

Weekly Word



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Last Week to Sign Up

This is just a friendly reminder that entry forms for the Corporate Challenge are due this week. Anyone intending to participate in the run/walk/stroll with their brothers and sisters in FSW need to get their entry forms and \$25 check (returned when you participate in the Corporate Challenge event) to Ed Thomas by next Monday. The last forms will be taken at the membership meeting that evening.

This year's Corporate Challenge is being held May 31 on the RIT campus at 6pm. FSW has contracted with Dinosaur Barbecue to provide the food. Even if you don't participate in the run, you are all welcome to join us in the FSW tent for the camaraderie, cheering on of team mates, fun times, etc.

This promises to be a fun evening as the committee has developed a Hawaiian theme. Plus, runners will be sporting the 2007 tie dye tee shirt that design contest winner Ed Wawrzaszek (Financial Assistance Team 12 at Westfall) created.

Any questions regarding the evening can be directed to Ed Thomas at ed.thomas@dfa.state.ny.us or by phone 753-6528.

Domestic Partner Benefits

Probably unknown to most of you, but there has been a group of folks in the area that have been going to County Leg meetings and meeting with various County legislators to get domestic partner coverage for county workers. As a Union, we have included language for domestic partner benefits for at least the past three contract negotiations. Unfortunately, we and the other county Unions have been unsuccessful in our attempts.

At this point, Monroe County remains one of the only entities in the region, public and private, that does not offer domestic partner coverage for its workers. Why is that?

In former negotiations, we have been told that this is too politically sensitive and would be too costly for Monroe County to consider.

Part of the politically sensitive argument is the false belief that this is a gay only benefit and some folks don't approve of that lifestyle/orientation. I say false because statistics show that the people that take advantage of domestic partner benefits are primarily our straight co-workers. There are many different family configurations in today's world and failure to allow domestic benefits

becomes a civil rights and equality issue. We as a Union should stand firm for equal benefits for our members.

As far as costs...most employers find that increases are minimal (less than 1%). Part of the reason for this may be that coverage for families with children can be more expensive a cost to bear than for two adults. Also, because the benefit to the domestic partner is taxed, some do not choose to have this benefit if coverage is available elsewhere.

As far as I am concerned, we should all be standing in support of domestic partner benefits and showing our support publicly. Whether at the County legislature meetings, calling your county legislator, or whatever it takes to make this a more equal workplace, your voice is needed now.

There is a meeting this evening at 6pm at Spin Café, 739 Park Avenue, to strategize a successful campaign. I hope you can take a few monuments to stop by.

Save the Date!!!

May 14

Diplomat Party House

(Corner of Lyell Ave and Diplomat Way
near Rt. 390)

4pm

FSW Retiree Chapter Meeting:

Agenda

- Election of officers
- Future event planning

5-5:30pm

Social Period for retirees and current members...snacks and refreshments provided

5:30pm

General Membership Meeting

Agenda

- Election of 2 delegates and 3 alternates to the IUE and CWA meetings in Toronto July 13 to 18
- Vote on joining US Labor Against the War as an organization
- Merger with other IUE-CWA locals update