



Women's News

The Teamster Women's Newsletter

James P. Hoffa, General President • C. Thomas Keegel, General Secretary-Treasurer • Sue Mauren, Women's Conference Director

The Fight of Her Life

Rosie DeMitro Faces Tough Battle, Supports Others

It was at the Teamsters Convention in 2006 where Rosie DeMitro experienced the first symptoms of the difficult path her life would take. The sharp pains felt like a dagger repeatedly going through her chest, as she doubled over in pain in her Las Vegas hotel room. DeMitro didn't know what was wrong. But by the time she got back home to Toronto, she would find out.

"You have breast cancer," the doctor told me. He wasn't able to look me in the eye, but I told him, "It's OK. I'm going to be fine," Rosie said.

Rosie was diagnosed with aggressive inflammatory breast cancer, also known as "the silent killer" because it does not become apparent until it is in the advanced stages, and in DeMitro's case, excruciatingly painful.

Representing the Women

DeMitro began chemotherapy shortly after her diagnosis. However, she found it difficult to slow down an active pace of life, including full-time work and participation in her union. She was a 24-year Teamster with Purolator Courier; an 11-year Local 938 shop steward; a facilitator for new recruits; and a union Trustee. She did everything.

And as President of the Teamsters Ontario Women's Caucus, Rosie couldn't miss the 2006 Teamsters Women's Conference.

"I told the doctor I had to go to Phoenix to represent my Canadian women. She told me I could go, but warned me I'd begin losing my hair

See *The Fight of Her Life* on page 2

RAMPING UP at Continental



Cassandra Bowles was working at Continental Airlines in Newark, N.J. in 2007, when the ramp worker began experiencing stomach pains. She was taken to the hospital by ambulance, where she found out she was eight weeks pregnant.

"Once I came back, I spoke to my AD (assistant director) and I informed him that I was pregnant. I asked if there was light duty for pregnant women and he said, 'Continental doesn't acknowledge pregnant women because men don't get pregnant.'"

Bowles felt she was being pushed out of her job by management because she couldn't get in the bin to load the aircraft or get on the tugs because the bouncing caused stomach pain.

On doctor's orders, Bowles eventually took time off from her physically demanding job, resulting in the loss of three months' seniority. Her son was born four weeks premature on April 17, 2007.

"I promised myself that I would fight for a union and I've been fighting since the day my healthy baby boy cried into the world," Bowles said.

Fighting for Fairness

Bowles is one of nearly 8,000 employees who work on the ramp at Continental Airlines nationwide who recently voted to join the Teamsters. The ramp workers are looking forward to making improvements to their working conditions, including gaining fair pay, respect and more job security. There are 3,600 mechanics at Continental who already enjoy a strong Teamster contract and the ramp workers are looking to join them.

Throughout the campaign, Bowles traveled to events and rallies across the country; she's met with Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa; and she has been an outspoken advocate for humane and fair treatment on the job.

See *Ramping Up at Continental* on page 3

A Message from Women's Conference Director Sue Mauren

The Union Advantage

We know, and the research clearly shows, that union membership makes for a better life. It makes for better wages, better health care, a secure retirement and a better workplace overall. That's why it's important that our nation's laws make forming a union a fair process for all workers.



The Employee Free Choice Act is legislation that will make a critical difference, allowing workers to more easily join a union.

The benefits of union membership are undeniable, in particular, for women.

Women now make up more than 45 percent of unionized workers. In the next 10 years, women will be the majority of union workers. This is significant because it reflects a growing diversity in the labor movement and the work force. It also means that issues like sick days and maternal leave may take on a greater importance and value in our work culture.

According to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, joining a union raises the chances a woman will have health insurance more than a four-year college degree and it raises a woman's wage as much as a full year of college. Union women earn about 32 percent more than nonunion women.

For those of us fortunate enough to have a Teamster contract, we must appreciate and defend it. Let's help organize others and "spread the wealth."



The Fight of Her Life

Continued from page 1

there," DeMitra said. "And I did."

DeMitra endured 26 weeks of intense radiation to kill the cancer. But her spirit never died.

"You can't give up or give into it. If you give into cancer, it will beat you, but you need to beat cancer," DeMitra said.

*"You can't give up
or give into it. If you
give into cancer, it will
beat you, but you need
to beat cancer,"*

—ROSIE DEMITRO

Helping Others

Staying positive is a challenge that DeMitra tackles head on every day. She is now on disability from work because of lymphedema, a painful swelling caused by the removal of lymph nodes from her arm.

Now in full remission, DeMitra directs her strength to bringing hope to others.

"I go to Gilda's Club once a week and talk to the ladies battling cancer. It's a really great place to go to speak with other women. There's a lot of support," she said.

DeMitra would like to see all Teamsters—from the International Union to rank-and-file—support their brothers and sisters who are battling cancer and help out cancer foundations, which rely heavily on donations to do their good work.

When people ask DeMitra how she's doing these days she replies, "I'm still here." She urges others to get mammograms for early detection, and advises those battling cancer to remain vigilant with their health and always have a positive outlook on life.

"When it comes to your hopes, my best advice is live for today and appreciate everything," Rosie said. "Really, sincerely, stop and smell the roses."

Save the Date!

**Join us at the 2010
Teamsters Women's Conference!**

September 16 – 18, 2010

Minneapolis, Minnesota

More details to follow soon



Baumann Bus Workers Unite

Eyes on the Prize

Pamela Mason and her co-workers with Baumann Bus exhibited great courage and determination in becoming Teamsters.

Mason and a half dozen of her all female co-workers began talking in October 2008 about joining Local 1205 in Farmingdale, N.Y. They were fed up with not getting respect, not having affordable and decent health care and seeing their paychecks shorted.

It was through talking about their concerns that the women realized their co-workers at the eight other Long Island locations for the Baumann Bus transportation company, which includes Baumann & Sons Bus, Acme Bus, Alert Coach and Brookset Bus, faced the same concerns on the job and wanted to make a positive change.

Recently, the 1,700 workers voted 906-644 in favor of Teamster representation in an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. This is a truly historic election, as only 26 certification election

victories have taken place for bargaining units of 1,700 or more employees through the National Labor Relations Board in the past 20 years. This is one of those victories.

Working Together

Throughout their campaign, the drivers, driver assistants and mechanics held committee meetings, which grew in size as more workers joined the cause. They knocked on doors and held rallies. Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa was joined by Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and other prominent political, community and faith leaders to support the workers' efforts. And a volunteer commission made up of five key community leaders throughout Long Island stood up for the workers' right to organize free of interference and intimidation from their employer.

"The laws in this country need to change. We need the Employee Free Choice Act," Mason said. "Just the fact that they were able to bring in union busters from

another state that don't know anything about us at all, and that don't know what our lives are like, shows that it's all about keeping the money in the boss's pockets. It didn't work."

Many of the workers, single mothers in particular, united to improve wages and health care for their children and are looking forward to negotiating a strong Teamster contract.

"We need to be able to afford basic life necessities, like a roof over our heads and food in our mouths," Mason said. "I was on my husband's health insurance, but recently became divorced, so now I don't have the insurance because I can't afford it."

Mason was heavily involved in the organizing effort from the beginning and believes that women have a particular tenacity where it concerns organizing.

"My motto is, 'Keep your head to the sky and your eyes on the prize.' We have a lot more power than we think we have. We're Teamster women and we are not going to be intimidated."

RAMPING UP at Continental

"When I talk to my co-workers about the union, I tell them, 'What if that was your wife, or your sister, or your daughter that was being treated the way I was being treated?' With the union, I wouldn't have been treated that way; they couldn't just do what they want."

Bowles has two children and they understand the commitment and the time it took for their mother to

Continued from page 1

participate actively in organizing.

"My little boy goes around the house saying, 'Teamsters, Teamsters,' because he knows it's important to me. If you want a union and it's something you need because you have children and a family to take care of, you go for it. You've got to fight for what you believe in," Bowles said.

A Message from General President James P. Hoffa

Protecting Jobs

Protecting Teamster jobs is one of our most sacred duties. Lately, our fight to save jobs has led us to employ new methods, including taking action against powerful Wall Street financial firms.

The Teamsters Union often employs new and innovative methods when organizing potential members

and during contract campaigns, much like our recent YRC Worldwide battle.

In this, as in every campaign the Teamsters embark on,

member involvement is crucial. Freight Teamsters stepped up and got involved in the YRCW fight, and car haulers are stepping up to help in this one.

Hundreds of Teamsters have already taken an active role in the campaign, handbilling at dealerships and attending rallies. The union has also reached out to members of Congress, the White House, safety advocates and other allies. For more information, visit carbuyersbeware.com.

The Teamsters Union is always looking for strong, proud members to get involved. For more information on what you can do on these or other issues, please visit www.teamster.org.



DRIVE is a political committee that furthers labor-related goals, including making contributions to support candidates for local, state and federal offices. Individuals may refuse to join or contribute without fear of reprisal.

Find out more about this exciting program to build Teamster power on the web www.teamster.org/drive



Take a Stand for Working Families

Visit www.teamster.org

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Washington, DC
Permit No. 4481