**Laborfest**

Free parking all day in lots directly outside.

Summerfest. Gate admission to enter Summerfest also free. Two normally $10 costs just vanished.

Inside are clowns, face painting, jugglers, magic and playlands awaiting children of all families on a professionally supervised stage just inside the walkway along the Lake Michigan shore. For older kids and adults, there is a exhibition of pro wrestling slightly to the south, all day live dance music at the Miller Stage, exhibition areas and tents around the grounds (and you might even find a partisan papier-mache piñata game if you look hard enough).

Free raffles (boxes to drop names into) are spotted around the grounds – culminating at afternoon's end with the one raffle requiring a ticket purchase for cash prizes and the grand prize -- a 2012 Street Glide, the handsome new Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

Add in Bingo, corporate mascots, a display of vintage American automobiles at the north end of the grounds and many of Summerfest's traditional and popular vendors offering food and drinks.

All this on a national day off - the Labor Day holiday Monday, September 5, that honors America's workers, so it's quite fitting that this free for all festival known as Laborfest is underwritten by unions, aided by hundreds of volunteers in the People's, Parade, all are part of a special community outpouring. Zeidler Park from 8 a.m. on has become something of an advance Laborfest party for participants as they not only get ready but meet, share food and laughs, line up their mechanical behemoths and organize under watchful marshals. Meanwhile, hundreds of motorcycles and vintage cars and even boats along with trucks put on their best outfits and gear up for the big 11 a.m. march.

Yet for years, all of this was such a home-grown family affair for working neighbors that Laborfest grew accustomed to maximum advance preparation and minimal advance media publicity - compared to the ethnic festivals. (Except for politicians who know it is a good place to meet and greet future voters, though none can march in the parade unless invited to join a union's contingent)

So many families in the communities, particularly those without members in a union, are every summer newly shocked to learn that all these free goodies exist at our great place on a great lake, and that it's all part of the giving side of organized labor, without lectures, lures or preaching.

That sometimes makes Laborfest one of the best-kept open secrets of Milwaukee's summer - but some of that is self-inflicted because unions never sought the media publicity others pursue, and simply pay the way and control the pro-

Laborfest continued Page 13

**LABORFEST** becomes a hot property as the fist poster goes into extra printing and the Grand Avenue mall turns into People's Parade workshop (below) drawing young artists, musicians and community groups to prepare surprises for the big Labor Day.

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**The elusive lessons of Aug. 9**

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

My news lede kept changing Aug. 9 as I pursued the election returns. It started out suggesting the progressive forces were being "dinged a bit" as they clearly lost as expected two out of six recalls. That lead-in turned into "hanging by a thread" when they lost the Fred Clark-Luther Olsen contest (in a district that has breathed GOP and seemed poised to change). So many families in the communities, particularly those without members in a union, are...
Unions invade White House on deficit deal

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

The resolution to the manufactured debt-ceiling crisis does nothing to address the heart of America’s long-term economic problem — job creation,” noted David Foster in a statement immediately after the signing of the deficit deal Aug. 2.

“Slashing spending will not create jobs, it will not spur economic growth; it will only make it more difficult to solve America’s jobs crisis,” noted the executive director of the BlueGreen Alliance, a national partnership since 2006 of labor unions and environmental organizations dedicated to expanding quality jobs in the green economy.

Though more balanced approaches including revenue raising were beaten down by Tea Party hostility during the lengthy and ugly negotiations — during which GOP leaders walked out because, it turns out, they couldn’t deliver the Tea Party votes — the final legislation from Congress has already accumulated holes and cut as much as $2.4 trillion in domestic spending.

The theme was emphasized when leaders from the AFL-CIO general board, the executive council and selecteds guests met the president for more than an hour on Aug. 2, criticizing the debt deal and urging him to focus directly on job creation.

The president in private comments apparently lamented the resistance he has faced at every turn and demanded his concern for workers given the political hand he’s been dealt (no compromise from the Republican side). He had a big victory in the deal — extending the debt ceiling through 2013, removing it as a campaignfootball.

Obama at one point thought he had $800 billion in revenue increases to go along with the domestic cuts, but House Majority leader John Boehner reneged. Bluntly Obama told the union group the debt-deal was not what he wanted, but “the rich and wealthy know how to deal with default, but your members aren’t able to do so,” said Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger relating the conversation. So the government had to avoid default, he quoted Obama.

“He emphasized to us that he is the workers’ president,” Schaitberger said. “And if we don’t think so, our enemies on the other side certainly are convinced” that Obama is pro-work er. He said Obama agreed “to push reluctant Democrats to defend workers and unions as strongly as the right-wing business machine attacks them.”

But he also told the group that while he can use the bully pulpit to defend workers, unions and collective bargaining. “He also said he can do only so much — he can’t run every level of government.”

Union leaders were blunt in their disappointment.

AFT President Randi Weingarten indicated the fight for job creation would resume, despite the “reckless and irresponsible people” Obama now faces in the nailing House GOP.

“My (teachers) union understands there had to be a debt deal, but there are other economic issues and it doesn’t mean we should stop fighting” for them, she added. In fact, she traveled to the Midwest and visited the Milwaukee Area Labor Council Aug. 8 to rouse volunteers with an off the cuff dynamic speech.

Unions detested the deal even where they understood it, so the meeting was characterized as polite with palpable anger. But the unhappiness was clearly not erased by the president’s words. One invitee — Rose Ann DeMoro, National Nurses Union executive director — deliberately boycotted.

AFT teachers’ leader Randi Weingarten was among the White House visitors Aug. 2 and then on Aug. 8 was in Milwaukee to rally volunteers for the recall election.

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On behalf of the Construction Labor Management Council of Southeast Wisconsin and Building Advantage, we thank you for your hard work and dedication to the industry. For more information about Building Advantage, please visit buildingadvantage.org.
Voces aide tapped to run Benedict Center

Well known to the Latino and administrative communities, Jeanne Geraci has been named to replace the influential veteran director of the Benedict Center, Kit McNally, whose advocacy for victims and community justice has deeply influenced the view of justice and incarceration in the community.

These are big shoes to fill, noted Geraci, but she has the credentials as well as the experience, which was clear when Benedict board president Maricolette Walsh made the announcement in July.

Geraci has worked for five years as the associate director of Voces de la Frontera, which has grown into the largest force for Latino workers in the state. Before then she worked for Esperanza Unida and the Mental Health Association.

Geraci, who had long admired McNally’s work, applied when she heard of the retirement. She took over Aug. 1 at the nonprofit center, which has a national reputation for its innovative work with women and restoring offenders and victims’ lives.

Voces’ executive director, Christine Neumann-Ortiz, has named Tammy L. Rivera, a Milwaukee native and veteran of two decades of service, to become the interim associate director at the workers rights center. Rivera will serves for the next six month as chief financial and development officer.

Kit and her husband, writer Joel McNally, both longtime influential figures in Milwaukee’s civic life, have announced plans to move to Virginia.

Jeanne Geraci has departed Voces de Frontera to take the reins at the nonprofit innovator for community justice, the Benedict Center.

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SC Johnson exposed as serial tax avoider

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

In its second informative “Who Does Not Pay Taxes?” newsletter, the Institute for Wisconsin’s Future strolls through Wisconsin’s wealthiest clan, the SC Johnson family, inheritors of the Johnson name, Racine company and a fortune that makes each of the four richest members worth $2 billion each, according to Forbes.

Since it’s a private company, no outside data reveals how much in profits SC Johnson really makes, but the odds are good they aren’t producing the likes of Windex, Ziploc, Off, Pledge, Raid, Drano and Saran Wrap just for their health or to pass the time.

Yet, IWF reveals in its newsletter, SC Johnson didn’t pay a penny in Wisconsin income tax for 2000 to 2008 (the last years for which corporate income tax data is available). It is a curious revelation for a company that regularly appears on lists of best places to work and “most ethical companies.” Even more interesting is how good at tax avoidance are other Racine area firms the same family controls, many of whose extensive profits can be revealed.

Diversey’s pre-tax profits during 2000-2009 totaled $360 million. The company is currently being sold for $4.3 billion. Its state income tax for those years is zero.

Johnson Outdoor’s pre-tax profits in 2000-2008 (latest data) totaled $42 million. State income tax: also zero.

But fear not, according to the IWF research revelations. There is one tax-paying family owned member. It is Johnson Bank, whose pretax profits during 2000-2009 of $219 million yielded a total state income tax of $3 million. Now that’s an effective tax rate of 1.4% while the actual state tax rate is 7.9%, so even Johnson Bank seems wrapped in economic Saran Wrap.

This is one of the highlights of the new IWF newsletter, which can be downloaded from milwaukeelabor.org’s Take Action section. It also explores how SC Johnson’s tax avoidance policy has landed it in court.

At issue, in state court in Racine and federal court in Chicago, is the company’s treatment of a whistle-blowing former tax manager, Michael Beguile, a 12-year veteran in SC Johnson’s tax office who was fired after telling federal agencies he’d witnessed illegal tax practices.

Why, the IWF’s research director Jack Norman asks, should the rest of Wisconsin pay taxes for billionaire - and how do these Johnson companies pull in such profits without having to pay a penny in Wisconsin on taxable income?

The newsletter -- and its tax data, which the Milwaukee Labor Press is a partner in releasing and publicizing -- wants the state legislature to act to stop such loophole abuse by so many highly compensated and profitable Wisconsin companies that are skating unharmed through Wisconsin’s questionable tax practices.

“WHO DOES NOT PAY TAXES?” -- the monthly newsletter from the Institute for Wisconsin’s Future that researches and exposes, among other items, the corporations that have managed to escape paying Wisconsin income tax -- is largely the brainchild of Jack Norman (far right above), the research director who once won awards as a business reporter and is also a much sought speaker on Wisconsin fiscal policy. At one recent Milwaukee Area Labor Council town hall, Norman joined other participants such as Lyle Balistrieri, president of the Milwaukee Building & Trades Council, and Rep. Barbara Toles, who all discussed the flaws in Walker’s budget approach. This newspaper is helping spread the word about the revelations in this newsletter, which can be downloaded at our website from the Take Action menu. Simply visit www.milwaukeelabor.org.

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RECALLS
From Page 1

GOP has pushed forward in the face of federal court challenge in the state that any number of events can tilt trending Democrat (Shilling) -- and what that does tell about less than one-seventh of the 2.2 million who voted in 2010 for governor.

Aug. 9, about 347,457 votes were cast - in a state with an electorate over four times that. The state stands behind Walker.

But if the media doesn't pound on this, the power and energy didn’t pull off a miracle Aug. 9. Why? In my analysis, it was the desperate, canny strategy on the other side beat them back this time around.

We know how to lose and come back stronger," said Sheila Cochran, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. Agreed another union member: "The ruling class has forced us to do that again and again."

Still, all the power and energy didn’t pull of a miracle. Even the appalling contorted redistricting for 2012 the Republicans could pay for TV and also pay for grassroots, no, they had money defending their very existence instead of fighting right-wing non-union policies. These are factors that could well cost taxpayers more money rather than save any.

Game Three: Keep Saying It's Working. That extra month allowed municipalities and school districts controlled by Republicans to come in with reports impossible to swallow in July, of how much Walker's attack on bargaining rights would benefit communities. That's only the stuff the unions had readily agreed to (higher payments in health premiums, direct 5.5% to pensions). The other factors are just punishment of unions to make them spend money defending their very existence instead of fighting the following non-union policies. These are factors that could well cost taxpayers money rather than save any.

Those who just listen to the media reports might think the unions had as much third-party money to play with as the GOP side. No, they had enough to compete well, combining union and progressive forces in We Are Wisconsin and other players, but the maybe $12 million - virtually all disclosed - obviously pales compared to the undisclosed advertising dollars third-party right-wing networks flooded in - some $20 million (according to independent watchdogs) from outfits like Club for Growth, Americans for Prosperity, Crossroads, American Federation of Children and others. Since the Republicans could pay for TV and also pay for grass roots, it was a bigger time not possible in July.

Game Two: Fiscal Pretense. Only the gullible would believe that a budget passed in June would really have any job benefits or fiscal impact by August 9, but the GOP pounded this in media and ads and the public bought it. Could we be real for a second? All these figures are projections. That much condemned $3.6 billion state deficit, half the size of past deficits and in the middle of the pack among states, may have already shrunk half a million from new revenue. Or it could rise if the economy swoons. Revenues change state deficits, and Walker's much talked-about about tools and fixes are limited and doubly short-sighted since it sits on increasing revenue even through such means as combined reporting or sensible collection of delinquent debts. But if the media doesn't pound on this, the GOP ads that are helping the media profit can fabricate the other way. And they did without correction.

Game Two and Half: We Balanced the Budget. Darling was big on this fiscal pretense, Pasch didn't score points with a bottom-line public by pointing out the obvious: Anyone can balance a budget if you don't care who pays.

Using your family as an example. Take any child at age 18 and don't help with a car, tuition, health care, and you would be amazed what you can legally save. Send granny packing, stop giving to the United Way, put to one side the donations you won't see and presto, you can still go out and party and say you balanced your budget.

The progressives argued that this is what Walker and Darling were doing. The voters, blinded by the thought of being in the black not the red or perhaps angry that the choices they agreed to in regular 2010 elections were being questioned, never understood. The interviews suggest that there were Republicans who could no longer vote for Darling but they were replaced by Republicans who assumed that a "balanced budget" reflected moral tough love, neglecting how many breaks to the rich, the lobbyists and the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) wrote into the budget bill. Ignorant they may be, but they still voted.

Game Three: Keep Saying It's Working. That extra month allowed municipalities and school districts controlled by Republicans to come in with reports impossible to swallow in July, of how much Walker's attack on bargaining rights would benefit communities. That's only the stuff the unions had readily agreed to (higher payments in health premiums, direct 5.5% to pensions). The other factors are just punishment of unions to make them spend money defending their very existence instead of fighting the following non-union policies. These are factors that could well cost taxpayers more money rather than save any.

Pro-life right-wingers were accepting figures that in most cases were an abortion. This two-year budget, many economists agree, will leave most school districts and municipalities bailing out from enormous debt by 2013. Yet most of the "it's working" figures are projections based on 2011-2012 school year. The gestation period has been cut in half. And all these baby figures will die by mid-2012.

These are games the GOP could not have played without that extra month. I'm not alone in the suspicion that if the final races had been held in July, the Republicans would have lost four of six races rather than keeping their seats.

Let's concede what is in front of us, that however nasty and heartburn inducing the road to Aug. 9 was, the Republicans proved they will do anything to win. If they had lost, we would still be facing demands for recounts and scrambles to pass bills before the Democrats gain power.

Of course, money remains a key to the future on both sides. But I think the Democrats will now be forced to change their ground game, which has largely been stirring up the forces on their own side and bolstering the wobbly. The ground troops will have to learn to talk to the people who dislike them or even distrust them, to look like them, speak their language and couch their ideas in basic terms that disinterested citizens, fierce independents and even traditional Republicans can understand.

Looking at what happened, it's fine to preach to the choir, but it's also time to expand the ministry. "If we have good arguments and we do," one union leader told me, "we now have to learn how to talk intelligently to the people who start out hating us."
Wal-Mart leaves unions miffed at the Obamas

Washington, D.C. - Barack Obama clearly sees his role as president to talk to all corners, but Michelle Obama has taken on the role of First Lady to encourage good nutrition. But good intentions didn't prevent sharp criticism from the heads of the nation's two largest labor federations, plus Teamsters President James Hoffa this summer. They went after the Obama White House's alliance with Wal-Mart, due to the lousy jobs and anti-worker stance of the nation's retail monster, not to mention the recent Supreme Court ruling that will make female employees work harder for justice.

The nutrition alliance, in a ceremony that included other retailers, highlighted those stores' commitment to bringing fresh groceries to under-served urban and rural areas. It's part of the fresh food/healthy eating campaign run by Michelle Obama. Wal-Mart pledged to erect 275 new stores, especially in low-income urban communities that lack grocery chain stores. But AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and Change To Win Chair Joe Hansen - who also leads the heading union for food store workers, UFCW - responded that the administration is ignoring Wal-Mart's virtual poverty wages and expensive or non-existent benefits. Wal-Mart's wages are so low, Hoffa added, that the retailer's kids run the risk of malnutrition because their parents lack cash to buy healthy food.

"Working families urgently need leadership that will get Americans back to good jobs, paying taxes, spending in their communities and saving for retirement. The White House event, which highlights Wal-Mart's expansion in urban areas, undercuts the message of the need for good jobs that can rebuild our middle class," Trumka and Hansen said. Hansen's union has been trying to organize Wal-Mart for years.

"When Wal-Mart opens, it displaces existing jobs with pov-

erty-level jobs," the leaders said. Tens of thousands of Wal-Mart workers "qualify for and utilize food stamps, Medicare and Medicaid … Wal-Mart's business model is subsidized on the backs of taxpayers."

"There is no economic just-
ification for our nation's largest private employer to pay wages so low that any of its employees qualify for public assistance. And there is no justification for highlighting a private employer with a business model based on suppressing wages for its 1.4 million hourly workers."

If you're going to create jobs, make sure they're "good jobs on the scale that is needed," when unemployment is above 9%, Hansen said. "We ask the administration to stand with communities that have called on Wal-Mart to strengthen the communities it enters rather than drive standards and wages down."

But no one has ever accused Wal-Mart or the Obamas of being dumb. In poor areas, Wal-Mart skillfully plays upon local leaders and resi-

dents who say "We want jobs - any jobs." And why not? The jobless rate among African-

Americans - and Wal-Mart specifically wants to put stores in African-American areas - is 16.2%. It's 17% for black men.

And Obama knows that by supporting a Wal-Mart, with its promise of jobs, however ter-
rible, he gains credit with those areas' residents - even some union members concede that political reality. It becomes diffi-
cult, the union leaders agree, when communities are pleading for "any jobs!" How do you tell them that a Wal-Mart job is worse than none at all? That Wal-Mart costs more jobs than it creates, by running local Mom-

and-Pop stores out of business? That's a hard case to make in economically depressed districts.

B ut the unions are still making it, and Hoffa is pushing the profound link between Wal-Mart's low wages and kids' bad nutrition. "Companies like Wal-Mart, which don't pay their workers a decent wage, condemn children to poverty, poor nutrition and shrinking prospects for their futures," said Hoffa. Its "CEO recently commented company shoppers are 'running out of money.' That's a big clue the problem with our economy is lack of good jobs. I urge the White House to reconsider its involvement with Wal-Mart unless Wal-Mart agrees to create the kind of good jobs that can provide its employees with a decent standard of living."

Wal-Mart uses "jobs" to woo very-low-income areas. It recently won a store in the Pullman area of Obama's home-
town, Chicago. Ironically, Pullman is a symbol of prior corporate greed, when owners forced the 1893 railroad workers' strike. Wal-Mart is also campaign-

ing for stores in the poorest areas of D.C. and New York. A UFCW-backed group, Respect DC, staged a peaceful protest - accompanied by a chorus and brass band - on July 21 at a D.C. suburban Wal-Mart. It demanded a living wage for the four pro-

posed Wal-Marts in the city. Labor Press and Press Associates

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Big push for jobs to greet returning vets

As the war in Iraq ends and the war in Afghanistan declines, more than one million more are projected to leave the military between 2011 and 2016. As of June, one million veterans were unemployed and the jobless rate for post-9/11 veterans was 13.3%. These veterans tend to be young and many worked in sectors that were among the hardest hit by the recession. Post-9/11 veterans were more likely to be employed in mining, construction, manufacturing, transportation and utilities -- all industries that experienced significant drops in employment during his first years in office and George Bush’s final years because of that deep recession.

Veterans disabled permanently or temporarily for protecting our country will also need special government assistance in making the transition to civilian employment or higher education.

The multi-pronged effort for veterans that Obama announced includes new tax credits or revival of expired efforts. For instance, under the Recovery Act, employers who hired certain unemployed veterans were eligible for a tax credit of up to 40% of the first $6,000 of wages, for a maximum credit of $2,400. But this credit expired at the end of 2010.

Obama has announced two new tax initiatives. A Returning Heroes Tax Credit for firms that hire unemployed veterans (maximum credit of $2,400 for every short-term unemployed hire and $4,800 for every long-term unemployed hire) and a Wounded Warriors Tax Credit that will increase the existing tax credit for firms that hire veterans with service-connected disabilities who have been unemployed long-term (maximum credit of $9,600 per veteran) and continue the existing credit for all other veterans with a service-connected disability (maximum credit of $4,800).

A challenge has been issued and in many cases accepted by America’s businesses to commit to hire or provide training to unemployed veterans and military spouses. Microsoft, Lockheed Martin, Accenture, JP Morgan, AT&T and many other companies and non-profits have already risen to the challenge and announced new commitments to training or employing veterans.

A "Reverse Boot Camp" -- which will extend the transition period to give service members more counseling and guidance and leave them career-ready - is being created by the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, working closely with other agencies and the White House economic and domestic policy teams.

The Department of Labor will establish a new initiative to deliver an enhanced career development and job search service package to transitioning veterans at their local one-stop career centers.

The Office of Personnel Management will create a "Best Practices" Manual for the private sector to help businesses identify and hire veterans. Task forces will also examine other ongoing initiatives in training and counseling.

Military also moves to reduce combat tours

In action this August, somewhat related though separately announced, the Pentagon with White House prodding has acted to fulfill another Obama commitment -- moving to reduce duty tours in an era where the need for troops has forced many to re-up for three or more tours of duty in foreign wars.

The Army said that combat troops will soon deploy for nine months, rather than a year.

The new policy takes effect on January 1, 2012, and applies to most active-duty, National Guard, and Army Reserve troops deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Egypt.
POTUS candid on difficulty of compromise

The president’s bargaining skills are being savaged by progressives. His liberal policies are seen as in conflict with his measured and even moderate approach. The passionate Obama that many associate with his elevation has been kept under cool wraps and people always ask him to explain. Actually he has. Agree or not, the president has been honest about what is blocking the tried and true American method of compromise, and by implication why he won’t abandon it. This is an excerpt from what he discussed at a July town hall appearance in response to a question from the audience.

“The culture is now pushing against compromise, and here are a couple of reasons. I mean, one reason is the nature of congressional districts. They’ve gotten drawn in such a way where some of these districts are so solidly Republican or so solidly Democrat, that a lot of Republicans in the House of Representatives, they’re not worried about losing to a Democrat, they’re worried about somebody on the right running against them because they compromise. “So even if their instinct is to compromise, their instinct of self-preservation is stronger, and they say to themselves, I don’t want a primary challenge. So that leads them to dig in.

“Y ou’ve got a media that has become much more splintered. So those of you who are of a Democratic persuasion are only reading the New York Times and watching MSNBC -- (Laughter) -- and if you are on the right, then you’re only reading the Wall Street Journal editorial page and watching FOX News. (Laughter.) And if that’s where you get your information, just from one side, if you never even have to hear another argument, then over time you start getting more dug in.

“They’ve actually done studies -- this is interesting -- that if you put people in a room who agree with each other basically, if you just put a group of very liberal folks together and they’re only talking to each other for long periods of time, then they start becoming -- they kind of gin each other up and they become more and more and more liberal. And the same thing happens on the conservative side; they become more and more and more conservative.

“And pretty soon you’ve got what you have now, which is everybody is demonizing the other side; everybody considers the other side completely extremist, completely unscrupulous, completely untrustworthy. Well, in that kind of atmosphere it’s pretty hard to compromise. “So we have to wind back from that kind of political culture.”

This Labor Day, The Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association (MTEA) salutes public school educators and other workers across Wisconsin for their commitment to worker rights and strong, healthy, and prosperous communities.

Voices for Quality Public Education in Milwaukee
Quite a parade inside Laborfest parade

The All-City People’s Parade throughout the summer will show off portions of its “Metamorphosis” theatrical floats, masks, skits and community comments on issues of similar import as the concerns of organized labor.

But it is saving its biggest presence and push to be a comprehensive unit in the Laborfest parade Monday, Sept. 5.

Hundreds of artists, youth and families from throughout Milwaukee have been getting ready for just this Labor Day event, and much of the work is taking place in a 35,000 square foot space in the former Linen & Things shop in the Grand Avenue mall. There volunteers transform cardboard, bits of found fabric, paper bags and plastic into giant puppets, masks and floats for the parade and pageant. The home base for these creations and performance training has been changed from a forgotten deserted cavern into a lively warren of organized chaos as dozens of individual pieces take shape.

This is a unique process of public art that organized labor is happy to be a part of, and free workshops, building and training continue through Sept. 2 (Wednesdays and Thursdays, noon to 9 p.m.; Fridays, noon to 5 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 161 W. Wisconsin Ave.) Individuals and groups are also needed to march, dance, wear masks and handle floats.

For details, contact Milwaukee Public Theatre at 414-347-1685. It and Milwaukee Mask and Puppet Theatre are spearheading the third annual parade project, partially funded by the Milwaukee Arts Board, the Wisconsin Arts Board and National Endowment for the Arts, Milwaukee County CAMPAC, United Performing Arts Fund, And also the Greater Milwaukee Foundation/Abert Fund and Mary Nohl Fund, Helen Bader Foundation, Max Fund, Gardner Foundation, Greater Milwaukee Realtors Youth Foundation, Merrill Lynch, Ritz Holman LLP, Mt. Mary College, Greater Milwaukee Committee, La Lune Collection, WE Energies, MPS Partnership for the Arts, Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board, Shops at Grand Avenue, ACLU of Wisconsin, Elizabeth Brinn Foundation, Koessler Family Foundation, MPS Arts Internships. Omaha Community Foundation, Jewish Community Foundation, and many other individuals and community organizations.

Barbara Leigh is both co-founder and artistic/producing director for the Milwaukee Public Theater and Max Samson is artistic director of the puppet/mask theater.

Podcasts, videos, photos and details of the Free Make-A-Parade Workshops (expanded through Sept. 2) and the volunteer needs required during Laborfest on September 5 are available at www.milwaukeepublictheatre.org

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To learn more about M&I Taft-Hartley Services, please contact us at tafthartleyservices@micorp.com or 1-800-588-9330.
Barbara Leigh (left), the tireless creative leader of the Milwaukee Public Theatre, leaves her wheelchair to help prepare the People’s Parade contingent of the Laborfest Labor Day parade (above, and story at left). Above right, her hands-on co-conspirator from the Milwaukee Mask and Puppet Theatre, Max Samson, demonstrates how to create animal figures of wire, paste and paper. Hundreds of volunteers have poured through the Grand Avenue doors at 161 W. Wisconsin Ave, taking over a vast space for workshops, training and building near the food court. What has been missing is union volunteers – at least before Aug. 9 when they were tirelessly engaged in electioneering. Now they have a chance to show their creative side.

Sugar workers locked out in protest

Less than a month after Minnesota’s state government shutdown ended, another group of Minnesota workers is locked out. American Crystal Sugar - the nation's largest beet-sugar producer - locked out 1,300 union workers in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa on Aug. 1. The lockout came after 96% of the workers rejected the company's take-it-or-leave-it contract offer, which workers say allows the company to subcontract their jobs.

The lockout affects members of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco and Grain Millers Union in five locals in Minnesota, North Dakota and Iowa. American Crystal Sugar, which is a farmer-owned cooperative, is using "transient workers" and private security to enforce the lockout.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO has an online petition at http://act.afl-cio.org/c/174/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=2567 opposing the lockout.

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PRESIDENT’S VISIT TURNED 2010 LABORFEST TOPSY-TURVY

It was a great event, drew national publicity and a massive crowd as Obama spoke and greeted union leaders and rank and file, but it also changed a lot of the low-key crowd flow and entertainment in efforts to ensure security. Below, in advance of the president’s visit, staff such as Mike Balistriere at left and chief officer Sheila Cochran at right rehearsed the volunteers. But other aspects of Laborfest, such as the motorcycles and the Operating Engineers Local 139 flatbeds went off as planned.

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seeds. They do worry about their members first while opening it all up to the community at large. Part of the problem is that the events really please everyone but Laborfest has always focused on being a gathering of unionized working people.

Among the things that have changed the emphasis -- without unions even trying -- is the political equation that has taken even union issues out of the hands of unions themselves.

What a political year this has been! Unions seemed forced to justify their mere existence. It's one thing to argue about what public workers are paid, but quite another when the legislature does something no one expected -- that is, passing laws that threaten the basic rights of workers to collectively speak to their bosses and take remedial action against the deliberately obtuse.

Many in the GOP thought (hoped?) unions would get ornery and destructive about all this. Instead they and their allies got busy in angry but civil fashion. Loud, yes. Chant-happy, definitely. But what evaporated was all that GOP hoopla about thuggery. In fact, their harping was all that GOP hoopla about thuggery.

It's become a famous symbol of "Stand With Wisconsin" and has been adopted as the motto for Laborfest. A huge papier-mache version is expected to help lead off the parade and then be parked on the Summerfest grounds.

The Parade Within the Parade. See details on Page 10. Stuff to Wear or Carry. Many will have been ordered by unions in advance but look on the grounds for sales of any unions even trying -- is the political equation that has taken even union issues out of the hands of unions themselves.

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A n innovative two-day workshop September 14-15, designed by internationally renowned labor cartoonist Mike Konopacki who is also the featured instructor, will help labor leaders and other activists understand how art can become an important tool in mobilization. And the great thing, Konopacki emphasizes, is that the hands-on training isn't just for the artistically inclined. It's really for any committed labor person who wants to explore new avenues of communication.

That's obviously a Konopacki cartoon above.

The course—“Membership Mobilization Through Art”—will address such issues as how to tap the artistic talent of members, how to use art to parody opponents and how to use art to utilize rank and file involvement.

For registration information, visit solidarity.com/hkcartoons/Artmobilization.html or check out the University of Wisconsin Extension School For Workers, phone (608) 262-2112, Fax (608) 265-2391 or write 610 Langdon St., Rm. 422, Madison, WI 53703 or email schoolforworkers@uwex.edu.

According to the Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance, taxpayer-funded spending increased by 7.6% and total spending increased by 3.5% in the 2011-13 state budget bullied through the joint finance committee, both GOP controlled chambers and Gov. Walker.

"Throughout the budget process the governor and his Republican allies in the legislature claimed that their budget cut spending and did not raise taxes," said Rep. Donna Seidel (D-Wausau). "Now the conservative-leaning Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance is contradicting the Republican talking points about frugality and moderation. Their analysis also makes clear that contrary to Walker's rhetoric, the budget was balanced on the backs of middle-class families rather than through shared sacrifice."

The Taxpayers Alliance in its analysis has now joined many citizens, legislators, media outlets, government watchdog groups and the non-partisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau in presenting ample evidence contrary to the Republican spin.

It notes that the budget included two tax increases on lower income families: the Earned Income Tax Credit, which affects working families; and the Homestead Tax Credit, which largely affects seniors.

Conversely, the Taxpayers Alliance highlights tax cuts that primarily benefit the rich with new capital gains exclusions as well as large, multi-state corporations by reopening several tax loopholes. A new, $128.7 million tax cut for businesses would "erase much of the income tax liability for affected firms."

"It's time for Governor Walker and the Republicans to be honest with Wisconsin citizens," insisted Seidel. "What's even more disappointing is that when the Republicans chose to increase spending, it was not to fund Wisconsin priorities like public education and job training. Instead, Walker and the legislators who have rubberstamped his agenda spent nearly $2.3 billion so far this session on tax breaks for corporations and the super-rich."

As much as the related loss of public worker bargaining rights, these cumulative fiscal analyses of the budget impact underlie the drive to recall Walker and change the tone of state government.
Postal workers told of dire slash proposal

Congress created this mess and Congress can fix it

— APWU President Guffey

The Washington Post and other newspapers discovered the "Workforce Optimization" paper, in which management acknowledges its "extraordinary request" to break its labor contracts. "However, exceptional circumstances require exceptional remedies," the document said. "The Postal Service is facing dire economic challenges that threaten its very existence. . . . If the Postal Service was a private-sector business, it would have filed for bankruptcy and utilized the reorganization process to restructure its labor agreements to reflect the new financial reality.

Problem is, as Guffey points out, the service operates under rules set by Congress unlike what the private sector faces and Congress can fix it.

For instance, Guffey noted in a statement, "The federal government is holding billions of dollars in postal overpayments to its pension accounts."

In a white paper on health and retirement benefits, the postal managers also say it is "imperative" to rein in health benefit and pension costs, which are a third of its labor expenses.

So the service wants to withdraw its 480,000 pensioners and 600,000 active employees from the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program "and place them in a new, Postal Service administered" program. Many observers call this a draconian solution that immediately casts doubt on a program that benefits many federal workers.

Subzero temperatures in Wisconsin aren’t rare. Using them to treat atrial fibrillation definitely is.

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Francis is the only area hospital in the state to perform cryoablation of atrial fibrillation. Now, thanks to this outpatient treatment with less risk, the forecast for those with atrial fibrillation is looking better and better.

Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – St. Francis is in Partnership with the Felician Sisters.
The real stories of the Wisconsin State Fair

Fistfights and brief street violence preoccupied talk radio and media coverage. The one-day storm may have blacked the state’s eye with national coverage – to the point that even local media under-reported how the fair set record attendance in its 14-day run. Inside the exhibition hall, the Union Label Booth staffed by volunteers did a brisk passersby look-see, especially for the Harley motorcycle and the Laborfest posters. A few aisles away, the state Democratic Party – bottom photo at right – seemed flooded with attention to its insignias, banners, funny signs (several of them from unions) and partisan good cheer. Several politicos also stopped by to check out such booths.
Center of summer storm

It was the Hawley Road office building where the Milwaukee Area Labor Council is located. In hallways, meeting rooms, kitchen and makeshift dining halls, thousands of citizens -- many but not all union members -- came in to work the phones in all the recall campaigns and knock on the doors in Senate District 8. Stirring up this constant flow of volunteers were parades of union and political dignitaries to thank them for their efforts and charge them up with personal details and new insights. This was the grassroots ground game on steroids as supportive citizens flocked to the cause -- and the organizers always made sure they had plenty to eat before and after they did the doors.

Day after day, week after week, trained volunteers (photos below) instructed participants -- including caravans from nearby states -- on what to ask, how to record their contacts and why they needed to honestly engage voters.

Among the notables who strolled in for breakfast and to provide inspiration (photo at left) was US Rep. Gwen Moore, catching up on local news as Sheila Cochran (right) chief operating officer of the MALC, chatted with Moore aide Lois O’Keefe (back to camera). Far left below, the parade of dignitaries brought out the ever-present camera of AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale.

RESULTS FROM AUG. 16

Incumbent Democrat senators easily won despite big GOP money against them. District 12 Bob Wirch swept away conservative lawyer Jonathan Sietz, 58%-42%. District 22 Jim Holperin beat back Tea Party Kim Simac with 55%. That leaves the GOP in control of the state senate by a mere vote.

Discover what Wisconsin educators have fought to keep for more than 40 years.

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Enroll between October 3-28.
Splash of cold facts helps explain growing female power of Emerge America

Some facts driving the new attention for Emerge America and Emerge Wisconsin

As late as the 1960s — an era that the right-wing still deems because of the advance of civil rights, peace movements and, gasp, feminism — classified ads even in major liberal newspapers like the New York Times were still categorizing careers by gender. That was also an era when only 38% of women attended college and only 11% earned Ph Ds.

Today 57% of US college graduates are women. More than half of Ph Ds go to women. According to US Dept. of Labor, of the 122 million US women age 16 years and over, 72 million, or 59.2%, were labor force participants working or looking for work. Women comprise 46.8% of the total US labor force. And nearly half of union membership is female.

Now look at public office - minimal representation for the maximum gender.

Currently of 100 US senators, 17 are women. But women did lose seats in the House. And only three states - Maine, Connecticut and Hawaii - can boast gender parity in their US House representation.

In Wisconsin, 23% of the Wisconsin Legislature are women. 15% of City Councils have no women and of the 12,935 town and village board seats, only 2,646 are held by women.

Now consider some of the gains made by Emerge Wisconsin, which has trained more than 50 women and is holding classes for dozens more. The chapter can point to two members of the state Assembly (Appleton’s Penny Bernard Schaber and Milwaukee’s JoCasta Zamarippa, the lone Latina in the chamber), three members of school boards (including MPS’ Megan Holmon), thirteen scattered municipal and county council leaders and one of the two brand new state senators, Oshkosh’s Jessica King. -- D.P.N.

Emerge America’s persuasive leader Karen Middleton (photo left and center above) met with union leaders from all public and private categories (firefighters, plumbers, laborers, building trades and county workers) to drive attention to the need to find and elect progressive Democrat women. At left in top photo is Emerge Wisconsin’s director, Wendy Strout. In forefront at right is Annie Wacker, the vice president of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and also an AFSCME member and AFL-CIO community liaison working with United Way. Next to Strout is Lyle Balistrieri, president of the Milwaukee Building & Trades Council. Fourth from back is Rich Abelson, executive director of AFSCME District 48. Also in the photo at right is Scott Redman, MALC board member from Plumbers and Gas Fitters Local 75.
Helping progressive women Emerge America

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

In the winter months before Scott Walker really got rum-
ing with his extremist agenda -- destroying bargaining rights, public education and stripping communities of their power to fix things -- leaders of the progressive and union com-

munities held several meetings with the articulate Karen Middleton, a multi-term elected official in Colorado with a national reputation who was seeking support and money for Emerge America.

That is the national program she heads to find, train, prepare and put committed progressive Democrat women into public office.

It would be fair to say the Wisconsin leaders asked her hard questions about why she wanted their money as well as their influence. Why, they probed, of all the groups inside union offices, should they help her -- and Wendy Strout, the organizer who left an AFSCME job to serve as executive director of Emerge Wisconsin, one of the group’s successful state chapters. Why should unions help Emerge with money and by identifying or encouraging women to go through the program?

Obviously, organized labor has some emerging women leaders who would be great for this cause, but shouldn’t they be encouraged never to abandon their roles inside unions? Still you can find Strout all over the state where there are rallies, forums or speakers out of the crowd no one previously heard of. All her scaring and cajoling happens in between running advanced classes in how to build a campaign, build money and build on the issues.

Middleton meanwhile is running all over the state and on her energy, the state might be the real reason Gov. Walker worked so hard to oppose the bullet train -- but any attempt to slow down her travels is obvi-

ously in vain. She drops in on San Francisco with former Emerge America, even setting up training classes, talks on TV and in classrooms. The national press looks at the recall election results and now talks about parity between conservative and lib-

eral outlooks. Women, unheralded and often unknown women, have been a key to this social advancement.

There is also growing recognition that the chauvinist extre-
mist paralyzing the nation -- and we are not just talking about men but about the ugliest side of patri-
tainment -- might not have happened except for the paucity of women in public office. That may well be holding the nation back from new ways of looking at issues and talking about them.

A situation that was hardly great before has actually gotten worse. If the public listened more closely to the stuff being spotted at tea party rallies, it would also realize this is a crap movement speeding backwards on equality of the sexes.

YouTube videos is having a lot of fun. With Wisconsin Sen. Glenn Grothman’s rally remarks charging women are the corpo-

rate male’s enemy, that women are conducting a war on men and that men deserve the prominent role because women leave work to do things like having babies (http://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=8BincmtWINMs). It’s become a thinly disguised part of the tea party mantra that women should stick to traditional roles because their presence at work or in public office upsets the “natural” male order of things.

We help women get into office, stay in office and like it,” Middleton is fond of saying - but it is determined work, she concedes, because women are different. They are not drawn to open domination as men are. They have to be coaxed into rec-

ognizing they can make crucial differences. They actually have to believe they can make that

pace and preparation in how to understand issues, talk about issues, network with men and women, raise money and dig deep into the grassroots. It works, which may be why the national media is paying atten-

tion and why Emerge Wisconsin has been singled out by state Democrats and moved up its planned training classes and public-

licity efforts.

Emerge in Wisconsin spends $2,500 on each candidate (via a rigorous vetting process) but only requires each woman to contribute $350, which explains the pressure to find funding. To learn more about the program and its stepped up classes, visit www.

emergewi.org or contact wendy@emergewi.org

Emerge America also has chapters in California, Arizona, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Maine, Nevada, Oregon and (get ready Rand Paul) now Kentucky.

Some progressive leaders may have once regarded the training for public elected office of committed females with a capital D for Democrat as a “niche movement” - but events are making them see how niche may not mean “niche.” Emerge America is an acknowledged game changer, a model of how women can move into a very necessary but elusive balance in public life and policy.
The snake oil that Walker’s good for schools

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

I t reared its cobra head during the recall elections and is swaying hard now, preparing to mesmerize and strike the public with venom through ever busier press releases. It is the claim - fostered by many conservative local officials at municipalities and school boards - that if they use the new liberties Gov. Walker has given them by removing bar-
gaining rights from public workers, they stand to save taxpayers a lot of money.

Such claims are partly true because of aspects the unions readily if reluctantly agreed to - to cut their own pay by covering more of the health premiums and by directly provid-
ing a fixed percentage of wages to pensions (and since state pensions are apparently in
great shape and unions long ago traded less costly good benefits - for reduced wages, this insistence by Walker is both reengineering on past deals and and forcing unions to grovel).

What Walker and his followers don’t tell the public is how much in his bargaining rights emasculation has nothing to do with savings now or later, and probably create later costs for the taxpayers. Things like forcing recertification of unions or eliminating the convenience of paycheck dues. Things like cutting back at many governmental units how many union workers help manage budgets, a move likely to raise human resource costs for taxpayers as time goes by.

T here are probably members of the public who believe that public unions pad their numbers and think from all the talk radio folderol that this is appropriate payback.

Except stories of featherbedding usually involve the private sector, where workers have long not shared in corporate profits. Public workers do a lot of things citizens don’t like, such as collect taxes and regulate behavior. They also do things people like, like plow roads and care for the elderly. Yet still the myth continues that public work is less economic suffering facing all the state’s schools and communities. His minions in munici-
er shock and yelling when citizens also start crunching these numbers and look deeper
under the hood as the smartest local officials have already done.

Yet many in the GOP are shocked at how many elected officials in local communi-
ties resist these vaunted tools (apparently a torn Band-Aid is now a tool). Brace for deep-
er shock and yelling when citizens also start crunching these numbers and look deeper under the hood as the smartest local officials have already done.

Research exposes all these supposed savings are financial flummery, premature as well as deliberately aborted projections. The full term of Walker's budget is two years.

These announcements are based on the first year of a two-year budget that budget-backs the economic suffering facing all the state's schools and communities. His minions in munici-
pal office are not just optimistically guessing, there are cutting in half the gestation period
economic suffering facing all the state's schools and communities. His minions in munici-

tie not build education.

Robert instruction was any way forward. They described Walker's tools as ways to disman-

Walker’s promised job growth is invisible, but his actions are destroy-
ing jobs. And these cuts mean the teachers’ union doesn’t think it will have

enough work for a regular staff, at least temporarily, and will have to wait a year or two until the other side recognizes the value of staff in smoothing out problems, inter-
preting work rules and guiding poorer workers out the door (something union staffers are
actually quite good at, avoiding lawsuits the public pays for). Put simply, the taxpayers will pay more later because they think they’re saving a thimble drop today.

But temporary savings have to be balanced against waste and inefficiency. There are genuine staff cuttings, but many of the staff members WEAC must dump helped teachers just teach, not deal with management wrinkles. And don’t expect a 40% cut on the man-
agement side.

Reports indicate that 275 school districts don’t have union contracts and intend to take advantage of the new Walker emasculation - but 175 school districts do have contracts. or human feelings. So where there are no union contracts to control the pace of the slicing, mandating higher pension contributions and health care payments will obviously reduce some local costs - and where it doesn't make much difference, you can be sure the Republicans won't discuss the moral bind that many communities are being placed in. After all, it is their citizens and their tax base that the GOP majority so blithely slashes.

The loss of equal power bargaining assumes a unity on the local conservative side
that doesn't exist, they point out, as any school board meeting or squabbling among con-
servative city officials would tell you. And they can cite chapter and verse of the dysfunc-
tion and power-grabbing that keeps even conservative boards from balancing the needs of

T hat was underscored July 21 when a diverse collection of administrators accused Walker of misrepresentation when he said his budget would put schools in a “good financial position.” Their educated view was quickly attacked by uneducated party loyalists. But from Racine to Eau Claire, from the right and the left, those experts debunked the idea that forcing larger class sizes, lower quality and less services and nar-
rower instruction was any way forward. They described Walker's tools as ways to disman-
tle not build education.

Similar games are being played by GOP defenders about health insurance. The right-

wing McIver Foundation screams about how dropping the teacher-supported WEA Trust saved the Hartford schools $800,000, neglecting news stories about how switching to the WEA Trust was saving the Marshfield schools even more money, while many other school districts (Kenosha, Turtle Lake, Marinette, La Crosse) opted to stay with WEA as cost-

saving measures. It's actually too soon to pass judgment on unfolding consequences. The public might like simple fast answers, but they usually don't exist in the real world. Yet, my, how the GOP lives on creating stampedes! It takes pretty cool heads to tell the difference between a garden variety snake and a cobra.

IAM is doing the Continental

Fleet service workers at United Continental Holdings completed voting August 11 for representation by the International Association of Machinists (IAM). It was a five-week-long election. Some 97% of the workers who cast ballots supported union representation.

Of those, 51.4%, or 5,572 employees, voted for IAM, while 48.5%, or 5,257 employees, chose the Teamsters, and a handful of workers supported other unions and individuals.

United and Continental merged Oct. 1, 2010, to form Chicago-based United Continental Holdings, but the two airlines continue to operate as separate operating sub-

sidiaries. Prior to the vote, IAM represented United employees and the Teamsters repre-
sented the ramp, cargo, and operations workers at Continental and Continental

Noted IAM District 141 President Rich Delaney after the vote: “This election was contested by two unions that have rich histories and deeply rooted belief in the trade union movement. It was conducted with a minimum amount of animosity between us.”
The AFL-CIO will create a "SuperPAC," a separate campaign finance committee that can communicate with the general public and raise money without any contribution limits - as part of an overall revamp of its political operation, the federation's new political director, Michael Podhorzer, revealed to Press Associates in August at the AFL-CIO executive council meeting in Silver Spring, Md.

Details of the SuperPAC remain to be fleshed out, though national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has openly discussed the possibility.

Podhorzer said the point is to expand the federation's reach beyond its own members. "It's the legal vehicle to talk to the general public in campaigns," using paid media and other communication methods, he said.

SuperPACs sprang up - almost all on the right - after the US Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision, allowing corporations, individuals and unions virtually unlimited giving to campaign organizations, but not candidates. Regular campaign finance committees, or PACs, have contribution limits.

Regular PACs also must disclose their donors. Union members follow other rules, since a union agrees with the political philosophy of any union member who disagrees with the political philosophy of its corporate backers.

But a SuperPAC would reflect a considerable change for unions, which have always been open about their donors. SuperPACs do not have to be open because of the Citizens United ruling that equated money and free speech. The monster SuperPAC of the 2010 cycle, American Crossroads, run by George W. Bush's political guru, Karl Rove, did not disclose the names of its corporate backers.

The AFL-CIO is clearly responding on the same playing field to the secret corporate money that helped radical right candidates hide their agenda as they swamped labor-backed candidates in the 2010 election, giving that cabal control of the US House and many governorships and legislatures. They've used that control ever since to attack workers, unions and the middle class in the states and on Capitol Hill.

The SuperPAC was just one feature the executive council approved for the revamped political program. Other decisions include "a greater independence and investment in labor political activity itself," apart from the Democratic Party.

Podhorzer said labor had made such pledges in the past, but never put money behind them. The council promised to do so now, but has yet to set figures or percentages - or seek a new dedicated money source.

Given the dire economic times, our money would be better invested in building worker-political power, and only supporting those candidates who support workers," he explained.

That means so-called "Blue Dog" Democrats will not get backing, and that labor will actually hunt out pro-worker hopefuls for open seats.

The changes would "Continue to turn labor's political operation into a year-round structure, focused on issues - especially jobs - and not just on officeholders."

The AFL-CIO revamp, beyond Wisconsin, where unions have mobilized tens of thousands of people for key state senate recall races, means labor will concentrate its next efforts in Ohio. That will be followed by "hard choices about people and resources" in other states the 21-member executive committee will select.

"Endorsements in political races," except for the US presidency "will still be by state federations, but the executive committee will try to get everybody together on a relatively small set of priority" endorsements in US House, Senate and state legislature races. There will also be "a higher standard" for endorsements, Podhorzer promised.

Labor will shoot for a minimum of 11 contacts with each member in each race it is interested in, a standard Podhorzer previously announced. "But there will be different numbers of contacts for different races," he said.

"We'll also be looking very carefully at how contacts through social media affect a race - and which members are the most important to contact."
Where are the jobs?

William Lucy (shown on a recent Milwaukee visit) wrote this opinion piece. He is the founder of CBTU and former secretary-treasurer of AFSCME.

We worked our way up. The bustling factories not only produced quality American goods, but good jobs that created a black middle class. These were jobs that workers fought to organize and unionize. Because of their struggle, they attained living wages and benefits so that the workers who followed would be able to provide for their families. Now, merely decades later, the Great Recession and continuing jobs crisis have pulled many working families back into the struggle against poverty.

Unemployment is an epidemic in the black communities. At 9.2%, the national unemployment rate is already too high, but when you focus in on black workers, joblessness jumps up to 16.2% nationwide. Focus the lens even tighter on the cities hit the hardest by the recession, and you will find unemployment numbers almost reaching Great Depression-era heights. 18% in Cleveland, 19% in Charlotte, 25% in Detroit, 22% in Milwaukee. And it’s not a coincidence that many of the areas with high unemployment among blacks are areas where there was once a thriving manufacturing industry.

There are some politicians who would have us believe that the proposed free trade agreements with South Korea, Columbia and Panama will heal the jobs crisis and restore the manufacturing jobs lost. Those politicians have historical amnesia.

Since the North American Free Trade Act was signed in 1994, more than 682,900 jobs in America have been displaced to Mexico. The bulk were in manufacturing, the very jobs that helped to create a black middle class. The South Korean FTA is estimated to cost the United States another 159,000 jobs. During a time when so many are struggling to find jobs or straining to hold onto the jobs they have, how could anyone think that more free trade agreements are what our communities need?

Maybe they can't see the effects of an auto factory or textile factory shutting down. Maybe they don't understand that for all the hundreds of thousands of jobs lost, those are communities devastated, workers who can't provide for their families, an entire segment of the population struggling to maintain the economic gains they've made.

It's the only reason I can think of for the complete disconnect between what matters to the politicians in Washington and what matters to the people at home. But if any of those elected leaders had walked into our communities to ask what was most important to the recently displaced to Mexico. The bulk were in manufacturing, the very jobs that helped to create a black middle class. The South Korean FTA is estimated to cost the United States another 159,000 jobs. During a time when so many are struggling to find jobs or straining to hold onto the jobs they have, how could anyone think that more free trade agreements are what our communities need?

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Even richest tell the rich to pay fairer taxes

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

I t's common sense, of course, but it was the source that got the nation's attention in August.

When a guy whose ability to make money makes the Koch brothers holdings look pygmy wealth, when the master brain of the free market system says, "My friends and I have been coddled long enough by a billionaire-friendly Congress," not only the media wakes up but so probably do a lot of voters.

The comments reveal that acquisitive greed is not the way to earn on investment - and that from the acknowledged expert on taking risk and thriving.

Billionaire Warren Edward Buffett is part of a very wealthy class that knows how much of their fortunes stem from a free society and a government reasonably taken care of its citizenry. Of course, one of the world's shrewdest investors as well as one of its richest despite giving to charitable causes so much of his fortune.

It turns out he knows how to write. Of course, he's rich enough to hire Aaron Sorkin as his ghost writer but, he draws from his own tax forms to make his point.

B effett bluntly proposes that as Congress works to cut the deficit, the lawmakers should "leave rates for 99.7% of taxpayers unchanged and continue the current 2-percentage-point reduction in the employee contribution to the payroll tax. This cut helps the poor and the middle class, who never yet even wrote."

"But for those making more than $1 million - there were 236,883 such households in 2009 - I would raise rates immediately on taxable income in excess of $1 million, including, of course, dividends and capital gains. And for those who make $10 million or more - there were 8,274 in 2009 - I would suggest an additional increase in rate." He concludes: "It's time for our government to get serious about shared sacrifice." He hastens to say nice things about his fellow mega-rich: "By and large, they are very decent people. They love America and appreciate the opportunity this country has given them. Many have joined the Giving Pledge, promising to give most of their wealth to philanthropy. Most wouldn't mind being told to pay more in taxes as well, particular-ly when so many of their fellow citizens are truly suffering." Buffett also scorns the idea that paying more in taxes would slow the market - quite the oppo-site, he suggests: "I have worked with investors for 60 years and... have yet to see anyone - not even when capital gains rates were 39.9% in 1976-77 - shy away from a sensible investment because of the tax rate on the potential gain.

"People invest to make money, and potential taxes have never scared them off. And to those who argue that higher rates hurt job creation, I would note that a net of nearly 40 million jobs were added between 1980 and 2000. You know what's happened since then: lower tax rates and far lower job creation."

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Comment

The new EPI report is dev-astatingly called "The Facts Support Raising Revenues from Highest-Income Households." And the facts as well as Buffett do indeed.

EPI analysts note that the Bush-era tax cuts shifted the burden of funding vital government services like food inspection and air traffic control onto the already struggling middle class. It also explores how between 1979 and 2007 the share of after-tax national income going to the top 1% of house-holds more than doubled, jump-ing from 7.5% to 17.1%. During this time, the middle 20% of households - not the bottom, the middle -- saw their share of total national income slide from 16.5% to 14.1%.

The report's authors con-clude: "The nation has the resources to support pub-lic investments and economic security programs that are cur-rently in danger of being cut by the ongoing budget negotiations. Better budgeting would ask the highest-income households to contribute more in taxes, because their total tax obligations have fallen and their after-tax income has risen over the past 30 years."

Delving more deeply into the report reveals some general and specific conclusions:

• It was meager revenues and Bush-era tax cuts that con-tributed greatly to the deficit.

• The top one percent of households benefited disproportionately from the Bush-era tax cuts.

• Recent income gains for the highest-income percent have far exceeded gains for everyone else, leading to dramat-ic income concentration at the top of the scale. Now, more than ever, the highest-income house-holds are in a better position to pay for their benefits.

• Wealth is even more con-centrated at the top than income, and the main wealth tax -- the estate tax -- has been sharply reduced in recent years.

• Reasonable proposals for taxing the highest-income house-holds can raise significant amounts of revenue.

• By not taxing the highest-income households, deficit reduction relies too heavily on spending cuts that harm low-and middle-income Americans.

• Raising taxes on the highest-income households reduces the deficit without having much impact on the economic recov-ery or job growth.

• Few small business owners have exceptionally high incomes, and thus few would be affected by these tax increases on the highest-income house-holds.

• Even if taxes on those with the highest incomes are substantially increased, income gains at the top over time would still dramatically outpace gains among the rest of the population.

• The progressivity of the federal income-tax system off-sets the regressive nature of fed-eral payroll taxes and state and local tax systems.
The shock to FOX viewers: 

Shock to FOX viewers:

When you get depressed by the right-wing attacks on unions, whenever you start thinking that unions have lost ground because of the obvious anti-union animus of the House GOP and the small margin of voters who have gone the other way at the ballot box, look at what is happening across the US despite the attacks.

A surprising number of unions - about a dozen internationals -- are either recording victories or are so notably engaged in new organizing and lively fights that they have changed expectations, the culture, the nature of the political debate despite the attempts of some big bucks lobbyists and corporations to proclaim death threes for organized labor.

Several news sources other than labor publications have slowly been forced to recognize that these stories (though cable still seldom make national headlines. Under the radar they reflect a change in tempo in organized labor's favor.

Take what's happening above as you are in the nation's service. It was not just the choice of AFGE as the union to represent Transportation Security Administration workers (TSAs) despite their limited bargaining rights under security rules. There is a trend for organized labor in the entire industry.

And that's quite a change since the attitudes of 9/11. Despite the threats of a few politicians to fly commercial, the image of air travel plunged, armed national guards showed up at airports, President Bush would not allow minimal union protections. Staggered by passenger drop-off, the airlines folded, merged, retrenched and pulled back on commitment to union employees, even seeking ways to add non-union workers.

Ten years later, air travel is booming and so are unions. The right-wing and big companies are clearly angry about what is happening, but now they know they look petty and foolish. For instance, the recent shutdown of the FAA over allowing union rights cost $200 million a day in tax revenues, stalling major private industry construction and squashing flights at more than a dozen regional airports. Only a temporary deal kept the FAA going, but the flight resumes in late September. And organized labor expects to win because the objections are patently not about money but about revenge for union victories.

Unions have been winning in the rail and air industries, which are controlled not by the National Labor Relations Act but by the separate Railway Act of the 1930s and the National Mediation Board. Once the playing field was leveled, the trend became clear. Earlier this year, a basic tenet of democracy - count the ballots - was restored, where previously the NMB counted as a "no" any lack of vote (those members who did not participate in a workplace election).

Actual is that's what the House GOP wants to go back to, with a bill that would require the nondemocratic rules to return - particularly now that unions are winning elections and decisions when actual votes cast are measured.

The push reflects the GOP fear of how many workers want the power to unionize. The old rules are doubly laughable since congressional elections proceeded under the proposed rules for NMB elections, in which non-participants were counted as votes for the opponent, then none of the current members of Congress would have won election in 2010, as the Communications Workers of America has pointed out.

Beyond this issue, a healthier airline industry has also allowed restored rights and more wins among mechanics, pilots and flight attendants at the large airlines resulting from merger and the smaller airlines that have resisted better treatment and rules for their workforce.

The example? Look at the recent success record of the Association of Flight Attendants, the world's largest union for flight attendants, now merged with the CWA and representing some 60,000 flight attendants at 23 airlines. Almost every week brings news of a new contract, a powerful new protest or an awareness of how putting safety first has actually backed it own progress in the union's favor even as its members five years to get a union contract.

We have moved past the days of so-called "wobbly" labor victories. The historical union force that many thought was dormant is the Industrial Workers of the World, enjoying a renaissance in organizing restaurant chain workers.

The IWW was famous for its radical unionism in the early 20th century, organizing workers the American Federation of Labor would not touch. Sales clerks in New York branches of the Swedish clothing chain H&M joined UFWC, the United Food & Commercial Workers. H&M actually backed it own progressive image by refusing to fire an election after a majority of workers signed union cards. Management determined it was a bad marketing strategy to alienate many of their customers.

An affiliate union, the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Workers, just succeeded in organizing 1,400 workers at Flenie's Basement stores and a distribution center in New York, suggesting a longer trend of success.

In May, workers at Rite-Aid's Southwest Distribution Center in Lancaster, California, successfully organized under leadership from the longshoremen's union (ILWU).

Over 500 workers became union members with a remarkable contract for these times, ensuring annual wage increases for the three-year deal.

Rite Aid engaged in classic union busting, including asking for a long delay before the union election to give the company more time to intimidate workers, a tactic recently banned by the Obama administration's NLRRB, which is also changing other rules to provide more balance. (The president in power controls the majority appointments on the 3-2 board). And for 500 would-be workers, it was too late. It took Rite Aid workers five years to get a union contract.

More union power. The "wobbly" days are back. This makes sense.

The historical union force that many thought was dormant is the Industrial Workers of the World, enjoying a renaissance in organizing restaurant chain workers. The IWW was famous for its radical unionism in the early 20th century, organizing workers the American Federation of Labor would not touch (then that meant workers in the industrial labor, African Americans and children).

The right-wing is trying now to weaken the child labor laws and unions have clearly changed since women, immigrants, blacks, and industrial workers have emerged as the backbone of today's union movement.

But the IWW was crushed during World War I and for most of the 20th century barely survived.

It's now the 21st century, and IWW has not only pursued Starbucks but unionization of the sandwich chain Jimmy John's.

Although the IWW narrowly lost a recent election to unionize Minneapolis Jimmy John's workers, the NLRRB threw out the results after finding intense corporate intimidation.

Just this August, the Writers' Guild of America scored significant victories. Writers at the Onion News Network television show on the Independent Film Channel successfully negotiated a collective bargaining agreement that provides retroactive pay increases, as well as pension and health insurance, to workers.

The guild has also worked for other cable television writers in recent campaigns, winning victories to represent workers at Animal Planet, Food Network, National Geographic, and Travel Channel. These are remarkable victories since so much work in basic cable has been nonunion with poor working conditions, as anyone involved in the surge of TV writing, directing, animation and similar fields will tell you.
Expert explores why unions win around the US

Why the new successes and new attention to organizing workers? Erik Loomis, a professor of labor and environmental history and a veteran blogger, had a column at AlterNet that speculated on the reasons, aside from the defiance demonstrated by Wisconsin and Ohio fighting fiercely back against corporate overreach in attacking bargaining rights.

"The terrible economy," Loomis suggests, "may have convinced more workers that standing together with their fellow employees is the best chance they have to hold on to middle-class dreams. The less-negative media climate surrounding unions after the draconian anti-union bills in Wisconsin and Ohio may have helped."

"Some of this success may also come from the structural changes within the National Labor Relations Board that have helped level the playing field for workers," Loomis added. "President Obama has disappointed many unionists in his administration. He did not push very hard for the Employee Free Choice Act, and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has expressed frustration with the Democratic Party for its continued rightward tilt. But behind the scenes, Obama's appointees to the NLRB, Craig Becker and Mark Pearce, have re-energized the board, and the tilt. But behind the scenes, Obama's appointees to the NLRB, Craig Becker and Mark Pearce, have re-energized the board, and the new contract forced workers to accept many concessions and primitives.

Loomis also points out that media's coverage of unions probably inadvertently - given how much of the media is controlled by right-wing money and thinking -- worked in unions' favor. "Workers have historically joined unions when the media reports positively about them and when the government plays a neutral role in union elections rather than openly supporting employers," he speculates. "The Republican overreach in Wisconsin, Ohio and other traditionally pro-union states led to a great deal of attention for unions."

From Hyatt to Verizon, fight goes on

Readers will note that even when unions have not completely succeeded, the nature of the game and the potential of success represent quite a sea change.

Consider the positive publicity surrounding the campaigns involving Hyatt hotels, owned in part by Penny Pritzker, a close friend of President Obama. Jurisdictional issues mean many unions are engaged in bargaining and protests at different Hyatt outlets - and the company's strident anti-union tactics have actually gained sympathy for workers such as housekeepers - and may be costing the hotels convention business.

Some losses contain the seeds of future gains. One such came when Honeywell locked out workers at its Illinois uranium processing plant in order to keep out the union. After over a year, the company came to terms with its workers. The new contract forced workers to accept many concessions and primitives. But the contract actually increased job numbers at the plant and the resistance gained international attention and questioning of Honeywell in a worldwide industry concerned about good regulation and skilled workers.

Just this month, with resolution unsettled as we went to press, the CWA and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) called a strike against Verizon. With the call for 45,000 workers to go out, this is the largest strike in the country in several years.

It's possible that the issues will be settled by the time you read this, but the boldness of the tactics and the larger issues and how they have gained resonance with the public and the media carry lessons into the future.

During August, demonstrations and other actions were held around the nation at Verizon work-sites and Verizon Wireless stores -- as part of the growing support for the 45,000 Communications Workers of America and Electrical Workers members, who say they were forced to strike for their rights by Verizon Aug. 6.

The company, with $32.5 billion in revenue in the past three years, is demanding $1 billion in concessions from workers, which amounts to $20,000 per Verizon worker per year.

Said CWA Communications Director Candice Johnson, noting that the unions are still talking to management, "If wealthy companies like Verizon continue to cut working families' pay and benefits, we will never have an economic recovery in this country. This is a fight for all middle-class working families."

Verizon's demands also include outsourcing jobs overseas, gutting pension security, eliminating benefits for workers injured on the job, eliminating job security, slashing paid sick leave and raising health care costs.

CWA filed unfair labor practice charges against Verizon Aug. 12 with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), charging the company with refusal to bargain in good faith.

Barbara Smith of CWA Local 1109 in Brooklyn, N.Y., talked reporters that, at Verizon Wireless pickets, pedestrians stop and "thank us because they understand this fight is about more than Verizon."

While Verizon demands that workers take home less, it paid its top five executives more than $258 million over the past four years, including $80.8 million for its former CEO Ivan Seidenberg, whose home was picketed by IBEW in a candlelight vigil in West Nyack, N.Y.

Through this strike, the unions are demonstrating they are unafraid of Verizon's size and media power and clearly want national attention to springing they are unafraid of Verizon's size and media power and clearly want national attention to spring-boarding organizing other parts of Verizon's communications empire. --- D.P.N.
The fingers of work in Managua textile mills

They are now unionized and much better off, but 800 workers packed into an export clothing factory still struggle for basic goods (both photos at left). Fair trade operations have created improvements over a decade and wages are better, though demand still too light at a co-op venture (below) known as Nueva Vida, where one worker displayed some of the items being sent to the United States. See story on opposite page.

Protests defend Social Security

Members of the Alliance for Retired Americans sponsored events nationwide to let lawmakers know the money working people depend on in Medicare and Social Security belongs to those who contributed to the programs, not to politicians in Washington who want to use it as a piggy bank. The events followed Social Security's August 14 celebration of its 76th anniversary.

Alliance members scheduled 27 events in the week after to protect Social Security and Medicare, including visits to congressional district offices, rallies and celebrations. More such events are being planned. In July, the alliance held some three dozen events around the nation on the 46th anniversary of Medicare.

"Social Security did not cause our budget deficits, and we cannot allow anyone to use our national debt as a political cover for cutting Social Security for current or future retirees," said one ARA leader. More information is on the alliance website at www.retiredamericans.org.

Ernestine O'Bee
1907-2007

J.C. Frazier
Funeral Director

“We are Setting New Standards for Funeral Services in our Community”

Let us remember in our prayers the families of:

Mr. John F. Spence, Allis Chalmers
Mr. Charlie Harper, City of Milwaukee
Mr. Jewel Barrow, Briggs & Stratton
Mr. Wesley Smith, US Post Office
Mrs. Lillian Glisper, State of Wisconsin
Mrs. Clara Savage, Milwaukee Public Schools
Mrs. Zula Mae Rayford, Milwaukee Public Schools
Mrs. Annie Fair, Milwaukee Public Schools
Mr. Gilbert Carter, Chrysler Automotive

Celebrating Labor Day

With Our Union Brothers & Sisters

From the Executive Board and Members of A. Philip Randolph Institute, Milwaukee Chapter
Sweatshops no more
Yet living wages elude even union textile workers in Nicaragua

By Steve Watrous
Special to Labor Press

Managua, Nicaragua -- As I walked through the big room of a clothing factory in Managua's free trade zone, where about 800 workers were busy sewing and ironing black Wrangler jeans, the heat was horrible for a visitor from the north. I saw the notices that the employees were supposed to wear dust masks, but they mostly weren't, and neither was I until a kind woman offered me one.

The dilemma is that once you put on the mask, those ceiling fans no longer cool half your face, and that factory seems ten degrees hotter. Fortunately, the dust was light enough that I could clearly see the far corner of the room, maybe 300 feet away.

This building used to contain Chemtex, a viciously anti-union company that made clothing for Kohl's Department Stores and other US vendors. About 11 years ago fair traders in Milwaukee and many other cities made a fuss about Kohl's Nicaraguan sweatshops. When I last visited Nicaragua, 10 years ago, Chemtex had defeated the unionizing effort.

But Chemtex and some of the worst exploiters left the country when Daniel Ortega, the leftist leader of the 1979 Sandinista revolution, regained the presidency in 2007. Most of those abandoned factories have new businesses, wages have gone up 36% since 2008, and workers get somewhat more respect now, said Pedro Ortega (not related to Daniel), head of the FESITEX textile workers union.

President Ortega, a socialist, didn't confiscate any factories but his government stepped up enforcement of the labor laws. Despite rhetoric against the US, the Sandinistas have an uneasy peace with foreign investors.

So now 60% of the workers in the largest free trade zone are unionized, according to Pedro Ortega. That means they have a contract, rights and representation, and the union can arrange for a gringo visitor to tour a factory. The minimum wage law calls for a tri-partite commission (government, labor, owners) to adjust factory salaries every six months, and wages went up 15% last year. That's the good news.

The bad news is that textile work in Nicaragua pays about $130 per month, according to Pedro Ortega. That's the lowest in Central America, where Nicaragua is the poorest country. Ortega noted that the canasta basic, or market basket of goods for a family of six, costs $450 per month.

I talked to one woman worker with 17 years seniority making about $200 per month. As one US labor activist in Nicaragua noted, no employer there pays a living wage. And the harsh conditions in non-union plants make them sweatshops.

Yet foreign investment, exports and factory employment are up. Poverty is down. The Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) with the US started in 2005 and has worked well for Nicaragua's garment industry, according to both Ortegas and several economic analysts.

What's really new is “Better Work,” a program of the International Labor Organization, supported by the government, unions, the US Department of Labor, the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, and by some US companies. It's supposed to improve productivity and conditions of work.

Gap, Target, Levi's, Wal-Mart and other US companies are putting the program into practice. Workers have more autonomy and control over their work and the workplace.

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