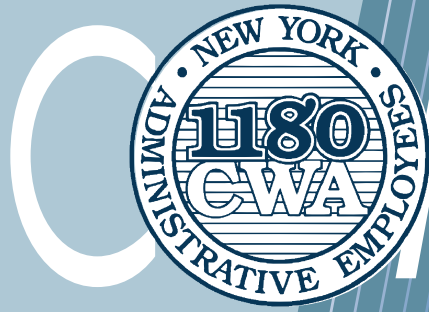
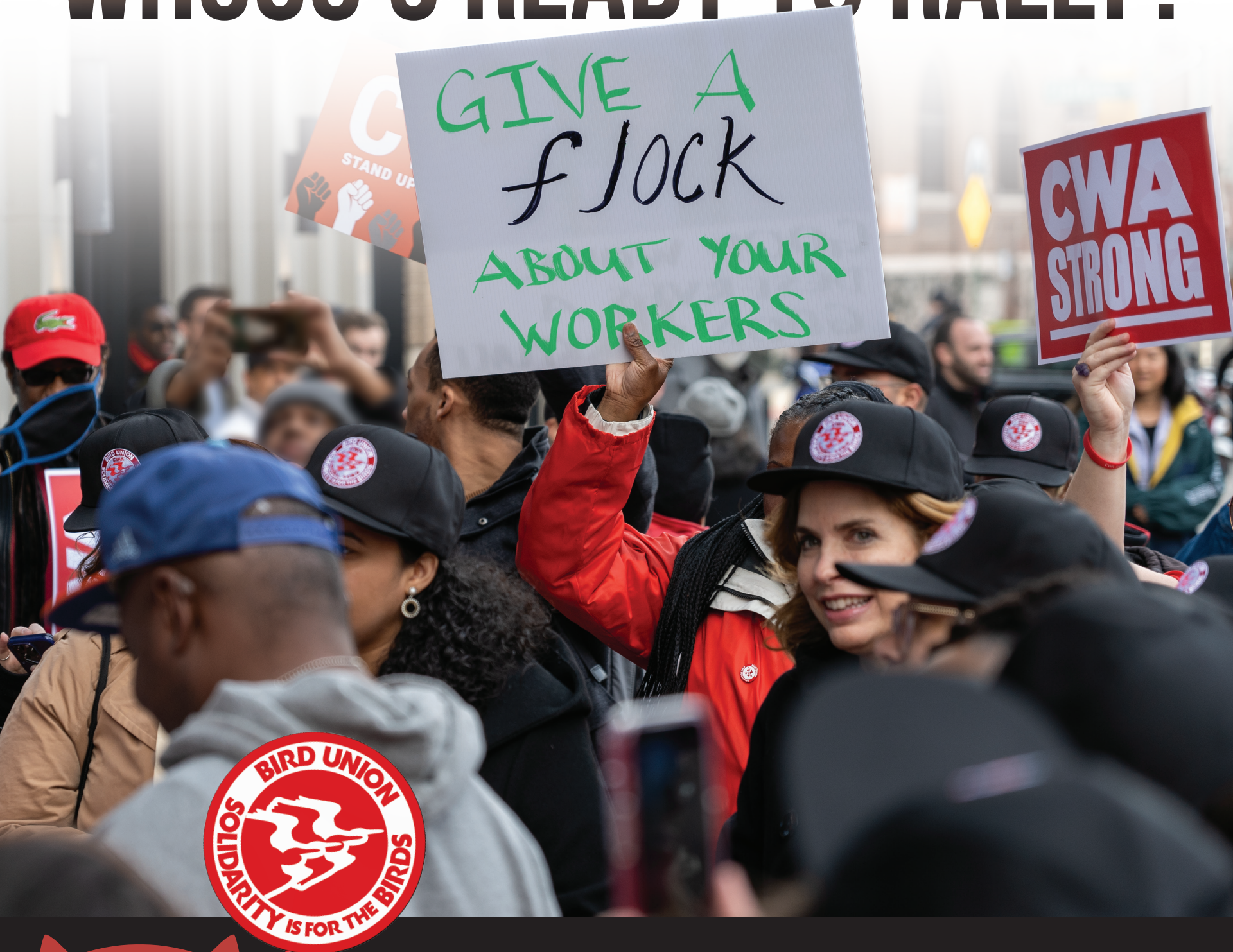


**SPECIAL EDITION**



# COMMUNIQUE

## WHOOO'S READY TO RALLY?



Workers at the National Audubon Society, members of The Bird Union represented by CWA Local 1180, held a rally outside the nonprofit's headquarters on March 29 to demand that Audubon bargain in good faith for a contract and stand by its renewed commitment toward creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace.



# LOCAL 1180 & CWA FLOCK TOGETHER



**When any group represented by Local 1180 needs the backing of the 9,000-member local, the union rallies the troops. Local 1180 members at the National Audubon Society have been trying for more than a year, to no avail, to get management to negotiate in good faith for their first contract. CWA has submitted 29 proposals but Audubon management has refused to address the majority of them. While this is a large enough fish to fly, it's not the only problem.**

"The Bird Union members are part of our CWA Local 1180 family and we are not letting them fly alone in this battle for a contract," said **Local 1180 President Gloria Middleton**. "Birds of a feather flock together and since we are a flock of almost 9,000, there is definite strength in our numbers."

Those numbers and the news of a Bird Union rally outside the National Audubon Society annual gala scheduled for March 29 at Cipriani, caused Audubon management to cancel the \$2,500+ per ticket event. That didn't stop the rally, however, which was moved to outside Audubon Headquarters at 225 Varick St. Bird Union members, Local 1180 public sector members, CWA District 1, CWA National, other unions, and politicians, including NYC City Comptroller Brad Lander and Councilmembers Carmen De La Rosa and Julie Menin, rallied to send a message that workers deserve a fair contract now!

Several workers spoke out at the rally about the dire working conditions they have faced and why they decided to unionize, while others highlighted the disrespect shown to the workers by Audubon Society leadership at the bargaining table.

"We deserve a seat at the table. We deserve a say in our working conditions. We deserve fair pay for all, good health care, and predictable raises so we can build lives and careers doing this important work. We deserve physical and psychological safety. We deserve to live and work with dignity," were the messages blasted out at the rally.

Bird Union members are demanding an end to the nonprofit's continued aggressive anti-worker behavior, union busting, and stalling of contract negotiations. Since negotiations began in 2021, Audubon has only agreed to only seven of the workers' proposals out of a total 29. In addition to failing to adequately address workplace challenges that the workers have consistently been raising, Audubon's leadership unilaterally cut workers' health care benefits amid contract negotiations. In response, CWA filed three Unfair Labor Practice charges with the National Labor Relations Board on behalf of the workers against the National Audubon Society.

Despite that, Audubon management continues to push back on proposals put forth by the workers to build a more fair and inclusive workplace. CWA now is planning for its next steps and strategizing on best ways to get management to come to the bargaining table in good faith and give workers what they are entitled to.

A month prior to the rally, on Feb. 22, workers announced they were changing the name of their union from "Audubon for All" to "The Bird Union" in order to distance itself from the man the organization is named after, John James Audubon.

"We named our union 'Audubon for All' after our employer, the National Audubon Society. But Audubon was not for all. John James Audubon, a racist white man who enslaved at least nine Black people and contributed to Samuel George Morton's 'race science' that claimed white superiority over other races—ideas criticized at the time and now discredited," workers put out in a statement.



# TO SUPPORT BIRD UNION MEMBERS

"We will not elevate and celebrate a person who would reject and oppress our union members today. We call on the National Audubon Society to join us."

The rally was Local 1180's latest effort to let management know The Bird Union workers have the support of not only Local 1180, but CWA District 1, and CWA National.

The fight will continue until management comes to the bargaining table to negotiate a fair contract that ensures inclusion is the norm and not an afterthought, that provides underrepresented groups with support and protection, and that guarantees working conditions are beneficial and accommodating for all members.

"Audubon enslaved people. He bought and sold humans like horses. That is evidence enough to recast the hero into a different role. The organization bearing Audubon's name must press forward in this new

light and decide who and what they want to be," said J. Drew Lanham, Black ornithologist and author in Audubon magazine.

Following the announcement of the name change, Audubon CEO Dr. Gray assured staff that Audubon centers "equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging values in our programmatic work, as well as our internal operations," but would not be changing the name of the organization.

Audubon workers say they have heard many promises and declarations from Gray, but have rarely seen commitments carried out at the bargaining table.

"Dr. Gray has no interest in following through on the commitments to cultivate a fair and equitable workplace" workers have noted on multiple occasions.

Middleton said Local 1180 will be fighting for these members until a fair contract is reached. ■





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