

# LOCAL 3

JANUARY – MARCH 2011

## STOREWORKER NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

LOCAL 3 UNITED STOREWORKERS

RWDSU/UFCW

## New Local 3 President

On February 17<sup>th</sup> the Local 3 Executive Board unanimously elected Cassandra A. Berrocal as President of Local 3 United Storeworkers RWDSU/UFCW. The election by the Board was held following the retirement of Ida Torres.

Berrocal was elected based on her many years of activity on behalf of Local 3 workers and on the continuing struggle for workers' rights. Berrocal was born and raised in New York City where she attended Parochial schools and Public high school. Both her parents were union members. Berrocal started as a volunteer in the Local 3 office during her teenage years. Following her graduation from Julia Richmond High School, Berrocal was employed by Bloomingdale's and worked in the Merchandise Adjustments department. Berrocal's union studies at Empire State College/SUNY led to her achieving a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial and Labor Relations. The late John O'Neill who served as Local 3 President for over 25 years hired her to serve Local 3 members. Berrocal has received various awards for her



*Newly elected Local 3 President Cassandra A. Berrocal.*

## Security Plan Big Win

The Board of Trustees of the Storeworkers Security Plan voted to agree to the Union's proposal to extend the Sick Leave Day Benefit to every union member with more than one year of service whether or not they are enrolled in the Company's medical plan.

In a continuing effort to improve the terms and conditions of employment for every union member, the Union Trustees of the Storeworkers Security Plan proposed some changes that would include every member of the Local.

The Board of Trustees also voted to agree with the Union's proposal that every member of Local 3 with one year or more of service be entitled to name a beneficiary for a "Death Benefit." This benefit shall be \$3,000.00.

The Local 3 Union Contract with Bloomingdale's is due to expire next year. Job security and health care costs are expected to be at the top of the list of the Union's demands. Two major factors, the Local 1-S/Macy's New York 2011 settlement and the state of the economy nationwide may impinge upon 2012 negotiations. The Bloomingdale's contract with UFCW Local 400 in Washington, D.C. and with UFCW Local 5 in San Francisco will also have some bearing on Local 3 negotiations. The Union must prepare for a difficult contract drive and rally all its forces and strength through union solidarity.

dedication to workers' rights and serves on the Executive Boards of the UFCW Women's Network and is a Vice President of the UFCW Minority Coalition.

"I pledge to proactively continue the mission entrusted to me as President of Local 3 by starting preparations for the 2012 Union Contract Expiration at Bloomingdale's. The rights and benefits established by our Union Contract have set the standards for the department store industry for over 75 years. I thank the Stewards and the Executive Board for trusting me with this important obligation and vow to lead the fight to improve earnings opportunities for every Local 3 member," said President Cassandra A. Berrocal at the close of the meeting.

## Special Commemorations

### FEBRUARY – BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During February of each year the Nation celebrates Black History Month. The commemorations are to celebrate the many contributions that Black Americans have made to our country and to the world in general.

President Cassandra Berrocal was among the dignitaries invited to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the New York City Chapter of the NAACP at an event in the NYS office building. During her remarks, Berrocal noted the little known fact that the first President of Local 3 was an African American who died in action during the second World War.

### MARCH – WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The role of women in the development of our nation was not celebrated until recently. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Triangle Factory Fire which killed 147 persons, mostly women, who were locked in and could not escape is being observed in very special ways this year.

The Labor Arts Association is honoring 20 women activists who have devoted their lives to improving workers' rights by their union activities and as labor educators. Local 3 President Emeritus Ida Torres is among those being recognized on March 21, 2011 as a union activists/educator.

## Executive Board Appoints Leadership

The Local 3 Executive Board voted to adjust the Local 3 leadership team due to the retirement of Ida Torres who served the Local 3 membership for many years.

Costello Dash was appointed Local Recorder and Shaun Kavanagh was appointed Secretary-Treasurer by the Board on February 17, 2011.

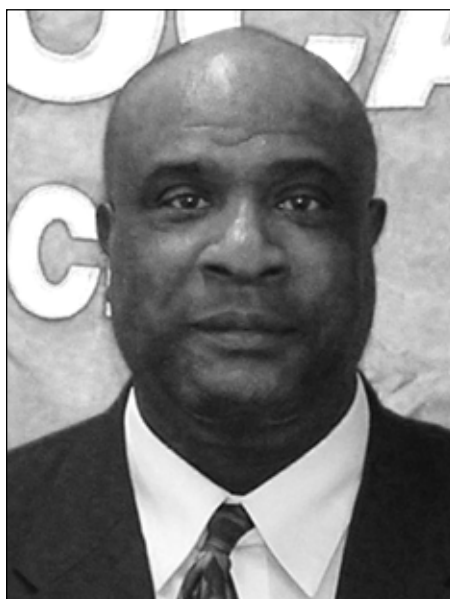
Dash was employed by Bloomingdale's in March 1980 where he worked as a stockman in various departments throughout the Store. He served as a Union Steward for nearly 20 years before his appointment to the Local 3 staff in 2004. Dash developed a reputation as a diligent worker and a vigilant Steward in defense of the Union Contract. He was elected to the Executive Board during the 2009 Local 3 Elections.

Kavanagh was employed by Bloomingdale's in 1987 to work as a sales professional in the Furniture department. He was also appointed to the Union staff in 2004 after many years serving as the Furniture department Steward. Kavanagh served an apprenticeship on staff during the 1996 negotiations and returned to the store shortly thereafter. Kavanagh was elected Local Recorder during the 2009 Local 3 Elections.

Both members are committed union activists who are pursuing labor studies at the Cornell University NYS School of ILR.



Secretary-Treasurer Shaun Kavanagh



Recorder Costello Dash

### Local 3 Storeworker

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



# 2011 Wage Increase

Effective March 1, 2011, all hourly paid sales employees and all non-selling employees on the payroll as of February 1, 2011 (including evening/ weekend employees and contingent employees, but excluding straight commission employees, waiters and waitresses, and employees whose rates are related to outside rates), shall receive an increase of fifty five cents (\$.55) per hour.

This General Wage Increase is being paid despite the department store industry suffering from a floundering business climate. The decrease in spending by consumers as a whole affected the profit margin in every industry from agriculture to high technology.

The union continues to pursue making the ADR evaluations formula fairer

to sales professionals, and hopes to resolve this problem soon.

It is expected that it will be difficult to duplicate the 2008 wage and fringe benefits package in 2012. "Union members at Bloomingdale's 59<sup>th</sup> Street will have to build a strong force of union solidarity to hold on to what we have," said Local 3 President Cassandra A. Berrocal.

## Depressed Economy Forces Lay-Offs

The current depressed economy has created thousands of lay-offs in every industry in America. Department stores did not achieve the expected earnings to recover from the poor figures of 2010. The Christmas business necessary to make up for the losses caused by the downturn were never realized. Not even the rise in seasonal employment could offset the recession we are in.

Layoffs have abounded throughout the department store industry. Some companies have closed unprofitable stores and others have cut deeply. The Union was instrumental in securing an enhanced severance package for eleven long standing Union members who wanted to retire. These members applied for a "permanent voluntary layoff." They had participated in the many negotiating campaigns mounted by the Union during their over thirty years of service with the Company. Among those who retired are: Felipe Aleman, Rug stock; Dermoth Austin, Display; Issac Dickerson, Display; Jeanette Edwards, Stock; Felicita Carby, Stock; Antonio Jimenez, Stock; Gloria Burton, Stock; Joan Feckete, Catalog; Virgie Shields, Counting

Room; Miriam Ramirez, Catalog; Edwin Hutchins, Stock.

The Union negotiated an enhanced severance package that includes one week's severance pay for each year worked up to fifty two weeks; three months of free health care coverage; all contractual paid time due including 2010 vacation; a lifetime employee discount and SWSP Continued Benefit Coverage Retirement benefits.

As usual, a Union Representative provided personal assistance to each retiree in applying for the benefits due.

The trend in the department store industry is swinging towards forming an industry staffed by part-time workers who are having a difficult time surviving on part time wages and no fringe benefits. The labor union movement is starting to mobilize in an attempt to stem the tide.

The rally led by the RWDSU on the steps of New York City Hall supporting organized labor's project to establish a "living wage" as minimum earnings was supported by the Local 3 leadership team. President Cassandra A. Berrocal, Secretary-Treasurer Shaun Kavanagh and Local Recorder Costello Dash participated in the rally along with Local 1-S President Ken Bordieri, RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum and Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wurm.



Union leaders attend City Hall rally for the establishment of a "living wage."



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**LOCAL 3**

# COMMENTARY



*by Berrocal & Kavanagh*

Organized Labor is at a crossroads in the history of our country. The current protest rallies by public sector union members are justified by the looming threat to cut workers' collective bargaining rights.

Workers join a union in order to improve their wages, fringe benefits and the terms and conditions of employment. Where there is no union, the employer conducts an "employment at will" workplace. This means that workers have "permanent job insecurity" and cannot challenge any action by the employer to terminate their job.

The US Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the average union member earns \$200 more in wages and benefits than non-union workers.

In the department store industry, the Local 1-S RWDSU/UFCW contract with Macy's New York expires this year. The 1-S workers are mobilizing for

especially difficult negotiations due to the economy and because the corporate structure is intent on destroying the benefits that working people have achieved through union contract negotiations. Local 3 members must be aware that all working people must stand together in order to protect each other and to save the middle class. We will support the 1-S workers because they will be the first to negotiate in this depressed economic climate.

We must also look to unionize non-union department store workers in order to protect the gains that we have made through contract negotiations.

Your Shop Steward is the first line of defense. Check your Union Bulletin Board for their names and extensions.

**In Union Solidarity**

