

# LOCAL 3

APRIL-MAY 2009

## STOREWORKER NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

LOCAL 3 UNITED STOREWORKERS

RWDSU/UFCW

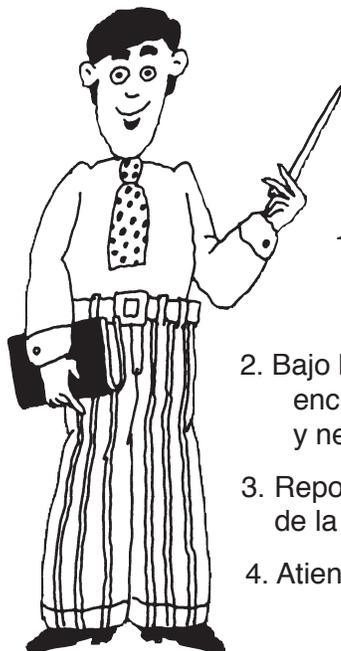
# UNION ELECTIONS

APRIL 29<sup>th</sup> & APRIL 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
6A.M. – 9A.M. & 4P.M. – 9P.M.

MARIELLA PIZZA  
151 E. 60<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
ACROSS THE STREET  
FROM BLOOMINGDALE'S

## ***Helpful Hints for Union Members***

1. Under the Union contract, and guaranteed by law, you have a right to union representation when you are called to the Security Dept., the Human Resources office or any Manager's office.
2. Under the law you have a right to a leave of absence for up to 12 weeks as per the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), if a member of your family is sick and needs your care, provided you present medical certification.
3. Report all accidents and injuries immediately to your manager and to the Local 3 office.
4. Attend your union membership meetings.



## ***Consejos Para Miembros de la Union***

1. Bajo el Contrato de la Union, y garantizado por la Ley, usted tiene el derecho de ser representado por la Union cuando usted es llamado a la Oficina de gerencia del Departamento de Seguridad de Recursos Humanos.
2. Bajo la Ley, usted tiene el derecho a licencia hasta 12 semanas por el Acto de Ausencia por Familia o Enfermedad (FMLA), si un miembro de su familia esta enfermo y necesita cuidado, proveyendo una certificacion medica actual.
3. Reporte todos los accidentes y heridas inmediatamente a su gerente y a la oficina de la Local 3.
4. Atienda a las reuniones de la membresia de la Union

## **Workers Win Contracts**

Local 3 President, Ida Torres, announced that building maintenance / house-keeping workers at Bloomingdale's SoHo have finally won a union contract. After nearly three years of contending with the Company's stalling tactics the workers are now protected by a three year agreement that increases wages and guarantees yearly increases.

This unit of unionized workers had to fight against their employer's tactics to forestall the workers' making any advancement. Many workers suffered indignities during the organizing drive, but the workers stood united in support of the union's determination to negotiate a fair contract. Building maintenance workers at Bloomingdale's SoHo are employed by IFS, a cleaning contracting company that services many department stores. The organizing drive was led by a rank and file worker in conjunction with Local 3 President Ida Torres. "This organizing campaign was very important to me personally because housekeeping workers are usually at the bottom of the ladder and do not receive the recognition and respect they deserve for the role they play in any business," said Torres.

### **Local 3 Storeworker**

Vol. XXIII, No. 1 April-May 2009

Published by Local 3  
United Storeworkers, RWDSU/UFCW  
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Sec.-Treas.: Cassandra A. Berrocal  
Recorder: Shaun Kavanagh

Contributions on topics of interest to members of the Union are invited. Correspondence should be sent to the address above.

# Berrocal Receives Award

Cassandra A. Berrocal, Local 3 Secretary-Treasurer, was awarded the “Phenomenal Woman of the Year Award” by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People/NAACP. The award ceremony was held at the Williams Institutional CME Church on Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

The coveted NAACP award was presented to Berrocal for her “outstanding participation and leadership in the Civil Rights/Immigrant Rights movement and Women’s Rights struggles.

Berrocal graduated from the State University of New York with a degree in Labor Relations. She is a founding member of the Coalition of Labor Union Women and serves on the Organization’s Executive Board. Berrocal also works with United Latinos, the Minority Coalition and the Women’s Network constituency groups of the UFCW.

Casey is on “union leave” from Bloomingdale’s in accordance with the Union Contract.



## Fairness for Working People

Millions of workers in the U.S. are denied rights and suffer from mis-treatment by their employer because they do not have the protection of a union contract. The U.S. Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, yet today, in 2009, millions of workers are denied union protection.

In the United States, working people find the deck stacked against them. The structure of labor law makes it extraordinarily difficult for them to organize into a union. And if they cannot organize, they have no ability to fight for fair wages or ensure that their constitutional rights are respected at the workplace. Scholars have repeatedly shown that when the government makes it easier for workers to organize to protect their rights and interests, they not only win higher wages but also spend that money on consumer goods, pumping money into the economy and generating growth.

Call it a stimulus package from the bottom up. All it requires are labor laws that are fair and that stop employer intimidation aimed at preventing workers’ rights to a union – measures like the Employee Free Choice Act are needed.

Since 1980, worker productivity has increased by 70 percent, but wages have grown by only 5 percent. Who has profited from working people’s increased productivity? The growing gap between CEO and worker pay suggests the answer.

Amid the current economic crisis, as workers face unemployment or confront lower pay and reduced health benefits, it is important that they have the ability to fight for their rights. The majority of workers want a union, surveys have shown, but aggressive corporate strategies have made most of them fear for their jobs if they attempt to unionize. Unfortunately, their fears are grounded in reality.

The Employee Free Choice Act would take an important step toward restoring workers’ rights. Existing laws include few penalties for employers who intimidate or fire workers. Even when workers win the right to be represented by a union, current laws allow employers to stall by appealing or engaging in bad-faith bargaining.

The Employee Free Choice Act would return democracy to the workplace by giving workers a clear and straightforward way to make their voices heard. It would allow workers to signal their desire for union representation either by choosing an election or by a process of majority sign-up. This method makes it much harder for employers to corrupt the process through a campaign of intimidation.

The National Labor Relations Act, includes the same strategy for allowing workers to exercise their rights to a union; it resulted in millions of workers joining unions, and creating a middle class, by negotiating higher wages and recovering from the Great Depression. Corporate campaigning and careful partnerships with conservatives resulted in the undoing of this measure in the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. The Employee Free Choice Act would simply restore rights that workers long ago fought hard to win, but then The Employee Free Choice Act would restore workers’ right to make their voices heard and achieve true democracy at their workplaces.

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# COMMENTARY



*by Torres & Berrocal*

The deep recession that we are all experiencing brings several factors to light. Corporate greed, the vast gap between corporate compensation and workers' wages, the need for a redistribution of money, the millions of people in America without health care, the realization of the amount of homelessness in our country and the serious need for a better system of education are only some of the glaring matters that must be addressed.

Most importantly, the rights and benefits to which union workers are entitled as against what non-union workers have has come to light.

Our nation is saved by the fact that there is a president in the White House who is sensitive to the needs of working people, to the needs of the corporate structure, to the nation's needs as part of

an international community, and who is willing to face reality and to act accordingly.

Every industry is being affected by the current financial crisis except perhaps health care and education. Luxury retailing is affected disproportionately but it's expected to rally eventually in response to the stimulus package.

Organized labor, the AFL-CIO, Change To Win and the NEA are engaged in talks about merging into one labor federation in order to maximize the strength and unity of "worker power."

Local Union Elections will take place on April 29<sup>th</sup> and April 30<sup>th</sup>. *Be sure to vote as a demonstration of unity and strength within Local 3.*

**In Union Solidarity**