

December, 2022 | Volume 40 | Number 150



# ROCHESTER REGIONAL JOINT BOARD REFLECTIONS 2022

## Building Worker Power.

### What's inside:

- Letter from the Manager
- New Organizing
- Sidney Hillman Updates
- Contract Updates
- 2022 Abraham Chatman Scholarship Winner
- 2023 Meeting Schedule
- Contact Information

## The Center of the American Labor Movement

The Rochester Regional Joint Board of Workers United, SEIU, is at the heart of the American labor movement. This union has a rich history beginning with garment workers fighting for basic worker's rights in the 20th century to Xerox workers organizing with the Haloid Company (the forerunner of Xerox) in 1937 in a sit-down strike. Now, restaurant workers are leading the way of the new American Labor Movement with RRJB and organizing what others thought was an unorganizable industry.



**Official Publication of Rochester Regional Joint  
Board, Workers United Upstate New York**



## Historic unionizing efforts underway at Starbucks in upstate New York

The efforts come as the labor movement gains steam after COVID-19 shocks.



By [Catherine Thorbecke](#)

November 11, 2021, 4:43 PM



BUSINESS

## Starbucks workers form their 1st union in the U.S. in a big win for labor

Updated December 9, 2021 · 3:28 PM ET

Heard on [All Things Considered](#)



Gary and Kris showed our union pride at the Buffalo - Broncos game to tell Starbucks Chair of the Board Mellody Hobson that Buffalo is a union town!

# LETTER FROM THE MANAGER



Union Brothers and Sisters,

Happy holidays and happy New Year to everyone! We are very excited to share our 2022 Reflections Newsletter with you. In this Issue, we have highlighted Joint Board activity, including numerous contract settlements, a look into the new organizing campaigns workers launched in our region, important updates from our staff at the Sidney Hillman Health Center, a profile of Brynn Sidebotham, this year's winner of the Chatman Scholarship, and much more.

This year has been one for the history books. Starbucks workers in our very own region, after winning the first unionized Starbucks store in the country in December of 2021, sparked a national movement that has taken the country by storm. A year ago, there were zero unionized Starbucks cafes in the United States. Now, there are over 260. We are so proud of the Starbucks baristas, and the baristas who came before them at SPOT coffee in Rochester and Buffalo, for leading this fight. We will continue to stand by them and fight for a contract that they deserve. The Starbucks baristas are incredibly grateful for the support and help of every single member of our union, and they know they couldn't do it without you.

This year has been a great year for our members, including new contract ratifications at a number of shops, including Xerox, Tioga Downs, Plattsburgh State University, Aid To Hospitals laundry, Spot Coffee, Energy King, and many more. Some bargaining committees secured raises of up to 35 percent over three years, and others added part-time employees to the bargaining unit. Overall, it was a busy year of making great improvements for our members lives and their families.

Together, we will continue to stand strong and fight for the dignity and respect that all workers deserve. Whether you work in a factory, a laundry, a hotel, a casino, or even a cafe, all workers deserve a voice on the job and a seat at the table. For 2022 and beyond, I promise my dedication and solidarity to our union - each and every one of you. The workers united will never be defeated!

In Solidarity,

**Gary Bonadonna Jr.**

Manager, Rochester Regional Joint Board  
Workers United International VP







# NEW ORGANIZING CAMPAIGNS!

Get on the job and organize!

## STARBUCKS

In the Summer of 2021, Starbucks workers were feeling overworked, underpaid, and under-appreciated after working as 'essential workers' during a global pandemic. They knew that Starbucks, a multi-billion dollar company, could afford to do better, and that they deserved a voice on the job and a seat at the table.

What started as a handful of brave Buffalo baristas taking a stand and fighting for the right to organize has now spread into a national movement with over 260 unionized Starbucks stores across the country (in less than a year)! And it all started right here in Upstate NY.

Workers continue to face one of the most brutal and aggressive anti-union campaigns in modern US history. They are relying on folks like you to continue to support them so they can win a fair contract.

## CITIZEN ACTION

Inspired by a wave of new organizing happening around the country and wanting to have more of a say at work: in 2022, 50 non-profit staff at Citizen Action of NY organized their union. Styled "Worker Action of NY" these members put forward a set of fair election principles which included card check. With over 90% support on cards, it took management only three hours to recognize our union and get to negotiating our first CBA.

While still negotiating, workers have been able to move management to accept proposals like just cause, non-discrimination, and grievance & arbitration. To its credit, Citizen Action has been the model of what an employer should do when workers organize, but that being said, all thanks really goes to the workers for standing up and moving the whole organization towards justice. Welcome to Workers United RRJB!





# NEW ORGANIZING CAMPAIGNS CONTINUED

## LEXINGTON CO-OP

Workers at the Lexington Co-op in Buffalo have won their union in a landslide election!

"We have taken this step as a means of protecting our dignity as workers and of fulfilling the foundational values of the Co-op by asserting our right to negotiate with our employer on an equal footing," they wrote in their letter to management announcing the organizing campaign. "We believe that the principles guiding the formation of our union run directly parallel to the Co-op's vision of supporting a thriving, local, sustainable economy."

They are asking the Co-op to sign the Fair Election Principles and respect the right to organize.

"Co-op workers believe in the community-minded mission of the Co-op and believe that unionizing will allow us to be even more community-minded going forward," said Philip Kneitinger, a four-year employee at the Hertel store who is also a Workers United steward at Spot Coffee, which he organized in 2019.

Stop by the Elmwood or Hertel co-op locations to wish the workers good luck on their union, and follow them on social media @LexCoopWU!



## POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

Staff at the Police Accountability Board in Rochester launched their union campaign in October, with nearly unanimous support.

The workers are organizing in order to save the agency they work for and enable it to fulfill its purpose and maintain its independence. In their letter to the city requesting recognition of their union, the workers write: "We have organized to defend the mission set by an overwhelming majority of Rochester voters in 2019; to investigate cases of police misconduct, and to assess current RPD policies and practices, through a civilian-controlled process built in partnership with the community we serve. We are forming our union in service of that community, in order to protect the work of PAB employees from mismanagement, retaliation, and unjust termination."

Workers have continued to call on the mayor to recognize the union, per the Rochester city code, and have filed for a union election with the Public Employees Relations Board. Follow them on social media for more updates @PabWUUnited!



**DIRECT  
ACTION  
GETS THE  
GOODS!**

## STARBUCKS UNION VICTORIES

- Monroe & Clover - Rochester
- Clifton Park Center- Clifton Park
- College Avenue - Ithaca
- Columbia Turnpike -East Greenbush
- Crossgates Mall- Albany
- Del-Chip - Buffalo
- Depew - Depew
- East Robinson - Buffalo
- Eastview Mall - Victor
- Elmwood Ave - Buffalo
- Genesee St - Buffalo
- Latham Plaza - Latham
- Kelch Drive - Malta
- Meadow St. - Ithaca
- Shelburne Road - Burlington
- Stuyvesant Plaza - Albany
- The Commons - Ithaca
- Transit Commons - Buffalo
- Vestal Parkway - Vestal
- Mount Hope - Rochester
- New Scotland Ave - Albany
- New Scotland Ave - Albany
- Niskayuna - Schenectady
- Sheridan & Bailey - Buffalo
- Williamsville Place - Williamsville

### FUTURE VICTORIES:

- Camp Rd. - Hamburg
- Walden & Anderson - Buffalo

**SOLIDARITY**









# HEALTH CENTER UPDATES

## SHHC offers Free Home Telehealth Urgent Care Visits to all Working Families!

SHHC is really excited to partner with EZaccessMD to provide telehealth urgent care visits to all actively working SHHC members and their families. Think of this as "Urgent Care, Anywhere, Anytime".

**Starting January 1**, all active workers can call EZ Access 24/7 from their home, car,



and have a live physician consultation via phone or video. The EZ Access physician will diagnose, prescribe medication, or refer the patient to a traditional in person visit, if needed. They can even arrange limited testing in the home, including urine tests, throat cultures and xrays, all at no cost to the member. For many common problems like fever, cough, sinus drainage, urinary infections and muscular injuries, they can provide all the care and treatment members need, without the member having to schedule an appointment or wait at an urgent care facility. This service will be available to all the members in the household, for age > 2 years. Active workers can get more information about this program from their shop steward or union representative.

## Respiratory Virus Season is Back, Big Time- Get Vaccinated!

After over 2 years of masking and distancing, viral infections like Influenza, RSV and Covid-19 are spreading across our community and infecting kids and adults. Hospitals are recording all time high numbers of severe RSV infections, and this flu season is also predicted to be more severe than normal. Because most of these viruses have not been active in the past 2 years; this season is going to be more intense. It's never too late to protect your family and loved ones with vaccination. Please be sure you are up to date on the following:

- Get your annual flu shot
- Get the latest Covid-19 Omicron specific booster dose. This was released this fall, so if you haven't had a Covid shot in the past 6 months, you should definitely take advantage of this safe and effective booster.
- Don't go to work or social gatherings if you have fever, sore throat, or a worsening cough.
- Masking can still protect you and others in public places from all 3 of these viruses

Call the SHHC Pharmacy to arrange vaccination at no cost to you!



# HEALTH CENTER UPDATES CONTINUED

## Sidney Hillman Health Center Local 381

The union negotiated another 3-year contract with the Sidney Hillman Health Center Local 381. Just as all of our members have the right to engage in collective bargaining, so do our health center staff.

We are proud to announce that SHHC shall provide wage increases every year for the life of the contract, while maintaining their current medical insurance plan and all other benefits. We appreciate all of the work SHHC staff do to keep our members and retirees healthy!

## Sidney Hillman Optical Department Updates

During times when many medical coverages have cut back, **the optical benefit was made BROADER** this year to cover more on lenses, including free standard progressive lenses, and a new yearly lens benefit with a prescription change.

The Optical Department is still carrying name brand frames far below retail pricing including Gucci, Tom Ford, Ray Ban, Vera Bradley, and now Maui Jim.

### Operating Hours:

Monday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Tuesday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Wednesday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Thursday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Friday: 9 AM - 5 PM

Saturday: 8 AM - 12 PM

Sunday: closed



# UNION CONTRACT UPDATES



## Xerox workers win hard fought contract

The negotiating team of Local 14A, including officers Chris Miller, Joe Stramonine and Tom Patti, began talks with Xerox August 2021. This was one of the most difficult negotiations in our longstanding history with Xerox, testing our will and patience. Xerox had over 30 proposals and most of their proposals started with the words eliminate and reduce.

For the first time ever negotiating a contract with Xerox, the Company did not provide a contract extension. The Company also claimed that once there was not a contract in place, they were

not required to bargain over retiree benefits. Only two days after Christmas of 2021, Xerox sent letters to thousands of retirees and their dependents announcing that all retiree health, dental, and life insurance benefits would be terminated.

Since that time, the Union has grieved the Company's unilateral decision to terminate retiree benefits promised to retirees in CBAs dating back to the 1980s, and are currently seeking a federal court order to have Xerox arbitrate the dispute pursuant to the CBA.

This situation is currently pending, and the Union is doing everything in its power to fight for our retirees and to get their benefits reinstated.

For active Xerox members, the Union prevailed and after a long ten month battle at the bargaining table, the negotiating committee persevered and provided a three year contract that was ratified. The power of the Union is standing up to corporations, like Xerox, and fighting for all of our members — both current and retired.



# UNION CONTRACT UPDATES CONTINUED

## OTHER CONTRACT RATIFICATIONS

Across our union, lead bargainers and bargaining committees won huge increases for workers across the board. Over 13 contracts were negotiated and ratified this year. Below are just some of the highlights from newly ratified contracts.

### **Aid to Hospitals:**

Workers ratified a three year contract with a \$1.00 in year one and \$.80 in year two and \$.65 in year three.

### **Best Western Inn:**

A 3 year contract was ratified, that included wage increases ranging from 14.70 percent to 29 percent.

### **Colonial Tanning (Local 1712):**

Workers had huge gains with increases to all piece work rates, guaranteed sick time, and increased the insurance buyout of 18.4 percent. Part-time worker also joined the bargaining unit.

### **Energy King (Local 1712):**

Workers passed a contract with a 5.7 percent increase in the first year.

### **Habasit:**

A three year contract was ratified, that included wage increases ranging from 5.6 percent to 35 percent.

### **Hall of Springs and Albany Capital Center (Local 471):**

Workers won wage increases of \$3-\$4/ hour for each classification, added Juneteenth as a paid holiday, and also got the company to agree to put the membership into health insurance at an 80-20 split.

### **Plattsburgh State University (Local 471):**

All member received at least a dollar raise in the first year, with several getting over \$2/hour depending on classification and 2.5 percent increases in years 2 and 3.

### **Rochester Riverside Convention Center:**

Servers, bartenders, and senior kitchen help all received a wage increase ranging from \$2 to \$7.

### **Sahlen Field (Local 4):**

Workers passed a contract with a 14 percent raise for one year.

### **Saratoga Performing Arts Center (Local 471):**

The bargaining committee increased starting wages, negotiated away the tier system, and increased hourly wages of all staff of \$3-\$4/hour depending on their classification.

### **Sealy Manufacturing:**

After a long fight, workers ultimately prevailed and won wage increases of \$2.35 to \$4.95 over the course of the 3 year contract.

### **Spot Coffee:**

A three year contract was ratified with a \$1.50 overall wage increase and a wage re-opener in November of 2023.

### **Tioga Downs Casino Resort (Local 195):**

All employees received a new flat wage increase of 14% over the life of the contract and a \$2,000 signing bonus.

# 2022 ABRAHAM CHATMAN SCHOLARSHIP WINNER BRYNN SIDEBOTHAM!

Brynn Sidebotham, daughter of our very own SHHC Optical Manager Mark Sidebotham, is the recipient of the 2022 Abraham Chatman Scholarship. Brynn is currently a freshman at Monroe Community College where she is currently majoring in Communications. Brynn has plans to eventually transfer to the University of Buffalo.

"It means a lot to me because college is so expensive," Brynn said about receiving the scholarship. "My Dad works in the union. It has so many incredible benefits for my family. The union has helped my family live comfortably and I'm so glad to have received this award."

"Receiving the Abe Chatman scholarship is another example of how fortunate we are to be part of the Union, and work at Sidney Hillman. We are proud of Brynn for putting in the time and effort, and are thankful to Gary, Workers United and the Community Foundation," added Mark Sidebotham.



"In blindly reviewing the essays, Brynn's written submission was exceptional," said Gary Bonadonna Jr. "She really saw the value in unions, and had incredible insight when talking about the wave of new organizing across the country."

This is now the fifth year of the newly revamped Abraham Chatman Scholarship Award, which allows \$2,000 per year for as many as four years for a total of \$8,000. All dependent children of union members attending an accredited two- or four-year college are eligible. You can learn more about the scholarship by visiting The Community Foundation website:

<https://www.racf.org/scholarship-summary/abraham-d-chatman-scholarship/>

Congratulations to Brynn and her family!



# ROCHESTER REGIONAL JOINT BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE 2023

## LOCAL 14A

### Executive Board

#### 6 PM START TIME

January 10th  
March 14th  
May 9th  
July 11th  
September 12th  
November 14th

### Regular Meeting

#### 7 PM START TIME

January 10th  
March 14th  
May 9th  
July 11th  
September 12th  
November 14th

**All Meetings are held at the Workers United Union Hall  
750 East Avenue Rochester, New York 144607**

\*\*\* Nominations are held on September 12th. 2023 nominations include EA Toner, Maintenance, Manufacturing Materials, Super Shop, Quality, Welding \*\*\*



# UNION INFORMATION

**GARY BONADONNA JR.**

Manager

Office: (585) 473 - 3280

Email: gbonadonnajr@rrjb.org

**ROSS CLARK**

Union Representative

Office: (585) 242 - 7551

Email: rclark@rrjb.org

**JOSEPH CONWAY**

Comptroller

Office: (585) 473 - 3280

**EMILY VICK**

Union Representative

Office: (518) 363 - 0800

Email: evick@rrjb.org

**VANESSA PATTERSON**

Union Representative

Office: (518) 363 - 0800

Email: vpatterson@rrjb.org

**CASEY MOORE**

Communications Director

Cell: 302-985-1417

Email:

casey.kennedy.moore@gmail.com

**LILLIAN TOMIK**

Union Representative

Office: (607) 321 - 9095

Email: LTomik@rrjb.org

**ROB VITELLO**

Union Representative

Office: (716) 932-7702

Email: rvitello@rrjb.org

**KRIS MULVANEY**

Union Representative

Office: (716) 932 - 7701

Email: kmulvaney@rrjb.org

**JAZ BRISACK**

Organizing Director

Cell: (662) 607 - 4441

Email: jazbrisack@gmail.com

**WILLIAM WESTLAKE**

Organizer

Cell: 315-744-0030

Email:

wowestlake@gmail.com

**POLICY ON THE FEE OBJECTIONS**

The Rochester Regional Joint Board, in conformance with the requirements of law, has adopted a policy and procedure with respect to dues and fees paid by non-members covered by collective bargaining agreements containing a union security clause. Under this policy, an employee who is subject to a union security clause and who, therefore, as a condition of employment, must pay regular and periodic dues or fees to our Union may perfect an objection with regard to the amount of dues or fees which he or she is being required to pay. An existing Rochester Regional Joint Board member who chooses to object to the payment of full periodic dues uniformly required as a condition of acquiring or retaining membership in our Union must resign from membership. A newly-represented employee who chooses to object to the full payment of dues may refuse to join the Union and will be treated as a fee payer. To the extent permitted by law, non-members cannot participate in Union elections as a voter or a candidate, attend Union meetings, serve as delegates to the Joint Board or as a delegate to an affiliated international union convention, or participate in the process by which collective bargaining agreements are reached and ratified. A non-member may file an objection with regard to the amount of dues or fees he or she is required to pay in writing during the first thirty (30) days following the employee becoming subject to the union security clause and/or during the month of July of any year with the Secretary-Treasurer of the Rochester Regional Joint Board, 750 East Ave., Rochester, N.Y., 14607. If you file a timely notice, your Joint Board dues will be reduced by a percentage equal to the percentage of Joint Board expenditures for political activities and other expenses not related to the Joint Board carrying out its collective bargaining duties. For purposes of this calculation, the Joint Board assumes that its percentage of non-collective bargaining expenses is the same as the percentage of non-collective bargaining expenses of the Service Employees International Association. The Rochester Regional Joint Board expects very few employees it represents will avail themselves of this option since it firmly believes that those it represents recognize the importance of all expenditures which the Union incurs and the many ways in which these expenditures benefit our members.

## *Additional News*

Radisson Hotel in Corning will be undergoing renovations and reopening as a Doubletree by Hilton.

The Spot in Snyder, NY joined the Rochester Regional Joint Board as the newest unionized Spot Coffee cafe! Baristas joined the union after corporate purchased the previously franchised location.





# CONTACT INFORMATION

## Union Office Rochester:

750 East Ave  
Rochester NY 14607  
8 AM - 5 PM  
(585) - 473 - 3280  
1-800-383-3797 (This number  
can be used to reach all union  
offices)

## Hillman Center:

Health Services  
8 AM - 4:30 PM  
(585) 473 - 2000  
(585) 473 - 3309 (Fax)

## Optical

Weekdays, 9 AM - 5 PM by  
appointment (noontime  
appointments are accepted)  
Saturdays, by appointment  
only, 8 AM - noon  
(585) - 271 - 1911  
(585) 442 - 7216 (fax)

## Pharmacy

Weekdays, 9 AM - 5 PM  
Saturdays, 8 AM - noon  
(585) - 473 - 2555  
(585) - 242 - 7580 (fax)

## Albany District:

2124 Doubleday Avenue  
Ballston Spa 12020  
8:30 AM - 4:30 PM  
(Except Friday to 4 PM)  
(518) - 363 - 0800  
(800) - 383 - 3797  
(518) 363 - 0804 (Fax)

**AliCare/Amalgamated &  
24hr nurses helpline.**  
Members regarding ALL health  
insurance inquiries:  
1-888-771-9075 (or number on  
the back of ID cards)

## Customer Center Hours:

M - TH: 8 AM - 8 PM  
F: 8 AM - 6 PM  
Saturday: 9 AM - 2 PM

AliCare member portal for  
members to register:  
<https://connect.alicare.com>

## CVS member portal for members to register:

<https://caremark.com>

**Anthem blue Cross Blue  
Shield (BCBS)** member portal  
for members to register:  
[www.bcbs.com](http://www.bcbs.com) OR 1-800-810  
BLUE (2583)

## National Retirement Fund:

M - F: 7 AM - 4:30 PM  
Pension/Retirement Benefits:  
1-914-367-5800

## Buffalo District:

Buffalo District Office  
4429 Union Road,  
Cheektowaga, 14225  
(Note: The space is in the  
office building located at the  
rear of 4427 Union Road).  
8 AM - 4 PM  
(716) 932 - 7701  
(800) 383 - 3797  
(716) 932 - 7702 (Fax)

## Local 4 - BUFFALO

Local 4 Business rep, servicing,  
negotiations, union  
membership and dues:  
(716) 932 - 7701  
(800) 383 - 3797  
(716) 932 - 7702 (Fax)

Local 4 Insurance  
M - F: 8 AM - 9 PM  
Saturday: 9 AM - 2 PM  
(800) 383 - 3797  
(914) 367 - 4108 (Fax)

Local 4 Pension Funds  
M - F: 8:30 AM - 4:45 PM  
(800) - 383 - 3797



# REFLECTIONS

PLEASE: if your name or address has changed, let us know. Simply complete the form below with the new information AND enclose the old mailing label used for sending you this issue of REFLECTIONS. New mailing information (Please print all information)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
State

Rochester Regional Joint Board  
750 East Ave,  
Rochester NY 14607

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID Rochester,  
N.Y. Permit No.  
4395

