

# 2013 Pittsburgh Labor Notes Troublemakers School

October 5, 10:30am – 5:00pm • Human Services Building

**Registration: 10:30 am - 11:00 am**

**Opening Plenary: 11:00 am - 12:15 pm**, Liberty Room

The New Labor Movement: Evolving Forms of Worker Organizing

**Sue Garza**, Chicago Teachers Union

**Mike Harms**, ATU Local 85

**Margot Nikitas**, Fight Back Pittsburgh

*Moderator: Larsene Taylor*, UE Local 150,

North Carolina Public Sector Workers

**Lunch: 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm**, Liberty Room

**Workshop Session I: 1:15 pm - 2:30 pm** (see over for details)

Stewards' Training, *Liberty Room*

Fighting Discrimination in the Workplace, *Homestead Grays Room*

The Economic Crisis: Is this Recovery?, *Rachel Carson Room*

**Workshop Session II: 2:45 pm - 4:00 pm** (see over for details)

Secrets of a Successful Organizer, *Liberty Room*

Taking Back Your Local/Running for Office as a Rank and Filer, *Homestead Grays Room*

Organizing Without a Contract, *Rachel Carson Room*

**Closing Plenary: 4:15 pm - 5:00 pm**, Liberty Room

Lessons from Labor's Past: Stories of Our Victories

**Nick Molnar**, United Mine Workers of America

**Jim Savage**, United Steelworkers Local 10-1

*Moderator: Mark Brenner*, Labor Notes

**Troublemakers School Party: 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm**

ATU Local 85 Hall, 2022 Chateau Street (North Side)

Drinks, music, and fun!



# Workshops

## WORKSHOP SESSION I

1:15 pm - 2:30 pm

### **Stewards' Training**

“What have you done to gain entrance to this place?” St. Peter asked the woman standing before the pearly gates? “I’ve been a shop steward for many years,” she replied. The doors instantly swung open. “Come on in,” St. Peter motioned to her, “you’ve had your share of hell.” Shop stewards are the bricks and mortar of rank and file power. Come to this workshop to learn and share tips on how to sharpen your steward skills.

*John Lepley, USW Education and Membership Development Department*

### **Fighting Discrimination in the Workplace**

Have you ever witnessed or been a victim of harassment and discrimination in your workplace? In this workshop participants will be exposed to conditions involving racial, sexual, religious, gender, and other forms of discrimination. Participants will strategize how to effectively deal with these issues in their workplace by collaborative brainstorming and sharing personal experiences.

*Jamaal Craig, USW Civil and Human Rights Department*

### **The Economic Crisis: Is this Recovery?**

States are swimming in red ink, and politicians across the spectrum are putting public services on the chopping block. Union teachers, bus drivers, and librarians are called the new public enemy number one. Private sector employers are squeezing on contracts as if it were still 2009. This workshop will explain how state and local budgets got to be such a mess, why politicians are slashing and burning instead of taxing the rich, and what unions need to do to get out of this bind.

*Mark Brenner, Labor Notes*

## WORKSHOP SESSION II

2:45 pm - 4:00 pm

### **Secrets of a Successful Organizer**

How do you get your co-workers to join you in building union strength? Learn proven strategies that get more members involved. Map your workplace; develop a winning plan of action with your co-workers; and craft different kinds of activity to maximize participation in the union.

*Samantha Winslow, Labor Notes*

### **Taking Back Your Local/Running for Office as a Rank and Filer**

This workshop will focus on what it takes to begin changing your local or your union into a democratic, rank-and-file controlled union. We will share our experiences in doing so, welcome new ideas, and exchange ideas about running for office as a rank-and-filer representative of your reform movement.

*Mel Packer, co-founder of Teamsters for a Democratic Union and Labor Notes*

### **Organizing Without a Contract**

Organized labor in the U.S. is at a crossroads. Labor union density is at the lowest level since before the Great Depression. The majority of union organizing campaigns utilizing the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election process end in failure. Which way forward for organized labor? In this workshop, we'll explore organizing “non-majority,” or “premajority” labor unions as a means for rebuilding the U.S. labor movement. We'll discuss the strategy and tactics for organizing a premajority union, and we'll hear from workers in both the private-sector and public-sector who are building premajority unions in their workplaces.

*John Thompson, UE Director of Education*

# Speaker Bios

**Mark Brenner** is the director of Labor Notes, a 34 year-old project dedicated to putting the movement back in the labor movement. Before joining the staff at Labor Notes, Mark spent a decade working with living wage campaigns around the country while and economist at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. For several years he also served as an officer in his union, a local affiliate of the Massachusetts Teachers Association. In addition to his regular columns in Labor Notes magazine Mark is a frequent radio and television commentator on labor issues for NPR, FOX News, and Pacifica.

**Jamaal Craig** has over 10 years' experience in labor and politics having worked at the National AFL-CIO and SEIU, he currently works for the USW in the Civil and Human Rights Department. During the 2012 Presidential Elections he served as the Pennsylvania State Coordinator for the AFL-CIO My Vote My Right Election Protection Campaign. He serves on the National Board of Directors of the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute.

**About Sue Garza:** I grew up on the Southeast side of Chicago, in a neighborhood filled with over 20 steel mills and over 65,000 steel workers. My dad Edward Sadlowski was Director for USW District 31, representing over 130,000 dues paying rank and file members. He instilled in me very early the importance of being a Unionist and "Fighting the Good Fight". It was a common occurrence for me to be dragged out of bed at the crack of dawn to walk a picket line or stand at a mill

gate to pass out handbills. So it was natural for me to become involved with the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) when I started working for Chicago Public Schools 19 years ago. I have served as a Union delegate at my school for many years. I have also served as a District Supervisor; I was a Strike Coordinator during the CTU strike last year, and was a regional lead during the C.O.R.E. (Caucus of Rank and File Educators) campaign to reelect CTU President Karen Lewis. I currently hold the position of CTU Area Vice President. I am also a counselor at Jane Addams elementary school in the same southeast side neighborhood in which I grew up. The things my dad instilled in me are still with me today. I bleed union and wouldn't have it any other way.

**Mike Harms** is Recording Secretary of Amalgamated Transit Workers (ATU) Local 85 in Pittsburgh, PA, which is at the forefront of fighting against budget cuts and concessions and for dedicated, sustainable funding for public transit. Mike is a longtime workers' rights activist and organizer and was a founding member of Pittsburghers for Public Transit. As a Local 85 officer, Mike has worked to build an active and involved membership.

**John Lepley** is originally from Somerset County, Pennsylvania but has also called Indiana, Connecticut, Alaska, Colorado and North Dakota home. He is a member of USW Local 3657.

**Nick Molnar** became a member of United Mine Workers Local 1257 in 1974. He later served two terms as President of UMWA District 2, which encompasses all of Pennsylvania. During the Pittston Strike of 1989-1990 he organized a rally of over 5000 miners and supporters in Ebensburg and also led a large District 2 contingent to join Camp Solidarity at Pittston. Nick was also involved in organizing campaigns in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia and West Virginia. In 1994 he served as an election observer in South Africa's first free election in which Nelson Mandela was elected the nation's first black president.

**Margot Nikitas** is Associate General Counsel for the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) and Organizing Chair of Fight Back Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh chapter of the USW Associate Membership Program.

**Mel Packer** is a long time social justice activist, now retired. As a working Teamster from 1969- 1982, he was one of the founders of Teamsters for a Democratic Union, a long standing and often successful rank and file movement to democratize the Teamsters Union (IBT). Mel was also a founder of Labor Notes.

**Jim Savage** is the President of USW Local 10-1 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and a member of the Steelworkers' National Oil Bargaining Policy Committee. Savage has a long history of progressive and militant union activism and in 2011 he led a comprehensive campaign to save Sunoco's South Philadelphia refinery and recruit new owners to purchase the refinery.

**Larsene Taylor** has worked as a health care technician at Cherry Hospital in Goldsboro, NC for 21 years. In 2001, Larsene was a founding member of UE Local 150, North Carolina Public Service Workers Union in the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), helping to lead the "Dignity Campaign" among health techs throughout DHHS. She went on to organize the UE Local 150 DHHS Division Council and to serve as an officer of the union at the local, regional, and national levels. Today, Larsene not only chairs the DHHS Council and serves as Vice President of UE Local 150, but is a member of UE's National Executive Board (the GEB), UE Research & Education Board, and Regional Executive Board. Ms. Taylor also chairs the rank and file committee that coordinated the work of the International Workers Justice Campaign (IWJC). She is a member of Black Workers For Justice (BWFJ) & the NAACP (Moral Monday Arrestee). She is the mother of one adult son and a prominent member of the Goldsboro - Wayne county community in North Carolina.

**John Thompson** is the UE Director of Education and a UE International Representative. Before coming on staff in 2006, John helped organize his shop, a plastic blow-molder, into UE in 1991. In the sixteen years he worked in his shop, John served various roles in his local union: steward, vice-president and president.

**Samantha Winslow** is a staff writer and organizer for Labor Notes. She was an organizer for SEIU-United Healthcare Workers West in California and later for the breakaway National Union of Healthcare Workers. Samantha covers teachers, public sector workers, and immigrants, and helps plan Troublemakers Schools and Labor Notes events around the country.