



# Public Notice

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## INSIDE PUBLIC NOTICE

**NO PLACE TO GO BUT UP--**The Food Co-op has opened its doors at a new location, 7th & Maine, in the old Turner's Grocery store. It has meant a lot of work and there's more work and changes still to come. To acquaint everyone with the new store, members are requested to attend a re-orientation session in October. For more details, see page four.

**YOU MEAN WE'VE BEEN LIED TO AGAIN?!** This month, the People's Energy Project exposes several energy myths, misinformation and outright lies that have been fed to the public to promote expansion of utility companies. See page ten.

**IT'S TIME FOR REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN LAWRENCE CITY GOVERNMENT--**In the first of a new series of articles, the community's foremost legal scholar reveals a plan for a drastic change in our City government that would honor one of the most American of all principles: MONEY TALKS. See page three.

**SECRET LOANS!**



THE CRISES IN LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IS WELL-ILLUSTRATED IN THIS EXCLUSIVE PHOTO OF ANOTHER END-OF-THE-SUMMER CIVIL DISTURBANCE (EAST LAWRENCE PICNIC). SUCH ACTIVITIES ARE PLACING AN EVEN GREATER STRAIN UPON UNDER-PAID AND OVER-WORKED POLICE OFFICERS

PHOTO BY KATE DUFFY

## PUBLIC EMPLOYEES FIGHT CITY HALL

BY SUSIE HANNA

The dispute between the City and its employees is still brewing. Dissatisfaction among City employees has forced several head-on clashes with City Hall. Although the conflict between management and workers is centuries old, for the public employees in Lawrence, it's only in the last few years that they have attempted to organize and bargain for higher wages and better working conditions. Their attempts have met strong opposition from the City and the Chamber of Commerce.

Two years ago, the City employees attempted to gain formal recognition of the United Public Employees Association of Lawrence. They pleaded with the City to es-

tablish law and order in management relations in order to protect employees, management and the public from unfair practices.

Following months of appeals from the employees and concerned citizens, the City Commission refused to formally recognize them. They ignored petitions asking the City to come under the Kansas Public Employer-Employee Relations Act, a state law that would permit formal recognition of the employees' right to organize and bargain and would establish a clear negotiation process.

This was just the first of several clashes. Following the City's refusal of recognition, a committee of two Commissioners, two pub-

lic employees, and two citizens began investigating charges of corruption, abuse of power, harassment, spying, favoritism and managerial inefficiency and chaos within City Hall. A minority report by the committee was presented to the Commission, confirming many of these charges. As a result, a couple of department heads were dismissed, some departmental rules changed and a few improvements in working conditions occurred. Many of the charges, however, were never acted upon.

Again this year, the Police and Firefighters have spent many hours the past few months negotiating a wage and benefit agreement with the City. The main issues have been low wages and lack of a clear negotiating process.

The City was first approached in May by the Police and Fire groups. For five weeks, the City postponed negotiations by asking for the employees to wait until the Commission revised the personnel manual. At the first meeting, the assistant city manager asked why they were so late in beginning talks. On Aug. 3, following proposals and counter-proposals by both sides, the City Manager told them no wage increases were possible because the budget was already set, claiming that they should have begun talks earlier.

The City then broke off talks. An appeal by the employees attorney, State Senator Arnold Berman, for a fact-finding committee to help settle the impasse was rejected by the Commission in another of their many "closed" executive sessions.

The Police and Firefighters then launched a public appeal campaign to inform citizens of their grievance. They pointed out that because their wages are not compet-

itive with many other cities, the turnover rate is high. Considering the costs of hiring and training employees, a four per cent wage increase would actually save taxpayers money.

More importantly, they stated that they wanted to avoid future disputes.

To force the City to reopen talks, the Police on Aug. 26 began a slowdown. The City, at least partly in response to public pressure, agreed to talk, but not about wages.

Their offer from these talks include a longevity pay plan and merit increases to begin in 1979, and a promise to open the '78 talks earlier. They also offer to establish a body of employees and City negotiators to report to Commissioners during an impasse.

The Police rejected the offer, objecting to the fact that they offered no benefits in '78 and demanding further talks. The Firefighters, although they voted to accept the offer, are supporting the Police and will not sign a contract until the Police settle with the City.

The city is prepared for the worst. The City Manager has made arrangements for the Highway Patrol to come into Lawrence in the event of a general strike.

PUBLIC NOTICE interviewed Berman, Alvin Samuels, chairman of the Firefighter's group and Dave Reavis, chairman of the Lawrence Police Officers Association in exploring this situation. Excerpts from the Reavis interview are on page two. Reavis, has spent 10 of his 15-year law enforcement career with the Lawrence Police Dept. and has been chairman for two years. His experiences have given him a keen insight into local politics.

## TEXTILE TYRANT TORN

BY BARRY SHALINSKY

"J.P. Stevens is so out of tune with a humane, civilized approach to industrial relations that it should shock even those least sensitive to honor, justice, and decent treatment." These are the words of a former Republican chairman of the National Labor Relations board, describing the nation's second largest textile company with 85 plants and 46,000 workers, largely in the South. Textile companies learned long ago that the South was a source of cheap labor, close to the cotton fields, and difficult to unionize.

J.P. Stevens factories are unsafe and inhumane. Inexperienced workers, some in their teens, are placed in front of machines and told to operate them without proper instructions. Many have lost fingers and hands. They received no compensation for their injuries. The cotton dust level at Stevens factories

is three times the permissible federal level. Workers have difficulty breathing and develop byssinosis or brown lung disease. Likewise, these workers receive no compensation. Only recently did J.P. Stevens begin to permit its employees to break for lunch. Stevens pays 31% less than the national manufacturing average wage, prompting Dr. Martin Luther King, to call it "worse than slavery."

A U.S. District Court judge found J.P. Stevens guilty of systematic racial discrimination at its Roanoke Rapids plant in June, 1976. Black workers are paid less, work under more hazardous conditions, and are the first to be laid off. The company fights unionizing efforts by telling white workers they would be forced to join a black union. Other

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