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Rick Barrett and his 30-story Moderne are rising symbols of the style and panorama of Milwaukee's downtown living – and are also months ahead of schedule thanks to all-union construction. But 14 months ago his concept, placement, financing and workforce caused snickers. See why no one is laughing now.

Rick Barrett's journey and the Moderne Pages 8 and 9

– Photos and story by Dominique Paul Noth for Labor Press

McCarthyism creeps back in Wisconsin

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

More than 60 years ago, Milwaukee's major newspaper won international acclaim and accolades from far-flung colleagues for standing up to McCarthyism, for speaking out against the dominant (often) Catholic opinion, the political and business climate that often controlled their advertising, to report, analyze and excoriate the one side most engaged in distorted and even demagogic excess.

The leaders of the McCarthy-devoted John Birch Society must be wondering why the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel editors of today couldn't have been around back then.

A lot of political coverage of late has stirred such thinking.

As a veteran who departed the main Milwaukee newspaper in the mid 1990s and still knows and respects several who work there (I even had a role in hiring and positioning), I sometimes have blamed reporters for mis-

deeds when all the downsizing should have made it clear that distaste is more correctly aimed at management.

The top editors and executive masters have more control these days - and hence should have more responsibility to be careful -- because they have a far smaller staff at Journal Sentinel and less news hole to work with. Plus the hard walls of separations between money-computing and news-gathering departments have long blurred.

Economics weigh more heavily as journalists are expected to either help bring in money or address costs (another round of buyouts shrinking all JS staffing has just been announced).

That makes it hard from the outside to accurately place blame -- line journalists, if nothing else, want to get published, know what the editors want and know how to sell it, so some tilting is part of the game.

But the difficulty of accurately placing blame doesn't mandate a free pass to how bal-

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ance and highest ethical standards are promulgated, and perhaps today's pressures necessitate more genuine avenues of complaint and correction -- more than a public relations ploy. Sadly, much of the public no longer feels listened to. More sense no remedy.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the issue of recall coverage, political balance and mainly the issue of constitutional petitions.

If you look at the validated signatures in the recall Walker effort - approaching one million - and then consider the wide-

spread dismissal of the very idea that recalls are legitimate expressed in editorials -- you suspect greater care should be taken to not let that cynicism color the ongoing news attitude about the move to oust the governor.

Instead that editorial opinion wrapped in false objectivity has bled over into news coverage. News stories are manufactured over what legal people, officials, secretaries at TV stations, spouses of candidates, etc., signed recalls and maybe (usually off bounds) how truthful they can be to their citizenship oaths and how they will vote.

Start with a simple largely unreported fact. The numbers

signing recalls are within 160,000 of all the votes Walker got back in 2010 - and within 50,000 of the votes his Democratic opponent, Tom Barrett, got in a close race. In 2010, Walker took office with the votes of about 20% of the Wisconsin electorate yet immediately acted like this was a mandate to sweep his most extreme ideas through (or the ALEC conservative wing's ideas) without discussion.

It is that behavior that left the recall as the only recourse available under democratic traditions. Blame more citizens for not turning out in an off-year election. Blame them for being

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Sebelius speaks healthy truths to Milwaukee seniors
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What's the Grim Reaper doing leading a noon hour stroll through Downtown?
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Park statue speaks for today's troubled postal colleagues.
Page 6

Drama, forum will re-ignite Bay View Tragedy event

Noted historian John Gurda and intermingled puppets and human actors in a dramatic re-enactment will highlight the 126th anniversary of the Bay View Tragedy, that historic event that speaks volumes to today's workers.

It has long been called the bloodiest labor moment in

Wisconsin history when the state militia with permission of a governor fearful of organized labor opened fire on workers marching for an eight hour day.

The annual commemoration of the Bay View Tragedy will be held at 3 p.m., Sunday, May 6, at the Bay View Rolling Mills State Historical marker site at S.

Superior St. and E. Russell Ave., on Milwaukee's lakefront. It commemorates the tragedy of May 5, 1886, when the militia shot into some 1,500 workers marching in an 8-hour-day rally and killed seven in front of the old Bay View Rolling Mills, then Milwaukee's largest manufacturing plant.

Building on last year's success, which drew 400 people, the program will again include a re-enactment featuring actors reading from speeches of the period, accompanied by volunteers and players of the Milwaukee Public Theatre dressed in period costumes supported by larger-than-life-sized puppets.

The free outdoor ceremony will be followed by a discussion forum about 4 p.m. led by Gurda, who will open the session with remarks and then look for comments from a panel of historians and worker activists, as well as the audience. The forum will be held nearby at the Club Garibaldi, 2501 S. Superior St.

The outdoor event will be similar to the ceremonies that have been held annually for the last 26 years. Featured speaker will be Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale.

A fixture at this event, Larry Penn, folksinger and retired Teamster, will perform several



Actors and puppets will again get together to resurrect the Bay View Tragedy as they first did last year.

songs including his own, "Ghosts of Bay View." Members of the family of the late Frank P. Zeidler will participate in the ceremony, which includes the placing of a wreath honoring the workers who were killed. Zeidler, Milwaukee mayor from 1948 to 1960, died at age 93 in 2006 and was a regular speaker at the event.

Since 1986, members of the

Wisconsin Labor History Society, the Bay View Historical Society and others have been holding this celebration to memorialize the tragedy. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Labor History Society, this year the occasion is funded in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Council through the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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Sebelius provides seniors a healthy dose of reality

On paper, the second most powerful federal official behind President Obama is Vice President Joe Biden. But you could make a quiet case for the busiest and by current legislation one of the most central players in the national debate on health care - US Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

By law and by process whatever the fate in the US courts of the far-reaching Affordable Health Care Act, Sebelius is mandated with a large professional staff to be what Bush once called "the decider." She approves the standards of care of national health, the cooperative rules with states, the elimination of waste, the colloquies with medical professionals and a range of technical and pragmatic solutions.

Her job is the definition of intense complexities and frankly a far cry from the seat of the pants "what should we fund next?" days of Tommy Thompson, the former governor and HH secretary fighting other Republicans for a chance to climb back into the political ring in the US senate race against US

Ayers dies suddenly

Mark Ayers, president of the Building and Construction Trades Department (BCTD) and an AFL-CIO vice president, passed away on Easter in Washington. His sudden collapse traced to natural causes at age 63 shocked and saddened friends, who recalled his work for labor-corporate peace -- and his ability to reach across natural lines of division.



Mark Ayers

Ayers, the son of a miner from St. David, Ill., a small town in the state's southern coal country, was a

longtime leader of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 34 in Peoria, Ill., before ascending to national union office. Prior to his election to BCTD leadership in 2007, Ayers served as the director of the Construction and Maintenance Department of the IBEW. A US Navy veteran (an aviator), he also chaired the AFL-CIO Union Veterans.

Among the legions of mourners was US Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis, who commented, "Ayers was a quintessential 'builder' of coalitions, consensus and a great movement for workplace fairness. He built on the dreams of his members - laborers, electricians, plumbers and other construction workers - to make the BCTD a strong and articulate voice for working families."



Leon Burzynski and US Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius led a panel talking turkey about the affordable health care act for a crowd of Milwaukee seniors.

Rep. Tammy Baldwin, the clear Democratic choice.

Sebelius is also a former governor (Kansas) and also a former insurance commissioner and her trip to Milwaukee was part of a whirlwind sales job on the health care bill and how it is helping thousands already with more on the way.

She was part of a panel April 11 at the crowded county Washington Park Senior Center - trust these organizers, Stephanie Sue Stein, director of the county's department of aging, and Leon Burzynski, president of Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans, to round up a crowd. But with Sebelius' reputation and the topic, not much push was needed to draw several hundred plus media.

Lean and specific, Sebelius had vivid soundbites, hard facts

to share and a no-nonsense style that insiders say reflect her preparation, capability and growing national importance.

While there were several speakers to address aging, pharmaceuticals and new levels of local cooperation, the secretary

had two big messages.

One is generally known - how much of the act is already doing for seniors, with millions in savings, free wellness and checkups, closing the prescription "donut" hole - "50% already and the rest step by step."

Asked about the GOP Ryan plan, she crisply tore it apart as "the worst thing I can think of for seniors, gambling that future coupons will protect you." She also noted with gentle humor that as bad as it was for seniors, and how vague about future revenues or tax increases, the Ryan plan had already incorporated the savings of Obamacare in its selling points.

"Do you keep hearing we are taking \$500 billion in 10 years away?" she noted. "Not a penny in benefits." That amount is the savings from better management, attacking corruptions and "ending the overhead private companies built in to their profits from Medicare Advantage, while Advantage enrollment keeps

increasing," she said. "Another myth."

Her other big point is that the Affordable Health Care is "never mentioned as the largest anti-fraud measure in federal government history, already returning \$5 billion to the taxpayers. I wish the media would report it," she said. She described the deep team of investigators and the department focus on targeting the unscrupulous health providers who had been using Medicare and Medicaid to dupe the public "and we are attacking at every quarter."

Understand. Sebelius in person is quite friendly and personable, but when she talks like this, one senior leaned over to tell me, "She would scare me into behaving."

Also on the Wednesday morning panel along with Stein and Burzynski were County Executive Chris Abele, citizens with personal stories of how the Act helped and local medical leaders.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



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Who's on first May 8? And who cares?

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

"We're not choosing Walker's opponent," said a union leader at Serb Hall - and turning to the Democratic Party official standing next to him he smiled and added, "And neither are you."

What events are making clear - if only the media would cover them fairly - is how no backroom biggies control this state of the state. Not Scott Walker's myth of outside union goons and coffers. Not the GOP fantasy of government workers Pied Pipering the ratty lower class around the Capitol. Not the journalistic fabrication that the nearly million people who signed recall petitions are bleating sheep misled by wacko radicals.

Parents, students, neighborhood groups, middle class workers, modest ecologists and vehement environmentalists, organic and nonorganic shoppers, rich and poor developers of green communities, farmers, moderates, Latinos, independents and growing numbers of traditional Republicans who feel abandoned by the extremists in their once grand party. All are showing up at grassroots events and defying the usual factions that decide these things.

All the establishment figure can do is lend organization, money and influence to a runaway express. It supercedes party labels, Act 10 anger, union membership. It even ignores the tyrannical pressure of GOP secrecy, the Tea Party determination to expose every petition signer or punish every Republican who speaks out against Walker.

It is all somewhat naïve and Capra-esque, given modern political sensibilities, but Wisconsin is looking much like the climactic frame of the 1938 "Boys Town" when screen after screen of motivated youth behind a determined priest marched to rid the community of gangsters.

Many we spoke to inside and outside unions don't care

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Kathleen Falk and Doug La Follette prepare for the first candidate debate.

which of the strong candidates win. That came through April 5 in an event set up to favor Kathleen Falk but revealing far more. At the first gathering of all the real Democrats who want to replace Walker, interest filled the 750 chairs set up in Serb Hall and then brought 200 more to line the walls plus scores of media hoping to record some sort of bitter squabble. The media left early and in vain (though two days later they concocted "Democrats in disarray" stories to sell newspapers and radio/TV shows).

Citizen Action relied on a simple device. Those who liked what was being said raised their hands and wiggled their fingers and those who didn't turned their backs. Some of the most prominent hand-wavers were candidates listening to each other (something few in the media reported).

Even the most unlikely at age 71, Secretary of State Doug La Follette, unleashed some zingers as well as sporting impressive credentials (and a famous relationship to "Fighting Bob" La Follette) of surviving elections even during Republican tsunamis. He was indeed the centurion at the bridge blocking Walker's bargaining rights bill as long as legally permissible.

But he's also an astute observer of state politics, a wicked analyzer of legislative excess and a firm believer (without mapping the lineage) in his late great cousin's call for fair play and lively open debate - the Wisconsin ideal that Walker kicked into the swamp.

If Doug has the La Follette name, Kathleen Vinehout had the La Follette style -- square-jawed, honest, eloquent and straight from the heartland. The state senator who fled to Illinois to delay Walker is also a veteran dairy farmer and college professor who keeps peeling voters away from Barrett and Falk whenever she talks.

Again and again at Serb Hall, she landed candid punches, flashing her knowledge of the state budget and how the money "was always there - it was Walker's priorities that went awry." She should know - she was in harness fighting. Her companions on the dais could only agree with her passionate points just as she was in agreement with many of theirs.

Falk had a third of the crowd in her pocket going in but won more over with her laments about what Walker had done to public education, which she called the key to job growth.

Many expected Tom Barrett to be the most under attack. Large state unions made it clear he was not their first pick, while many veteran Democrats put him first, perhaps believing that not having unions in his pocket works in his favor.

But it was union members at Serb Hall most upset at how a misleadingly edited video from a Charlie Sykes radio show was sent to AFSCME workers to make Barrett look like a closet supporter of Walker's attack on bargaining rights. AFSCME later disowned the video, but some damage had been done. Like unions Barrett supported paying more for benefits but from the start opposed taping union mouths shut, which Walker did while adding such nasties as the now unconstitutional elimination of union paycheck dues and forced annual recertification outside his selected "public safety" pets.

Barrett is good at these forums explaining how he avoided the Walker trap of hitting Milwaukee hardest with state aid cuts to force the mayor to fire public workers.



Tom Barrett spoke to the packed Serb Hall while moderator Jennifer Epps-Addison surveyed the crowd.

Instead, Barrett tucked and trimmed to avoid layoffs. Unions here still feel he was too willing to trim and also gave a pass to fire and police workers who supported Walker, were spared Act 10, spared higher health and pension costs and then had the audacity to demand raises denied regular workers.

Still, Barrett was clearly in the direct eye of the Walker storm while Falk was not, and he uses that to explain how she could be more openly supportive of unions and their ideas faster. A debate remains of degree - those who think Barrett was just being shrewd and those who think he waffled too readily.

But here's the surprise.

Rather than flame-throwing mad at Walker, all his opponents speak sadly about how he destroyed the basic fair play of the state, and then accurately and even derisively dissect his policies.

Even more amazing given what you hear on television and in print, union bargaining rights are not center stage for these candidates.

The litany against Walker starts and ends with his proven poor record on the economy and jobs and the even poorer defense his side offers that eventually all his stubbornness will make things better (most economists know the general national recovery plays the biggest part).

The Democrats do have strategic disagreements but not about reversing the signatures of Walker's legislative failures on public education, government revenue, job policies, cronyism and, first off, bargaining rights. The dispute is how.

Falk won unions over by insisting that eliminating Act 10 was Condition One of any fiscal budget bill.

Barrett wants an immediate special session instead to end Act 10.

Falk fears the legislators will dodge that session, while Barrett fears the still GOP Assembly will dodge her fiscal budget insistence or balk to keep Walker's horrible budget in place.

Vinehout was not alone in wanting her alternate budget with bargaining rights immediately adopted and La Follette probably spoke the truth at Serb Hall more quietly, that Walker has left such a legal mess that it might not be fixed until 2013.

But note that all these debates are about strategy. They are not about goal. Reversal is the order of the day.

For philosophical differences you had to look at side issues, like paid sick days, which Barrett infamously opposed when nearly 70% of city voters supported an ordinance. He defends the principle but told Serb Hall he wanted a national law first. That caused many to turn their backs to him even though Falk and La Follette confessed they did not know enough about the issue to form an opinion.

It was Vinehout who slyly pointed out that states doing better than the federal government in social and economic policies are often the hallmarks of genuine change and once something Wisconsin prided itself on - until Walker came along.

Here the crowd got a better sense of the issue of daring and chance taking that is the real May 8 choice. None of these Democrats are wild-eyed idealists. None are extremists against the extremist Walker. The citizens want him gone, but what level of firebrand will they go for? It's a matter of taste, since nothing chosen is likely to dampen this fire.

Media, GOP eager to concoct a Dem squabble

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

The powers that be want an enormous turnout May 8 to end once and for the GOP canard that Walker is a shoo-in and Wisconsin doesn't want to dump him. But they don't want to lose main focus on the June 5 recall. So they have to accept that many are undecided despite the insider pressures and guesses - and the heart attack that gives the candidates. It's not quite "anyone but Walker" but it is creating its own life.

Now consider how all the media reports throughout April are trying to play up dissension in the Democratic ranks, turning what used to be regarded as democratic debate about strategy into something nasty. So who is really being nasty and why?

While Scott Walker is clearly the recall prize June 5 for Democrats, the Republican Governors Association - a third party political funding machine not to be mistaken for the public service governors group - was unsure in March whether Walker's big opposition would be then unannounced Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett or already hard-charging former Dane County Executive Kathleen Falk.

So RGA attacked BOTH Barrett and Falk in a statewide TV ad blaming them for policies before the current recovery. Then they split into second echoing ads against both. And then, when Barrett did announce just before his April 3 re-election as mayor, the Walker campaign came out for choice. No kidding. They created both a Falk ad and a Barrett ad, first using the Barrett one when a lot of insider Democrats (Obey, Moore, Lawton, Kagen, Kohl) strongly endorsed him. Who knows what ad they will use next?

Wisconsin is clearly confusing the Republicans. They could hardly waste all that extensive opposition research from the 2010 campaign when Barrett was the Democratic candidate for governor --- or ignore internal polls that mark him still better known statewide than Falk. Yet they can't ignore the interest in Falk nor the

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effectiveness of her ad campaign simply talking to the camera or letting real citizens - not actors - speak about what Walker has done to them. That's left them fuming, forced to attack and demean, call her the "union candidate" despite how unions have splintered.

The GOP is still acting confident that money and a boilerplate marketing ploy will allow it to talk old school politics to old school voters.

But there are no salient details in the ads, just generic blame and questionably broad and misleading statistics blaming Democrats for everything that went wrong with the country.

This is what pundits call the "I'm rubber you're glue" GOP strategy, blaming the Democrats for stuff the Republicans instituted and want to return to destroy us again.

So far all that unlimited money hasn't made a dent in the public passion, according to polls. Walker spending is simply bouncing off a wall of hostility. But money sure preoccupies the mainstream media - as well it should. The local media makes the most money from Walker's side and prays nightly the national unions step in with even more ads to help their bottom line.

The journalists and anchorites still underplay the truly remarkable story. That's how, from being dismissed in the press as a longshot effort a few months ago, recall Walker fever now controls the highway of



Vinehout enlivening debates public activism. The odds have changed from underdog to likely.

Perhaps that's why so much pink inventing "disagreements" among the Democrats running May 8 to replace Walker. Frankly, a lot of folks have their favorites in this race because they want to assure the strongest candidate to oust Walker. The "disagreements" are all about tactics to reverse course for Wisconsin and undo Act 10.

Sure, Barrett sounds happy with the level of benefits giving agreed to by the unions (and that could be a bone of caution) and Falk is emphasizing how restoring full bargaining rights would open even those for negotiation. Of course!

But the unions gave that over freely. I suspect that they would want to talk about it again since you could argue that more in health give-backs and less in pensions would be better for the economy. It is also painfully clear that Walker's Act 10 is costing the taxpayers money not saving any because it ties the hands of unions and governments to make money-saving deals. Ask

around. In fact, ask a lot of disgruntled Republican communities.

But no one except the headline writers have yet said the unions want to renege on what they agreed to freely before Walker dropped his pants - but they sure should have the right to talk about it, shouldn't they?

In Walker's ads there is barely a mention of any Walker achievement or at best vague references to much debated data. Even Walker's own camp avoids any reference to his abysmal track record on jobs -- the worst in the nation! -- or how he has raided government funds targeted for other purposes such as foreclosures (taking away one of his campaign charges against his predecessor), or how he has actually raised taxes (though on the lowest incomes and bottom of the middle class rankings who probably weren't voting for him in the first place).

Pay attention to the recent Walker ads and note their backwards time machine approach. You get the feeling that it's neither Barrett nor Falk he wants. Walker still feels cheated that he never got to run against Doyle. In fact, he may have squeaked by in 2010 by pretending it was Doyle not Barrett.

Walker even went to the National Rifle Association April 12 to seek money and describe himself as holding back a tide of alien liberal hordes coming to take their guns. Wisconsinites immediately turned on the news channels and wondered if, like War of the Worlds, they had

missed some horrible attack. It was a speech ludicrous in its fabrications and preening.

The ad blitz left Falk in particular highly amused since both business and labor had praised her leadership of Dane County to spur record economic growth by retaining high services. Admittedly she had a strong UW and legislative employee base to start, but the steady addition of tech companies, corporate headquarters and better standards is also the result of her policy.

"You have to chuckle," she said about the ads, "because under my watch for 14 years the Madison area grew more jobs than any other part of the state."

Barrett must be equally amused. By picking on him, unintentionally the ad machine has helped re-establish his credentials among liberals, who have complained that as Milwaukee mayor he has been too supportive of the business community and refused to go progressive enough in tax and service policies to notably reduce the 45% black male unemployment entrenched during the Reagan-Bush-Clinton-Bush national manufacturing downturn.

But maybe it's smart politics to bank on how much of the GOP and NRA faith is like the Las Vegas gambler betting "on the come."

Someday, Walker keeps saying, astringency for the working class and rewards for the wealthy, the stuff that never moved the economic needle up in the past, will come through.

When you don't have the beef or the grill, Madison Avenue tells us, just sell the sizzle.

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It's postal theft – but by Congress!

There's a little triangular park at Plankinton and Wells with a city statue honoring the letter carriers. The statue was draped with a banner signaling the complaints of the carriers and the challenges to the public to save its postal institu-

tion in a national Day of Action April 12 against a so-called "compromise" in Congress.

Postal workers and letter carriers are fighting to save thousands of centers and almost 200,000 jobs because of an impossible financial mandate and

lousy business practice that Congress could easily solve with a good bill - yet they keep trying to beat the workers down with deceptions like a halfway house.

Senate 1789 trades cash infusion for jobs and service losses, once again avoiding the simple corrective action needed. It will take community opposition to expose the truth and stop the destructive bill, which is the purpose of events near US Senate offices to pressure elected officials. In Milwaukee the gathering was organized by the letter carriers with key leader Scott Van Derven wielding the bull-horn and passersby and officials such as Sen. Chris Larson lending support.

On a Thursday afternoon, however, it became clear how few people realize what is about to slam down on them and why.

Business leaders ought to be the first in line when they understand the damage looming in the massive and needless shutdowns. In the Bush years, the US Postal Service was subjected to a rule no business could survive, to pay all its pension costs 75 years ahead in a 10 year window. That meant putting aside \$5 billion a year just to pay this cost and cover the retirement of workers not yet born.



Letter carriers union state leader Scott Van Derven steered his workers and passersby during the Downtown protest April 12.

Actually, the pension funds at the US postal service are already decades ahead in covering workers and the postal service continues to cost the tax payer zero dollars (that's right, nada). The \$5 billion yearly hardship just makes it impossible to function effectively, yet an imposition so devastating could easily be solved instead of closing services and firing workers.

Why isn't that on the table? Because the aim is really to make the US postal service look bad and open the door to privatization and profits for nongovernmental companies to make a killing by stepping in with higher-priced mail service. The solution - dumping the old bill and letting the postal service expand its services - has to be debated.

But while Congress prevaricates, employees are intervening on behalf of the American people to protect the USPS and to assure that the services provided to the public aren't degraded. The Day of Action is supported

by intensive television commercials on national networks.

Full rescue would be a business solution as opposed to simply cutting - which would serve only to drive people away from the Postal Service, reduce revenues, and ultimately destroy one of America's oldest and most important agencies, which by law must operate on a break-even basis.

The USPS affects every resident and business. The loss of Saturday delivery, door-to-door delivery and the radical downsizing of the USPS contemplated in this bill would dismantle a beloved institution that has served the nation for more than 235 years and that remains our only universal delivery network. It would push away from modernizing technology while laying down for profit-minded companies.

"Postal reform is needed, but the solution is not Senate 1789," said Van Derven.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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Media

From Page 1

complacent after the gains of 2008. But don't deny them the constitutionally provided ability to correct.

There are sometimes reasons to use an eraser.

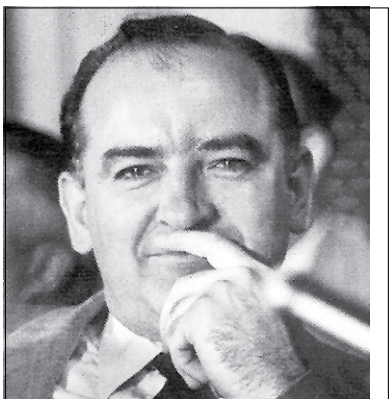
But if the recalls are already close to what Walker treated as a mandate, the Journal Sentinel is editorially on record as opposing the concept of recalls about policy, holding out for corruption or malfeasance in office.

Well, obviously, we are getting close to that, and the journalists at JS and elsewhere must acknowledge that many in the public who watched Walker at work over the years were connectively ahead of their plodding investigation.

Recalls also have a bad reputation for often being used by right-wing extremists angry at tax policy, so some sense of applying brakes is understandable. It is also good to be objective in reporting both sides.

But let's not fall into that tired journalistic equivalency game that if both sides are attacking you, you must be doing something right. That can also be a sign you are doing something deeply wrong.

The selectivity in what editors and executives report and encourage staff to report has over months added force to the doubt and hostility toward the media. Management's resistance smacks of an obduracy similar to Walker's, or of playing up to the corporate dollars (suspected



McCarthy then compared to Wisconsin now

to be on Walker's side) that the media needs to stay alive.

Beyond that, the citizens are defying the media resistance to recalls. Just look at what they are feeling, signing and promoting in neighborhoods across the state. And how little of that is reported compared to a few loud voices with deep pockets.

And it is not just in the impact of Walker's policies (we can argue about the outcome of these still green graftings). It is also the growing evidence that corruption should be a natural part of the recall discussion as the John Doe and other probes circle in on Walker, who has already been required to talk to the prosecutors and who avoided proper procedures in hiring people under investigation.

This can't be dismissed as a partisan witch-hunt, not given the care, professionalism and the evidence involved. A dozen of his advisers and aides were at the very least engaged in secretive campaign and public policy intermingling. How the prison time falls out is still in the future, but

without prejudging the legalities, the public is slowly understanding that these operations were conducted by his own personal and sometimes willful hires, that a secret network existed within feet of his desk and involved consultations on tactics, funding, policy, gossip, bickering about whom he favored and on and on, with details still unfolding.

From all evidence these operations were more akin to Mafia cutouts and the operational methods of terrorist cells. Yet these clandestine tendencies dovetail with what we know of Walker as governor -- the secretive stubborn refusal to discuss and compromise, the reliance on aides to flesh out details, the leanings, legal or questionable, of tacticians and financial insiders and outsiders.

Yet even while the journalists are circling in, they seem to be asking the public not to use his behavior through the only recourse left them - petitions for redress and elections for recall -- though it is the public that is suffering the consequences of lost ethics and failed openness.

I agree that judges who know they will be forced to judge Walker's involvement in

corruption or related practices must bend over in impartiality (though I can't resist the sarcasm of noting the right-wing favoritism displayed by Wisconsin Justices Prosser, Gableman and Zeigler at our highest court, undermining any call for fairness).

But when the media questions the signing of a petition to the point of scorn, that raises an issue of fabricated outrage.

You would expect journalists to be as aggressive in pointing out which public officials DIDN'T sign the recall when asked and whether fear of reprisal by right-wing voters was behind that refusal. After all, from the start, only the Tea Party and the GOP - and the journalists! -- are going around taking names of those who signed or threatening them, deliberately or not, with loss of support or even opposition for public office.

You might expect a few stories pointing out that not signing in public may have been based on fear of being excommunicated by your party. All that could be quite different from what the citizens intend to do in the secrecy of the voting booth (and sev-

eral Republicans have told me they are so angry at the pressure of exposure by their party and the media that they are looking forward to that private moment).

From the start, those who signed petitions feel under more threat from the media than those who didn't sign, making that the price they're willing to pay for citizen involvement. Should the media even be doing that unless there is some sort of obvious conflict -- and what is an obvious conflict and what is a manufactured one?

In editorials journalists still give lip service criticism to "vindictive acts aimed at discouraging political dissent" but acts of omission or avoidance are not criticized - perhaps because it is mainly the media so engaged. It is exactly this fear of reprisal, that freed McCarthy to mislead for so long.

The choice of who to identify for signing a petition, who not to and who never to identify for turning the idea down has all become quite ludicrous. More coercion is favoring the GOP side over the opposition side, though neither is blameless.

But why through April was the public watchdog only barking up one tree?

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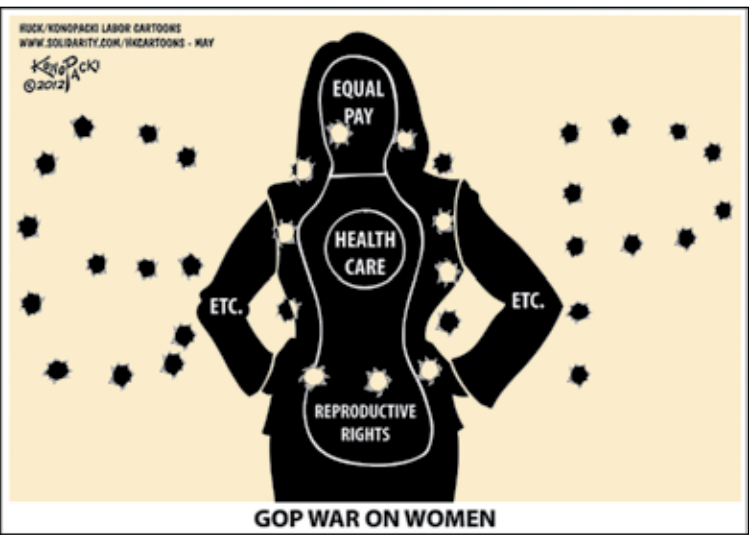
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Rising high over the cynics:



Workers offer Rick Barrett a familiar welcome as he starts a tour of the Moderne and later ride up and down the cage as they move floor to floor.



jobs were proving an empty Madison promise (the euphoria was always around the corner - still is) contrasted with what skilled workers angrily realized - the new governor rejected thousands of train-related construction jobs.

What a time to invest in Milwaukee! What a time to try to lure young couples and empty nesters to a high-rise downtown!

Yet it was in this atmosphere that Barrett insisted on full-prevailing-wage union construction, a return to a neglected 1930s architectural school, wrap-around vistas with windows that actually open up to the summer breeze on the top floors (unheard of in skyscrapers), state of the art efficiencies in tight spaces, floors of parking, wi-fi, marbled-counter kitchens - and even a fancy ground-floor restaurant with an imported prestige chef.

I never asked and have no idea of Rick Barrett's political leanings, but this was a case of a developer with a dream flying in the face of everyone's advice to play it safe.

He persevered throughout 2010, building painful financial bridges with the city fathers and businesses, cajoling and leaning hard for some \$9 million in TIFs and other easements. He spent big on design and promotion. He talked the nationally prestigious \$4 billion AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust Fund and similar investors into putting up more than \$42 million with a HUD loan guaranty as part of the fund's nationwide push to foster good-paying jobs and innovative urban projects.

Such financial acumen hardly silenced the doubters - it made several ultra-skeptical of how Barrett was taking a chance on the unsung unbuilt north edge of the deserted Park East on a site hidden by tired buildings and parking structures.

Only union pension funds seemed to be taking a chance on big construction projects because banks were sitting on their assets - and aren't banks supposed to know best?

Their experts spoke more fondly of houses and condos and derisively about the lowly apartment, yet Barrett was

pointing most of his 1-2-3- bedroom units at that apartment market. Put the politics and the economy together and most of Milwaukee was frankly scared.

The sun was shining and no clouds were in sight 14 months later when I met Barrett on Brewers home opening day to clamber through the almost-done Moderne. I was fearful that most of the union workers would have skipped to Miller Park. Not so. The full crew scheduled was on hand -- about 112 of the 250 union workers still involved. They kept the outside cage elevator humming with platoons and material dropped floor to floor, barely moving their bulky bodies over for the familiar creator and the nosy guy with the camera.

"Put on those hardhats before OSHA sees you." The foreman was smiling but he was still barking at us.

The construction log for the main contractor, J.H. Findorff & Son, indicated I was visiting on a slow day - that the real beehive would not explode until closer to the finish line. This was busy enough - caulk was being laid, the outside was being painted, electricians, carpenters, floorers, masons, sprinkler teams were unloading floor after floor even as granite was delivered, equipment was moved in and the chemical lab was raised a floor to be closer to the spray teams.

The lead contractors hadn't even mentioned the four internal elevators were being inspected and now working - and "they're fast and quiet," the Findorff manager told the owner.

"Hear that?" said Barrett, and then, "Why didn't anyone tell me?" He remembered how this crew had worked through the blueprints and built the elevator shafts "within a quarter of an inch of specifications - isn't that something?"

Barrett led me up and down through several floors of nearly finished and barely framed quarters. In one I could see operational washers and dryers and on a higher level I could literally look across undone condominiums in one gaze to City Hall on one side and Time Warner headquarters

Continued Next Page



Exterior caulking seems to whip by as you ride up the Moderne's outside cage. Inside the high apartments, windows roll open to let the north breeze in . . . or out.

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press
Some 14 months ago I walked into murmurings of doom and dismay never previously experienced at a posh upbeat wine and fete launching a massive downtown project.

Without exaggeration that was the attitude at the County Historical Society among Milwaukee's elite regardless of political persuasion Feb. 24, 2011, gathered to mingle around the groundbreaking for a 30 story landmark idea called the Moderne.

Even within the feints and faint praise for the nearby signage at 3rd and Juneau (the hidden end at that time of the long praised but long fallow Park East and its 14,000 acres exposed by a demolished freeway), there was mutterings under the speeches from aldermen, financiers, construction veterans and government insiders - mutterings like this:

"Money down the drain."

"All union? The last of that!"

"The final biggie for downtown."

"Insane risk."

The goat they were talking about, or the visionary depending on your viewpoint, was a largely unknown young developer everyone said they liked even as they questioned his mental capacity. He had constructed a few unsung buildings along a street named Commerce and was starting a major skyscraper (30 stories is major in Milwaukee). He had persuasive salesmanship - and former ballplayer Rick Barrett accidentally shared the same last name as the mayor.

But 14 months ago his timing looked horrible to those insiders. Because politics had just exploded, the GOP had won by proclaiming Wisconsin broke and in need of enforced starvation. Some 90 miles away, Scott Walker dropped the nuclear bomb on the state, eviscerating public worker bargaining rights, drifting over into shrinkage of private union jobs, and about to squeeze money out of municipalities (Milwaukee first) and out of state aid to education in the name of "balance."

What little life was left in major construction dropped dead. Unemployment and lack of credit were already devastating (30% job emptiness for just the skilled trades). More

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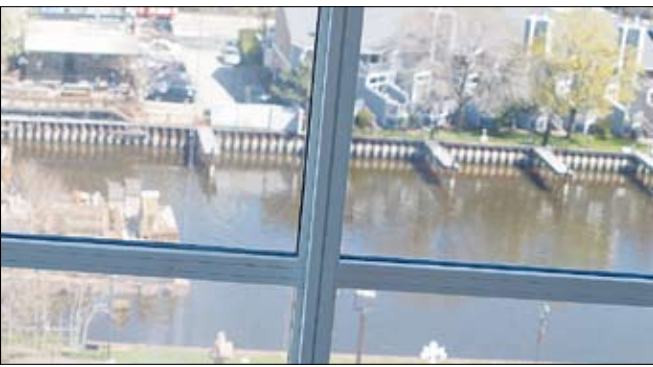
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Barrett, Moderne and unions



From some apartments the Milwaukee River seems close enough to jump into while from others (right) you can watch the river wend far away.

From Page 8

on the other.

It turns out the big condo on the north had just been leased for two years to the CEO of a major corporation.

I went down hallways with electrical wires still hanging and plywood waiting, skipped around carpet installers (alternate floor decorating schemes, black and cream), inspected high-tech outlets, examined working counters and faucets - even an apartment designed for the disabled with lower controls in the kitchen. Common spaces for tenants were right now storage for trades equipment.

Barrett let me sit in some of the outdoor high nooks in select apartments and work the beveled windows that let the wind in for those who still want nature high up. The Moderne's mixed use of curved windows at the corners and squared stretches and panes provided changing exterior views on very side in every unit.

To the west you can look down and see the hills and intersections of new roads and infrastructure. On the other side, the Milwaukee River rolls and loops and the higher up you go even the lake glistens. It all feels almost in your lap.

On the south, look out on Milwaukee's attractive downtown, quite different than it was even a few years ago.

Even the once-scoffed positioning of the Moderne is proving an advantage. On the north side residents will be the envy of New York City's sidewalk superintendents because they will have a literal window into massive expansion of the downtown landscape.

You can look far into Riverwest, or at empty adjacent lots or older buildings about to disappear - such as Sydney HiH, just across the street and scheduled for demolition. Moderne residents are now perfectly positioned to gawk at multiple major construction if other developers take Barrett's lead - and many apparently are or will.

This was the land where the county and city tried to lure hundreds of Kohl's office workers. You can see the modernized Juneau Bridge going up. Whatever happens you will see Milwaukee's future unfolding.

The views may be the selling point (already more than 70 of the 200 units are spoken for), but Barrett is most proud of the hidden interior fine points.

"In Milwaukee you will often have people on one side of the building cool as you go up and others dealing with the heat of the sun," he noted, "so we've invested in both steam heat and air-conditioning so that each floor can have either - back and forth as needed."

The gambler in him is also smart, he argued, discussing the common floor plans on the top five floors that allow him to move from condos to apartments or back depending on market demand. The Moderne, styled after the least known of three 1930s architectural movements, is clearly conducive to



Barrett cautions careful stepping through an unfinished high-rise (the Moderne opens in three months).



the older buildings in the area but also a modernized signal to the developing ones.

On the eighth floor where apartment units begin just above parking, an insulated half floor ("So soundproof you can't hear anything!") is actually a mechanized house for all manner of HVAC -- calibrating gauges, hot water pipes, steam conduits, air conditioning as residents desire. "We've got builders coming in from all over to see how we do this," said the proud developer. "It saves money. When this building is up and running, it will only take eight workers" to serve more than 200 units.

No one jests about Barrett's Folly now as he heads to a vacation in Mexico. Not with 97% apartment occupancy downtown. Not while home buying still suffers and condos built along the lake convert to apartments. Not while Commerce St. where Barrett started is now so packed that traffic can't get through.

Not when other major projects are forming downtown, such as the new Potawatomi Hotel and even more Park East activity and interest. (For the Moderne, figure \$1340 a month at the bottom but going up as apartments get bigger, the bedrooms increase and ceilings get two feet higher.)

The biggest criticism also has turned into a sure winner. Union workers. It becomes clear as you traverse the building that Barrett knows not just his onions but also his unions. He knows these workers even to their first names, bantering with many and asking what's next. And they know him.

"They love him," said Lyle Balistreri, president of the Milwaukee Construction and Building Trades Council, AFL-CIO, who clearly heard the pessimism that greeted Barrett's plunge into downtown 14 months ago - and probably still hears jokes about "costly" unionized workers. He grips about "self-destructing" developers who haven't absorbed as Barrett has the savings of speed and efficiency.

"My workers are still suffering the economic downturn," said Balistreri. "There are still people building in Milwaukee who don't get it and politicians who get it even less. I get so angry about them I have to bite my tongue. But here's a guy and a project as good as any I've been involved with."

Unsolicited, Barrett says similar stuff.



A carpentry supervisor works through the plans in the Findorff basement nerve center at the Moderne.

BELOW: In a special eighth floor room a jumble of water and steam pipes and air conditioning equipment is being coordinated and calibrated.



Modern kitchens and counters were being installed as Barrett took a visitor through Moderne apartments.

"I've built with a lot of non-union companies, but they didn't hold a candle. These unions are the best - they take charge, they move ahead, are organized, they are fast, they save me money because they know what they're doing.

"We are way ahead of schedule. We weren't going to open until September, but now the first residents will move in August. I can add stuff to the plans. I'm now talking with a chef from Chicago and we could open his place when the building opens. I am totally confident in the work."

"You know, whenever I bump into these guys, the first thing they ask me is, 'What are we doing next?'"

Barrett continues to build - in Chicago for one place - and has other projects afoot including some in Milwaukee he can't yet speak about. But he shared a little bit about what it takes to be a "job creator," perhaps not realizing the phrase is hot and heavy in political news of late.

"First there were people with money who believed and took a chance," he said. "I'd sure like the AFL-CIO Fund to come back here and do more. We need people who believe."

"Then there's appreciating what quality workers can do for you -- how they earn what they ask. There's teamwork, there's planning, but there's also looking at all the angles and knowing how to talk to people."

I suspect there's also forgetting the negative vibes of 14 months ago.

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SEIU janitors mourn loss of a dozen jobs

The Grim Reaper joined downtown janitors on Friday the 13th at high noon to mourn the loss of good jobs by a building owner that abandoned benefits for low-pay workers and refused to consider SEIU for the job.

Drums beat, cymbals crashed and slogans were chant-

ed as some 30 circled the building front under the watchful cameras of Milwaukee police, who had two vans and a squad car parked in the neighborhood and were able to film from the private steps denied to public media photographers.

What was this about? It was "in memory of 12 decent paying

building service jobs that were killed December 1st by developer/building owner Stewart Wangard," aid the organizers as they and community supporters marched to and then at 875 E. Wisconsin Avenue.

A Wangard-led investment group owns the commercial offices in a building that union janitors had cleaned since it opened ten years ago. The union janitors - represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1 - were paid \$11 an hour with health insurance benefits. They were replaced by part-time, non-union janitors paid \$8.50 an hour and no affordable health benefits, the local's leaders reported.

Nearly all major office buildings downtown are cleaned by companies that recognize Local 1 and work with the union to maintain a business environment that is clean, comfortable and safe, noted Pete Hanrahan, Wisconsin director of SEIU Local 1.

"Wangard is one of the very few irresponsible building owners downtown who has failed to understand the importance of decent jobs that keep workers off of public assistance in our recovering economy."

Local 1 represents over 1,000 janitors and other service workers, mostly working in Downtown Milwaukee.



While the rally in front of the downtown office building at its peak drew 30 peaceful but loud SEIU marchers, it drew two police vans, a patrol car and an officer with a video camera shooting every minute. Our tax dollars at work.

Health and Hygiene Drive struggles to help homeless shelters

Even as economic times force average families to look inward, shelters for Milwaukee's growing homeless ask ordinary people to continue to look outward at a desperate and growing need. The 23rd annual Health and Hygiene Drive is being counted on more than ever by some two dozen shelters relying on donations and purchases of paper products, toiletries and other items of everyday basic health and grooming.

It is essential not just for self-worth but to relieve the stressed budgets of these shelters. Fire Department stations, United Way and the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, 633 S. Hawley Rd., are accepting gathered products, donations or cash till about the time Wisconsin recalls a governor. Contact AFL-CIO field liaison Jay Reinke at (414) 771-9828 or jayaflicio@sbcglobal.net.

The council is talking up the drive among its members and the community, recognizing that this year represents a hard slog because of what both average families and these neglected homeless are going through. Time is short and the need is great.

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Even right wingers get Rachel's "Drift"

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

The right-wing's main devil praises Rachel Maddow! In a nifty bit of counter-programming, the back of the "Drift" cover jacket features a "must read" blurb from the heavyweight guru of FOX News, Roger Ailes, though even he can't avoid harrumphing that MSNBC's most popular radical leftie "never makes the case that war might be necessary."

What? Did he even read it? The entire point of "Drift" is American citizens no longer have to wrestle with that basic question.

While the Founding Fathers set up an elaborate system to curb the executive war fever, to make war difficult and subject to excruciatingly hard thinking, the US can now go ballistic without interrupting any of our multiple entertainment channels.

Congress can't stop it, citizens don't have to ask as they did in WWII "Why We Fight?" because there's no why, and millions screaming on the street fail to dent the drift.

Maddow's book, subtitled "The Unmooring of American Military Power," brought her to a Milwaukee talkback April 21. It exposes how neither left nor right planned this, how we got to this state with the best of intentions, flying concerned flags about our families, our economy and even our values. One disturbing suggestion is how love of toddlers fostered privatization and a paid army of mercenaries to shift us further away from a time when citizens had to leave work and hearth to go fight. Now we don't have to leave the sofa. Talk about mission creep!

Deftly Maddow lifts the curtain on what led society to abandon built-in protections. Flashing the wit, asides and intellectual style that make her sentences dense but shrewd, her Oxfordian commentaries the most surprisingly popular element of her news shows, Maddow shows both a breadth of analysis and a relish of history. She pauses to explain

Book Review

how death-inflicting drones from Pakistan are made possible by rich sheik devotion to falconry. But mainly she dissects the American psyche from the inside.

We hate war, but we love warriors. We can abandon our reluctance over bloodshed when our bloodlust is triggered and fears are ignited. We believe in the leader on the white horse when he's brandishing a gun. While we agree intellectually that people should find it horrible to kill, we grab for any trick to buy our way out of trouble, much as abolitionists were happy to pay their way out of Civil War service.

Some of this sounds obvious when a reviewer sets its down, but Maddow earns these conclusions with her analysis of history, producing much ironic laughter - and "oh, Lord" moments -- along the way. It's "Pogo" revised, putting life behind cartoonist Walt Kelly's famous observation that "We have met the enemy and they is us."

Without giving up her liberal tone and credentials, Maddow plays it honest to both sides as she watches us drift into adventurism from our

founding to Vietnam to the Persian Gulf to today. You can't pretend that her disbelief and dismay aren't the most full blown exploding the Reagan era with its bizarre secrecy, "unitary" warping of presidential powers and mainly Keystone Kops excesses - such as Grenada where our mighty military couldn't handle a compass, killed mental



Rachel Maddow

patients and misplaced hundreds of confused American college students.

But even here she looks underneath and beyond Reagan to explain why citizens were so eager to throw our principled democratic baby into the ashcan. She does not spare Lyndon Johnson, Bill Clinton or Al Gore, particularly over the trend to bloated and corrupt privatization. Even today citizens look the other way at Croatian and Afghan ditch-diggers and meal providers. Privatization almost by definition means we are paying someone big money to do dirty things in our name, yet American taxpayers still don't grasp the waste in treasure, reputation and soul in sparing "real Americans" from supply lines and mess-hall KP.

Wait! Is Maddow saying we have lost our way but can still restore the real America, and the solutions have little to do with the partisan ferocity that keeps her and cable news flourishing? Frankly, yes.

It is the lingering paradox. We still don't know how easily we have shredded the safeguards, the checks and balances, we still don't fathom the hidden price of neglect and indifference. Gently, humorously and surgically, she's trying to wake us up - and it's much deeper than reducing our defense budget.

"Drift" right now is going through all the suspicious promotional huzzahs of our celebrity age - New York Times best seller devotion, praise from Leno and other talking heads, endless publicity tours, all the stuff that gains media attention while raising skepticism about temporal flightiness.

The book is better than that. It is not a quick read to forget, like a pop song flourish or a Donald Trump punchline. It's bright, requires mulling, moments to put it down and think. There are chapters to revisit that transcend our current partisan cable wars and jingoism (hear that, Roger?). Keep it handy.

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Gains amid a shadow April 3

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

For nonpartisan local officials and judges, April 3 determined the next four years of their public lives - a big deal. The national media concentrated on a small deal, the obvious clown sideshow known as the GOP presidential primary where Mitt Romney edged Rick Santorum about 43-38% in a weak turnout race that probably won't be remembered by anyone come May.

But there was a shadow hanging over the entire process that affected many results and put the national GOP figures in a strange shade. They all supported the threatened governor in words but avoided physically posing with him out of fear of the future (imagine what a photo op for the press that would be!). Agreeing with Scott Walker at arm's length can win sympathetic GOP voters, but the game was avoiding the distaste looming in the May 8 primary, the June 5 recall election, the John Doe corruption probe and the court declarations of his unconstitutional tactics.

All that left everyone examining April 3 for predictive signs - and both sides saw portents. For instance, Wisconsin's fastest growing minority, Latino citizens, also successful in challenges to the voter ID law and the GOP redistricting maps, are now the most energetic and progressive faction in the electorate and proved it April 3.

Yet in Milwaukee, the largest entrenched minority, most suffering from lack of jobs and poverty, African Americans, seemed the most complacent using the ballot box. Maybe because it didn't solve things before. That indifference had to be a disappointment to the union organizers who worked hard to improve their lot.

(As one longtime Democrat told me, his party's establishment concern about traditional sources of money and influence "could be our Achilles heel because more and more involved young citizens are tired of our caution and moving way ahead of us.")

That is certainly one reading of the Milwaukee election results, where the Common Council became more progressive and dynamic when Latino activist Jose Perez, a veteran developer and MICA organizer, surprised the establishment by defeating long established and strongly financed veteran James Witkowiak, first elected in 1992. Perez won by 90 to 200 votes depending on how you count these moving results.

District 12 is a Hispanic majority region that coalesced around Perez. Turnout in Latino neighborhoods is still somewhat low, but growing. In Latino majority County District 12, incumbent Latino Supervisor

Ecstatic supporters crushed new Ald. Perez election night



Peggy Romo-West sailed to victory with nearly 57% of the vote though outspent four to one by her opponent.

In districts where Latinos have not yet grown to a majority, change was not in the air for the reform and corrective minded. Educator Benjamin Juarez - partly because of a poor campaign strategy that assailed the incumbent with last minute attacks on his shady past rather than simply repeating his recent extremist preening - failed to unseat veteran District 8 Ald. Bob Donovan, the Common Council's most disruptive member.

One progressive failure was not a surprise in an African American district. Eyon Biddle, who had given up a safe seat on the county board, was an outspent underdog in his city District 15 fight against a perennially smooth, amiable and well-financed Willie Hines, the second most powerful person in city government as president of the Common Council.

It would have taken amazing insight and galvanization of the injured and neglected district citizens to change things, and there was little turnout at the polls.

Similarly, there was hope but not massive grassroots efforts behind Ray Harmon's attempt to unseat do-little incumbent Ald. Robert Puentes in the predominantly black District 9, but while he led early in the count, Harmon succumbed by some 500 votes.

Both Biddle and Harmon had been endorsed by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, as had another progressive candidate who lost in a low turnout African American area, open County Board District 18.



Carolina Stark

Newcomer Tracey Corder's loss made a curious choice, Deanna Alexander, the new supervisor but will not overall slow the board's move to a more progressive mix of incumbents and fresh activists.

The labor council had stayed out of County District 15, because two similar Democrats were competing. Rep. David Cullern, fearing redistricting would cost him his state seat, leaped into the county race against Dan Cody, a parks and transit champion who had been working for years on replacing retiring Lynne de Bruin. Cullen's better-known name in a region overlapping his Assembly district won him the seat by some 1,400 votes, but the contest among normal colleagues caused quiet hostility among voters.

County Executive Chris Abele was re-elected unopposed (largely because no one dared take on his wealth and no one can quite figure his intentions).

But the County Board is now absent its self-absorbed chairman Lee Holloway (whose seat was won by the council backed Russell Stamper II) and is likely to prove an even more coordinated force for change and opposition to the exec if he tries to bully his way.

This became apparent April 16 when labor backed Marina Dimitrijevic, who had sailed to re-election, was chosen the new chairman of the board.

Also elected were newcomer David Bowen (District 10) and incumbent Theo Lipscomb, labor backed and a challenger for the board chair. Returning are a number of well-regarded incumbents (Gerry Broderick, Nikiya Harris and Jason Haas, all unopposed).

On the Common Council, labor backed incumbents Milele Coggs, Michael Murphy and Tony Zielinsk were re-elected (while a number of other incumbents were unopposed).

Labor's choice for the elected county comptroller, a position imposed by the Madison GOP legislators that may now have boomeranged on their effort to control the county, is actually an experienced independent expert on county fiscal practices, the veteran and long appointed comptroller, Scott Manske, who



At the end of the March delegate meeting, a crowd of election winners (David Bowen), losers (Eyon Biddle) and supporters stunned Sheila Cochran with thank-you bouquets, honoring her "tireless support of young African Americans trying to change things."

The media tried to make this a pro or anti Walker race and Stark indeed had said she did not want to be associated with "Walker's values," by being appointed by him to the bench. But it was the electorate more than the candidate who made a big issue at the polls about Walker's involvement, aided in no small measure by JS publicity about her statement.

So her win was one of several clues as to how the voters feel about the upcoming recall. But it's not a clean message. The low turnout in this election suggests it still takes a lot to motivate the public to believe that elections change things.

The distinct lack of involvement of the black minority community, judging by the voting numbers in too many inner city districts, suggests organizers who think their engagement in the recall is essential to defeating Walker - well, they have their work cut out for them.

The position of city treasurer was contested by two known Democratic state senators, Tim Carpenter and Spencer Coggs. Coggs won - though don't expect him to leave the senate at long as there is a 16-16 tie - and is expected to become an influential figure in ongoing Milwaukee politics from his office at City Hall.

In judicial contests, labor supported Mark Sanders was unopposed and hence sailed to victory. In the Branch 23 race for the Milwaukee Circuit Court, there were two highly regarded candidates, but the labor council's choice, Hannah Dugan, lost to Lindsey Grady.

At the same time labor's choice for Branch 17, Carolina Stark, surprised the field with 13,000 votes more than the Walker appointee to the bench, Nelson Phillips.

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Threads to labor in PBS preview

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

TV Review

In visual and intellectual quality it is the best hour on national television. In educational kits and human insight into what makes the nation's visionaries tick, this Peabody honored series has deep influence over our schools and heritage. In Nielsen ratings compared to "American Idol," it doesn't raise a blister.

But the next PBS "Craft in America" entitled "Threads' puts a Wisconsin artist in remarkable company, revealing why Terese Agnew's approach to quilts, colors, cloths and crafts made her the finale personality among four pioneer crafts masters, three of earlier generations. All combine the mundane and the heavenly, the human core exposed in old-fashioned hard work handwork, the highest skills to provoke the lasting meanings.

The PBS hour - which will air nationally and in Milwaukee Friday, May 11, at 8 p.m. repeated on Channel 10 at 3 a.m. Saturday May 26 -- starts with the amazing ageless Faith Ringold, quilter, author, artist who grew up around the corner from Malcolm X, then moves to the Massachusetts weaves of Randall Darwall and his rural associates, then to California's Consuelo Jimenez Underwood

who learned from an illegal immigrant father, also a weaver, she hid as a child and invests border insights into barbed wire and safety pins threading.

All these brilliant surprising people are the lead-in to Agnew's lightning quick connections of today's society and nature's deterioration. Her artistic levels and intuitive gifts dovetail with theirs as does her refusal to fulfill modern instant gratification and facile creation.

Social justice and nature's wonder combine without beating us over the head with politics. Highway maps, mining, parking lots, bombing sights and pink slips echo in her perspectives and make the bureaucrat in all of us wake up and smell the losses. In some ways she is the gentle perceptive inspiration for Occupy 99% or Reclaim Wisconsin, proving again how artists sense linkages far ahead of data punchers and politicians.

PBS devotes time to Sheila Cochran of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council who knows how textile shops have abandoned our shores and skilled workers were reduced to economic digits. She and workers here were big parts of the "label-less" parade Agnew



Agnew and the film crew shivered at Zeidler Park while Sheila Cochran (above) acted unperturbed for her interview. speaks of -- thousands cutting out clothing labels around the world to give personality and recognition to the sweatshop unknown of "Portrait of a Textile Worker," much written about here and now housed in a New York museum.

Agnew deserves the high placement the series gives her, but on the more mundane level of local politics there is quite a Milwaukee tale behind all this. Filming took place at her farmhouse workshop near La Farge, at the Milwaukee Art Museum, which owns key quilts, and at the Downtown park where Agnew co-designed the Workers Memorial annually celebrated April 28 and where Cochran came for an interview.

But while you can't tell on the PBS program, since Cochran



is cool and calm like nothing bothers her, she had to be mad as a wet hen, as well as wet as a wet hen. She and Agnew arrived in whipping rain and wind to discover downtown holiday frames, bric-a-brac bulbs and wires dumped randomly all over Zeidler Union Square Park, leaving the PBS crew desperate to find any spot - even an ungoated tree - for a setup. A highly regarded artist, national film crew and labor council were embarrassed for Milwaukee.

The upshot came when told about it all was how Milwaukee County and the downtown com-

merce association apologized and sought amends.

The memorial was never supposed to interfere with normal park activity and was carefully designed to blend with nature. Conversations ensued to restore respect and switch the holiday display to white not garish colored lights.

The artist may not be happy that nothing can be done about the ugly giant decorative Teddy Bear but the new sensibility will return to the county and the labor council the original vision and agreement - a very Agnew-like blend of nature and message.

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Get ready to do Fair Trade Crawl

WISCONSIN SHOPS will celebrate the powers of fair trade and direct support of world artisans on Saturday, May 12, in the Fifth Annual Milwaukee Fair Trade Crawl. Participants can start their Crawl at any participating locale. Note that this list at deadline was not

complete and you can always check for full participation with the main sponsor at milwaukee-fairtradecoalition.org. But wherever you begin the Crawl it's not just to get free samples but to win prizes, which will be given out from 3-5 p.m. at three Outpost Natural Foods outlets.

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Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Saturday, April 28

Workers Memorial Day

Noon, Zeidler Union Square Park

Speakers include US Rep. Gwen Moore, DA John Chisholm,

USW remembrance of Jeff Smith's death at Caterpillar,

Breakfast preceding, Postal Workers Hall, 417 N. 3rd St.

Wednesday, May 2

Monthly Delegate Meeting

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Sunday, May 6

Bay View Tragedy Remembrance

See Page 2 for details

Tuesday, May 8

Statewide Democratic Primary

to Choose Candidate for Governor

Stories Pages 4-5

Wednesday, May 30

Executive Council Meeting

2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.



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Keeping track of all the recall action

As Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger puts it, Mahlon Mitchell is "trying to make the leap from the firehouse to the Statehouse." It looks like he knows how to jump..

Mitchell, the telegenic, fast-talking, knowledgeable president of the Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin, is the most prominent Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor in the state's special recall election June 5 to wipe away Scott Walker sidekick Rebecca Kleefisch. He is the most likely winner May 8 when voters ignore the fake Dems promoted by the Republican Party to confuse things, reading through the muck to uncover the real candidate in all the recall warm-ups.

A well meaning Marinette novice, Bruce Berman, has signed up for May 8 and the race is also an effort to recapture the limelight for the once portly now trim private investigator Ira Robins, who made news years before he turned 70 by championing the late Lawrenca Bembeneck.

But the class of the field is clearly the exuberant Mitchell, a Madison fire department lieutenant and member of IAFF Local 311 whose brother and sister unionists are fire fighters in Atlanta and St. Paul. Mitchell went to D.C. March 27 to address his union's legislative-political conference and give unionists even more reason to turn out the vote in the recall balloting.

Remember, these are union workers Walker tried to curry and sideline by selectively excusing units from his emasculatation of public bargaining rights.

"These are guys and girls trained to run into burning buildings," one exempted safety officer told me, "so they felt flattered -- until they realized he is just the guy to pull the ladder away at the last minute."

"They're trying to destroy and defund us," Mitchell told the D.C. delegates. "They said we had a \$3.6 billion budget deficit, that our state is broke, and we need 'shared sacrifice.'

"But they give two years of tax exemptions" to corporations while cutting \$1.6 billion from the schools and in community ability to support schools, he added. "This is an attack on the middle class and on our way of life. Shared sacrifice? We sacrifice and they share the gains."

Mitchell like many others in law enforcement thought briefly that Walker was recognizing their valuable role - until he realized how selective his exemptions were and how deliberately deceptive, mainly sup-



'The House of Labor is on fire,' says fire fighter Mahlon Mitchell, running for lieutenant governor.

porting his own backers. "They came to us and said, 'You can just sit this one out.' We didn't just say, 'No,' we said, 'Hell, No!'" So he led Wisconsin Fire Fighters into the mass protests that surrounded and occupied the state capitol.

For all his exuberance and optimism, Mitchell warned unionists nationwide "that we have some educating to do" about the "right-wing business agenda." He said 39.6% of Wisconsin unionists voted for Walker for governor in 2010. Other estimates say it was 45% of unionists.

"That's our problem, and we have to talk about that, to make sure we're protecting decent American values."

"Right now, the House of Labor is on fire nationally, and we're here to put the fire out."

Four GOP state senate seats are also up for recall with the final contests June 5 and the GOP trying to muddy May 8 by throwing Republicans pretending to be Democrats against the leading challengers.

Confusion may exist in District 29 for Pam Galloway's seat, since she is the Republican who resigned and created a 16-16 tie in the senate. The GOP has already recruited a June 5 replacement and tried to slow May 8. But it's still easy to figure because the real Democrat is popular and well known, Rep. Donna Seidel.

Similarly, Racine area voters in District 21 will have no difficulty spotting the experienced Democrat, John Lehman, to get him to recall GOP Sen. Van Wanggaard June 5. It would be returning the favor because Lehman lost his senate seat in that 2010 debacle.

Clarity should emerge in Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire District 23 where known Democrat Kristen Dexter is chafing to take

on GOP incumbent Terry Mouton June 5.

And Walker henchman Scott Fitzgerald has gone from blind confidence since his District 13 has long been in GOP hands to some apprehension at how the unknown factor could upend him. His chief opponent despite recruited fakes is a photogenic new-

comer who is hanging him with his own record. Lori Compas also went door to door without outside support winning the signatures against him -- and is using May 8 to solidify her separation from his Walker sycophancy. -- *Labor Press and PAI*

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A MAJOR NATIONAL INSURANCE COMPANY that prides itself on its union workforce and calls Gov. Walker's policies "scurrilous" is putting its money where its mouth is, contributing \$25,000 to United for Wisconsin and more than \$125,000 to state organizations engaged in recall efforts. It is also talking up full collective bargaining for other companies. American Income Life, which helps many corporate and union organizations with insurance programs, recently presented a \$10,000 check to United for Wisconsin leader Phil Neuenfeldt, who is also president of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO. Participating in the ceremony for American Income Life were Jodi Oleson, Bill Verbeten and Amanda Mlinaz.



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