

Arctic Club Hotel Workers Ratify First Contract

The first newly organized hotel in downtown Seattle, The Arctic Club Hotel, ratified a strong first contract. UNITE HERE! Local 8 be-

gan the process of organizing the new hotel in the fall of 2008. Working with the great employees at the Arctic Club and

multiple bargaining sessions, employees were successful in gaining significant improvements for their hotel coworkers.



L-R: Gerlie Sijera, Lina Evangelista, Ana Hernandez and Maria Mendoza

through many conversations and meetings with these hard workers, the workers gained Union recognition in the fall of 2009. Nearly 80% of the employees chose to become part of Local 8 and to begin the process of negotiating a first contract! The tough task of achieving a new contract began in September of 2009, and through

Highlights of the new agreement include reduced and safer workloads, improvements in the cost and access to health insurance, guaranteed wage increases and a fair scheduling system.

We congratulate the employees of the Arctic Club Hotel on winning great improvements and a voice on the job and look forward to more successes in new organizing in the future. Let's welcome these new members into our Union!



Airport Workers Stand Up to the Port of Seattle

Airport concessions workers are turning up the heat for real job security. Local 8 members have begun meeting with Port of Seattle commissioners to discuss their future at the airport.

Airport workers have also taken action by circulating a petition to

demand that the Port do the right thing and give us real job security. Without job retention being a part of all concessions lease agreements, a new company could do business in the airport and bring in a whole new group of workers. We are fighting to protect our jobs and the stan-

dards that we recently won in a great new contract.

If you are an airport worker and have not had a chance to sign the petition, please contact Cindy Richardson at 206-470-2982 and she will tell you who is circulating it in your unit.

Politics and Workers' Power

Politics is an integral part of worker power, because elected officials can make a huge difference in our lives.

For example, in 2006 and 2007, the support of community groups and politicians helped us win the best hotel Union contract in the history of Local 8 at the Westin Seattle.

In the next several years, Port of

Seattle Commissioners will decide who runs food service concessions at the airport and whether long-term Union members will keep their jobs, wages and benefits. The King County Council and Seattle City Council will have a say in whether the hotel industry grows in a worker-friendly direction.

For all those reasons, it is our goal at Local 8 to increase and improve our efforts to create a political program that builds power for workers in the hospitality industry. In a big step in that direction, Melody Swett, shop steward at the Westin Seattle, agreed

to join our Union's political team for this past election season.

Because of her work, we were able to register more members to vote than ever before, get committee leaders and shop stewards involved in our electoral campaign work, increase our voter turnout and show key candidates that we are serious about supporting them and their field campaigns.

We helped defeat the anti-worker initiative 1082, which would have privatized our workers' compensation insurance system for on-the-job injuries, we helped re-elect Senator Patty Murray, and we made a difference in many smaller local races.

The experience of running a comprehensive political program this year will help us be ready for the 2011 election season, when many important local races will be on the ballot while we negotiate union contracts in all major King County union hotels.



NOTICE REGARDING UNION SECURITY CLAUSE AND DUES DEDUCTION AUTHORIZATION

As an employee working under a UNITE HERE Local 8 contract containing a Union Security Clause, you are required, as a condition of employment to pay dues or fees to the Union. This is the only obligation under the Union Security Clause. Individuals who are members pay dues while individuals who are nonmembers pay an equivalent fee. This fee, which is authorized by law, is your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your co-workers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the Union's duties as collective bargaining agent and thereby be obligated to fees representing expenditures germane to the Union's duties as collective bargaining agent. Nonmembers have the right to be given sufficient information to enable them to intelligently

decide whether to object, and to be apprised of the internal Union procedures for filing objections. Individuals may obtain a description of the procedures which must be followed to file such objections and further information by writing to Zella Melville, UNITE HERE Local 8, 2800 First Avenue, Room 3, Seattle, WA 98121.

Nonmember fee payers give up many benefits that only Union members receive. As a member you will have all the benefits and privileges of membership, including the right to fully participate in the internal activities of the Union, the right to attend and participate in membership meetings, the right to participate in the development of contract proposals and to participate in contract ratification and strike votes, the right to vote to set or raise dues and fees, the right to nominate and elect Union Officers, the right to run for Union office and

for convention delegate. The Union Privilege Program, available to members only offers Union members such services as: reduced interest rate MasterCard, reduced fee legal services, a prescription program with savings for long-term users of prescribed medicine, a mortgage program that allows Union members to receive reduced interest rates, a dental program, a lending program, and many other services available to Union members at lower rates.

The authorization for dues deduction is voluntary. If you do not wish the convenience of this payroll deduction but prefer to pay your dues and/or initiation fees directly to the Local Union office each month, you may do so. If you do not sign the dues deduction authorization, you must then pay your dues and/or fees to the Local Union by the 10th of each month.

Dear Local 8 member,

In a show of worker power, over 1,400 hotel workers in King County will renegotiate their union contracts in the summer of 2011. We successfully lined up our hotel union agreements to expire at the same time in order to maximize our strength. We have an exciting year to look forward to.

The hospitality industry's response to the economic crisis has been to cut back staffing and make workers do more work with less resources and less time available. Now, despite forecasts stating that the hotel industry will return to record profits in 2012 and 2013, employers are trying to permanently lock workers into this recession. As a response, UNITE HERE members in cities like San Francisco, Chicago, Honolulu and Los Angeles, and other cities are fighting back. They are determined to only accept contracts that strengthen their union, give them a fair share in the economic recovery, and allow non-union workers to organize.

We have an opportunity to join their struggle in 2011.

In order to win and improve standards in our region, we have to continue building our union in every workplace. By challenging employers through worker delegations and jobsite actions, we are in control and we change the power dynamic at work. When we stand up at the jobsite together, we win. This collective strength will then give us the power we need at the bargaining table.

You may have noticed that we started early to prepare for the upcoming fights. Key leaders at every jobsite have already joined the union committee and many more will follow in the coming months.

But in order to lift hotel workers back up into the middle class, we need to do more than just renegotiate existing union contracts. We all, members and staff alike, have to fight together for union growth and make organizing the unorganized our top priority. More than any other factor, the quality of hotel jobs in the Puget Sound region will depend on our efforts to bring more workers into our union. Strength in numbers will be necessary to stop cutbacks and win better wages, benefits, workload protections, and respect on the job.

I am excited to continue working with you to make the hospitality industry a better place to work.

In solidarity,

Erik Van Rossum

Secretary Treasurer, UNITE HERE Local 8



Welcome Aboard Michael!

Six months ago we hired Michael Abate as an Internal Organizer. We asked Michael to

write a brief article about his first six months on the job as we gear up for 2011, and here is what he had to say:

"My first day was a full day staff meeting, where I was introduced to the other organizers and office staff, along with the

passion and hard work that they dedicate to this organization.

"The theme of that meeting was looking forward to the future of our Union and how we strengthen and empower our workers in these difficult times, because our real power comes from the members. We laid out our plan to win in the years ahead, and we dedicated ourselves to implementing it.

"From that day I knew I was in the right place, and hoped my

background as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ghana and as a teacher in Chiapas, Mexico would make me a valuable asset to our membership. The essentials of the work proved to be very similar; all are about helping people empower themselves. I rarely have a dull day and am always impressed by the wonderful members we have. I am excited about the year we have ahead of us and am proud to be a part of this dynamic and fighting Union."



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Largest Rally in Recent Tacoma History

On August 10th, Local 8 members and over 200 labor activists and community leaders held one of the largest hotel worker rallies in recent Tacoma history. The exciting rally took place at Tollefson Plaza, located next to the Tacoma Courtyard Marriott. The labor community made it clear that the non-union Marriott, as well as other Tacoma hotels, need to stop paying low wages, providing unaffordable health benefits, and using the economy as an excuse to pressure workers to do more for less.

A group of community delegates entered the hotel lobby and presented a "Downtown Tacoma Hotel Workers Bill of Rights" to management, an opportunity to commit to providing

their employees fair wages, affordable health insurance, and a voice on the job. Not surprisingly, the Hollander family, who owns the Marriott, refused to make this commitment to their workers and to the Tacoma community. On the other hand, the nearby Hotel Murano made the commitment to the "Downtown Tacoma Hotel Workers' Bill of Rights."

Despite receiving public subsidies to build their hotel, the Hollanders have been unwilling to provide their employees with living wage jobs pursuant to the bill of rights. After giving the Hollanders several opportunities to do the right thing, we have launched a "Do

Not Patronize" campaign at the Tacoma Courtyard Marriott. We are urging Tacoma City Council



Speaking at the rally: Translator, Maria Montero, Rosa Torres and Irma Romero

to support the workers as well as their community. After all, hotel workers who earn good wages and benefits have more money to spend locally!

UNITEHERE!
Local 8
General
Membership
Meeting

Wednesday,
January 26, 2011, 4:30pm
Doubletree Hotel
Seattle Airport
 18740 International Blvd., Sea-Tac
Olympic Room II