woodland Regional High School lead secretary and administrative assistant June Rydzik

Woodland Regional High School lead secretary and administrative assistant to the principal, June Rydzik has been named the 2022 CAS Administrative Assistant of the Year. The Connecticut Association of Schools awarded Rydzik with the award during the CAS 2022 Virtual Administrative Assistant and School Secretary Conference on Friday, April 29.

“June’s quality of work, dependability, initiative, creativity, and positive relationships placed her in a category all by herself,” CAS Assistant Executive Director RoseAnne O’Brien Vojtek said in a letter issued to Woodland Regional High School Principal Kurt Ogren.

Rydzik said she was very surprised and honored to have received the award. “There’s a lot of good candidates,” Rydzik said. “I’m grateful to have been part of Woodland and the Region 16 community for the last twenty years.” Rydzik, who began working at the high school when it was first established in 2001, credits her accomplishment to being able to work with such a wonderful group of people. Superintendent of Schools Michael Yamin said that without question, Rydzik is the epitome of professionalism. “She is reliable. She is honest and she is a welcoming face as you enter Woodland,” Yamin said. “She is irreplaceable and we’re very fortunate to have her. The school and district is better because of her and how she performs her job,” Yamin added. Rydzik said she is grateful to have received the award.

Contributed By Andreas Yilma Citizen’s News

Working Together To Help An Injured Co-Worker



Gary & Michele Ublacker, Rene Roosa, Theresa Hoffman, Lynn Kutski, Dianne Lugo, Brian McDonald, Jason Baccaro, Mike Anderson, Steve Olah, Joe Grasso. Absent from photo: Michael Kutski, Guy Hughes, Jr. , Lisa and Tom Geno, Amy Spoto, Zach Hall, Mitch and George Bu, Heather McClary

Longtime Columbia County employee and UPSEU member Joe Grasso needed help after his injury. Columbia County co-workers, administration and non-employees had no problem donating their time to help Joe at his house. UPSEU Labor Relations Representative Michael Kutski said it was a pleasure to see all come together to help a dedicated employee of the county in his time of need.

UPSEU Mailbox



Dear UPSEU,

We searched long and hard for a union that would represent us in the ways we needed and deserved. When we joined UPSEU in February of 2017, they immediately felt like family and we knew we were in the right place. We wanted a union that would ensure we were respected, treated with dignity, and heard, which UPSEU has done for us. Our Labor Relations Representative Antonella has been a game changer: she is fighting for EVERY one of us EVERY day. Antonella is always willing to assist any member who reaches out and we have been able to tell how much she cares about us. We are #Union Strong with UPSEU in our corner!

Ardia Gutowski

Churchill Bus Driver

CDC'S GUIDE FOR SUMMER TRAVEL



BEFORE YOUR TRIP:

- **Check CDC's destination pages.** Check CDC's webpage for your destination to see what vaccines or medicines you may need and what diseases or health risks are a concern at your destination.
- **Make an appointment with your healthcare provider** or a travel health specialist at least one month before you leave. They can help you get destination-specific vaccines, medicines, and information. Discussing health concerns as well as your itinerary and planned activities with your provider allows them to give more specific advice and recommendations.
- **Make sure you are up-to-date on all of your routine vaccines.** Routine vaccinations protect you from infectious diseases such as measles that can spread quickly in groups of unvaccinated people. Many diseases prevented by routine vaccination are not common in the United States but are still common in other countries.
- **Prepare a travel health kit with items you may need,** especially those items that may be difficult to find at your destination. Include your prescriptions and over-the-counter medicines in your travel health kit and take enough to last your entire trip, plus extra in case of travel delays. Depending on your destination you may also want to pack insect repellent, sunscreen (SPF15 or higher), aloe, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, water disinfection tablets, and your health insurance card.

For further information: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/summer-travel-abroad>

HAVE A SAFE, HAPPY AND HEALTHY SUMMER!

Making a Difference in the Workplace



UNITED PUBLIC SERVICE EMPLOYEES UNION
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3139 State Route 11, Malone, NY 12953
29 Liberty Street, Unit 210, Batavia, NY 14020
130 Research Parkway, Suite 201, Meriden, CT 06450
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