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TOP PHOTO: Nourishment for the body preceded conversation for the brain when ministers, union leaders and other Labor in the Pulpits speakers gathered for presentational and content advice on the topic of "Jobs, Justice and Poverty."

NEXT PHOTO: Don Richards, a retired Milwaukee alderman, could readily offer advice to a fellow speaker, soon-to-retire Milwaukee DA E. Michael McCann (right).

Official notice

On July 5, under the guidance of the 6th District of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, IBEW Local 715 (Wisconsin Broadcast Engineers) re-ran its election of officers for three-year terms. The results:

- Christopher J. Albrecht, president, business manager, financial secretary and delegate to the international convention.
 - Andre Johnson, vice president, executive board member and alternate delegate;
 - Rachelle Cehanovich, recording secretary and executive board member;
 - Greg Haladej, treasurer.
 - Executive Board Members: John Klawakowski, David Michalak, Art Welter.
- Installation of these officers will take place at the September 7 general membership meeting at 633 S. Hawley Rd. in Milwaukee.

Christopher J. Albrecht
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Major honor for service dumfounds plumber



There was no more surprised man in Milwaukee Aug. 15 than Ken Greening at the speakers event for Labor in the Pulpits. He was pulled out of the faith community choir by Lyle Balisteri (left) and presented with the same St. Vincent Ferrer award for community service accepted last year by Archbishop Timothy Dolan. Greening, a member of the plumbers union, was further embarrassed when Balisteri, president of the building trades council presenting the award from the Faith Community for Worker Justice, said flatly, "I wish we had 47,000 like him." But it's true. The modest Greening shows up and participates in all the activities of the Milwaukee County Labor Council – and also for WisCOSH, LCLAA, worker rights rallies, Wal-Mart protests and more. His typical response to the honor was a quiet thank-you, after which he returned to the choir to sing the final song: "Solidarity Forever."

For people, places and times for Labor in the Pulpits, visit www.wisaficio.org. For a story on the event, see Page 4.

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All faiths join to explore justice, poverty on Labor Day

By Annie Lauer

Special to Labor Press

"Jobs, Justice, and Poverty" will be the central focus of this year's Labor in the Pulpits, a program built around Labor Day and organized by the Faith Community for Worker Justice. It sends diverse speakers to more than a hundred religious congregations in southeastern Wisconsin to talk about justice issues as seen through the prism of faith.

Propelling this year's theme are reports of how Milwaukee is ranked seventh of all metropolitan cities in the highest percentage of people living in poverty and fourth in the highest percentage of children living in poverty.

Yet more than two-thirds of impoverished families include members who are working -- typically totaling 46 weeks per year.

Many speakers will address the need for good, dignified jobs to help people pull themselves out of cycles of poverty -- and what the religious texts tell us to heed.

In our democracy, that also raises specific issues in the pub-



The author of this article, Annie Lauer (right above), served as summer intern for the Faith Community for Worker Justice putting together information and lists for Labor in the Pulpits and arranging for speakers and training. Before she returned to Notre Dame University, she was also active on the street in a number of justice causes -- such as working with field mobilizer Mike Balistreri (left) and UNITE HERE in support of Superior Health Linen workers. See story on Page 25.

lic forum, such as minimum wage, health care and immigration.

The federal minimum wage (\$5.15 an hour but moved \$2 higher by Wisconsin) remains at its lowest buying power in more than fifty years. Yet the average minimum wage worker brings home 54% of the family's earn-

ings. Health care has become another paramount issue in our society. Good health -- and access to health care -- are far less common for those living below or near the poverty level than for those above it. Employee-sponsored health care plans may be a solution, but a

Is your congregation taking part? Who is your speaker? For a full list of people, places and times for Labor in the Pulpits at area congregations, visit www.wisafclcio.org.

2001 report found that low-wage employees contribute about twice as much for health care coverage as employees in high-wage establishments. And the recent elevation in health care costs has led more employers to either abandon such coverage or stick more of the burden on their employees.

Immigration remains another key issue for society and people of faith. The AFL-CIO Executive Council has long adopted a position supporting full worker rights for all immigrants regardless of status. Voces de la Frontera, a major advocate for immigrant worker rights in Milwaukee, is helping to coordi-

nate Labor in the Pulpits speakers for Spanish services with the help of its summer intern, Jana Hosek.

The backgrounds, faiths and philosophies of the speakers will assure that the topic is addressed from a variety of perspectives. Among this year's presenters are leaders in the labor community, regular workers, public officials, teachers, journalists -- as well as representatives of a wide range of religious traditions, from Catholics to Baptists, Quakers to Muslims, Lutherans to Baha'is.

The speakers were invited to a special picnic Aug. 15 and offered guidelines on presentations, religious teachings and issues from a noted panel: Father Michael McClernon, a professor at Sacred Heart Seminary; Barbara Beckert from the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations and Ahmed Quereshi from the Islamic Center.

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It's now part our newspaper logo and news pages. But it's also an exciting new communications outlet for the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and the Labor Press.

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It features an ever-updated calendar of important events. Members can also use it to take action by joining our email list or signing up in one seamless step to volunteer for charitable events, organizing, community issues, rallies and elections. Look into the Take Action section.

All visitors can also learn more about the MCLC, its leaders, affiliates and partners. Resources, labor links and background on issues are also in the works as are videos and photo galleries. Email feedback for our newspaper and leaders has been built into www.milwaukeeelabor.org.

Please check us out and tell us what you think at mclc@milwaukeeelabor.org.



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Labor crosses county lines for election power

Cleverly named WAMMEE, there's a new coalition to energize the Labor 2006 member to member campaign.

Actually, think of it as a double whammy. For the first time it formally unites the political muscle of the Milwaukee County and Waukesha County Labor Councils.

The two groups have long cooperated. But one November election race propelled both into the deep mobilization and expenditure known as WAMMEE (Waukesha and Milwaukee Member Electoral Education).

The race is the state's 5th Senate District. It is an effort to carry Jim Sullivan to Madison to work on health care, good jobs and fiscal responsibility.

State Democrats regard Sullivan as a key to winning control of the Wisconsin Senate. You can't expect Republicans to support that, but off the record (because of party unity) many are actually cheering Sullivan on, so exasperated are they with



Expressing their delight at the first collaborative Labor 2006 walk were John Krauss and Sheila Cochran, leaders of the two county labor groups.

the quirky ways of the current occupant, Tom Reynolds.

For workers it's far stronger than exasperation. Reynolds is openly anti-union. He threw roadblocks in the way of the minimum wage increase (against efforts from many business groups and his own party). He

wants to prohibit collective bargaining by university teaching assistants.

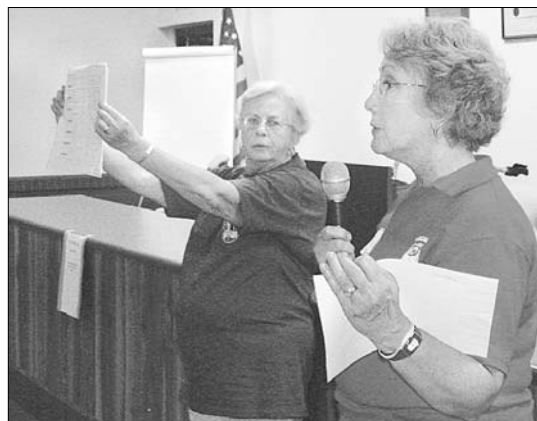
He got elected in 2002 on that strange wave of religious bashing and extremism that ousted a respected Republican moderate. Since then his suggestions and behavior have proven hilarious fodder for media columnists.

But he's no laughing matter to struggling families. Cooperating to oust him proved a no-brainer, says John Krauss, president of the Waukesha council, and Sheila D. Cochran, secretary-treasurer of the MCLC. In a joint letter to union leaders, they spell out why -- and what they need to succeed.

There are some 9,000 union members in the 5th Senate District, which straddles both counties. These union workers actually hold the balance of power in the district and it's high time they got together. Many union members who live in Milwaukee are part of a union headquartered in Waukesha. The reverse is also true.

All the unions, whether AFL-CIO, Change to Win or WEAC, are united against Reynolds. The district - the only competitive senate race in Milwaukee and Waukesha counties - thus inevitably is a focal point of Labor 2006, the member-to-member campaign that visits union households to talk candidates and issues. Coordinating this effort is just common sense.

On Aug. 5, after rallying and



The strict rules of the Labor 2006 walk - including accurately reporting responses, keeping databases updated and talking only to union households - were explained to participants from two counties by the AFT's Liz Harris (left) and the CWA's Joy Roberts.

getting instructions at Iron Workers Local 8 Hall, 30 teams of union walkers from both councils spread out to ring doorbells and talk to union members throughout the 5th District. It was AFSCME and SEIU, the UAW and the nurses, CWA and machinists.

That first walk focused on getting feedback on the Sullivan race, on the issue of health care and on the temperature of the governor's race, where labor backs Jim Doyle.

On September 16, walkabouts pressing the central gains Sullivan represents will begin in earnest. Workplace flyers and phone banks will also flow from WAMMEE. But there are costs behind winning. To participate, contact the Zone 1 coordinator,

Sue Ledbetter at (414) 526-3781 or email sledbett@afcio.org.

Supportive contributions are being sought to meet the \$27,000 needed for the full District 5 program. Write WAMMEE on the check's memo field and send to the MCLC, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53214.

A sign of how well Sullivan is doing on his own is the two-to-one advantage in campaign contributions he now holds from his district's own community of voters. To learn more about the candidate - lawyer and former lifeguard, US Navy reservist and Wauwatosa alderman - and his stand on key issues -- visit www.sullivanforsenate.com.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

125 years later, carpenters build a sturdy case for creating Labor Day

It's common knowledge that organized labor brought America "Labor Day" as a national holiday and celebration. But bragging rights about which individual was most responsible for creating Labor Day -- well, that has been an issue of historic debate.

The carpenters can make a huge brief for Peter J. McGuire -- and this is the year to accept that view, if only out of respect.

August marked the 125th anniversary of the founding of what is today the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

McGuire and three dozen other carpenters from 11 cities formed the union in a Chicago warehouse with 2,000 members. He served as general secretary for 21 years and was instrumental in pushing the eight-hour day, helping create the American Federation of Labor and, yes, pressing for a Labor Day recognition radiating out from Illinois.

The union he started has more than a half million members now.

The Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters, merging for strength, now represents 47,000 members in three states, including the carpenters district here with its headquarters in Pewaukee. (That's why when you see "Chicago" on the signs of picketing carpenters, it hardly means they are Cubs fans; they're Milwaukeeans who have regionalized for stronger voice.)

The union that helped found the AFL actually split a few years ago from the AFL-CIO, but the carpenters work in solidarity with the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, on a host of mutual issues, including recent forums on technical training and immigrant worker rights at their Pewaukee facility.

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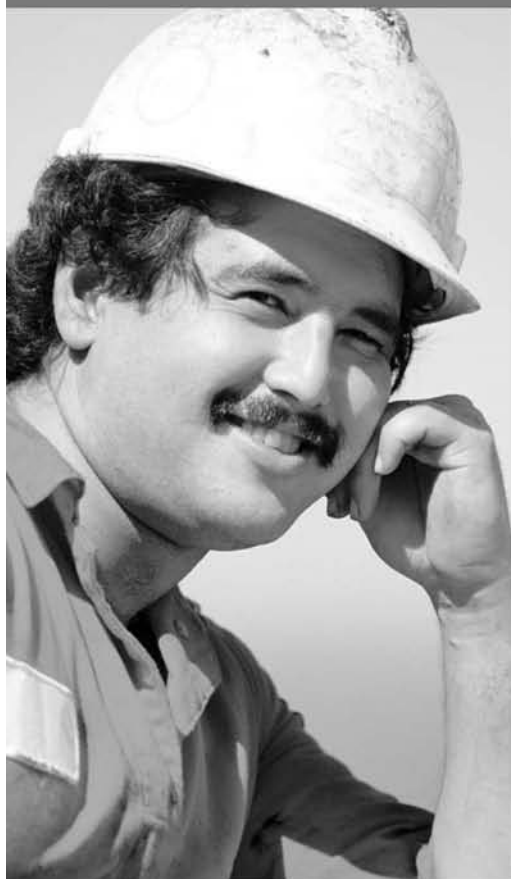
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Chisholm clear choice for DA

John Chisholm expected a half-dozen opponents when he entered the race for district attorney -- particularly when his retiring boss and supporter, Dist. Atty. E. Michael McCann, was so negatively in the news over the Jude case.

But one by one throughout the spring, lawyers who flirted with running fell away. Only in the summer did Chisholm pick up an opponent for the Sept. 12 Democratic primary -- in what newspapers described as an attack from the party's left flank.

Lorraine McNamara-McGraw, a long-retired East Side alderman largely inactive in elections for a decade but once supported by the labor community, entered the race decrying the current operation, which Chisholm has been part of for a dozen years.

Let's pause for a moment on this left-right thing. All prosecutors, as a sheriff's deputy reminded me, are "law and order toughies" determined to catch criminals. The issue is how evenhandedly, intelligently and efficiently they do it, responding to changing realities on the ground and working to turn citizens into helpers rather than skeptics.

It's a day to day presence and openness required to get the evidence to reduce crime. It's not



John Chisholm

posturing over skirmishes but improving long-term effectiveness.

COPE interviews with both candidates revealed that McNamara-McGraw was tapping in to negatives on the street with no formed practical plan for change.

Chisholm, 43, a Bay View resident, has specific plans shaped by deep knowledge of both the citizenry and the underbelly of the DA's office and its 100-plus lawyers. As an assistant DA, he handled thousands of cases (including murders and gang violence), led firearms enforcement teams, supervised the guns and drugs unit and has run efforts to get the staff into neighborhoods and precincts. So he has given much more than lip

service in community involvement.

Nor will he bash his friend and boss McCann because it's a convenient sound-bite today (a strange change since McCann has been DA since 1968, always re-elected with ease and often without opponents).

Chisholm notes how much has changed in the city he grew up in (he attended Marquette High and Marquette University before serving as an Army officer and earning his law degree at UW-Madison).

What was innovative in the 1970s may look old-fashioned today, he points out. But McCann should be honored as a "principled" man of honesty and ethics - and "we can't lose that dedication to independence," Chisholm said, even while pushing for fresh concepts and intelligent redesign.

Actually, Chisholm seemed happy that finally having an opponent has turned the race into a discussion not an anointment.

There will now be public debate (9 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 5, on Channel 36) on long-range issues and complex needs, putting in media view his strong record and the passion for the job that led the MCLC to back him.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

Organized labor makes its endorsements primary

Vincent Bobot, the only real Democrat in the Sept. 12 Democratic primary for sheriff (see page 8), and John Chisholm, the only experienced prosecutor in the same primary for DA, were endorsed Aug. 2 by MCLC delegates on the recommendation of the Committee on Political Education (COPE).

The entire day before, COPE reviewed questionnaires and interviewed 10 candidates in several primary races. The representatives from many MCLC unions took a pass on any recommendations beyond Bobot and Chisholm until they could consult with the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, which has the final say on legislative contests.

Those secondary discussions and votes led Aug. 17 to the endorsement of incumbent Jeff Plale, who faces an opponent in the Sept. 12 Democratic primary for the 7th Senate District, which is a curious geographical split incorporating the East Side and the South Side.

Plale had disturbed some of his past supporters because of his votes for concealed carry and voucher expansion (bills Gov. Doyle vetoed) and had flirted with the idea of bypassing Milwaukee County to create a regional airport commission. But he also provided key support for other Doyle vetoes and has a 90% plus favorable rating on AFL-CIO supported legislation.

The state COPE agreed with the Milwaukee COPE to take a pass - at least for the primary - in the 23rd Assembly District (northwest city of Milwaukee plus four-fifths of Mequon and all of Brown Deer, Thiensville and Bayside), a seat vacated by Republican Curt Gielow

Neither of the two Republican candidates (a Mequon alderman and a retired TV meteorologist) accepted the invitation for a COPE interview and all three Democrats are just forming their campaigns. No one jumped out for COPE, which insists on two-thirds support from members for a recommendation.



Jeff Plale

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Bobot – the real deal vs the ineffectual vanity sheriff

By Dominique Paul Noth
Labor Press Editor

A Milwaukee police officer whose life was re-directed to a law career after he took a bullet from a bad guy, Vincent Bobot became a city attorney and then a municipal judge credited with streamlining the court, fighting for quality public housing and pushing community outreach to help troubled juveniles.

A constant if quiet presence at community forums about poverty and education -- and a frequent background visitor to union rallies -- Bobot has been described by co-workers as fair, a team player, consistent and knowledgeable about administration. "He listens far more than he talks," added a Municipal Building colleague.

What a welcome contrast to Sheriff Filibuster David Clarke, who pops up on TV right before any election, retaliates against deputies who don't treat him as a god, berates dispatchers, diverts money to pet projects, ignores



Vincent Bobot

county supervisors who tell him to stop, hogs the radio microphone on any hot-button issue, creates tension with suburban and city law enforcement units - and plays footsies with Republican candidates and causes while offering himself as "an independent Democrat."

Appointed by a GOP governor to a Milwaukee that has resisted GOP sheriffs since Castro took over Cuba, he runs as a

Democrat while refusing to sign up as one. His campaign manager back then says he turned out to be an egomaniac who "runs the department like Captain Queeg."

The sheriff deputies were skeptical of Clarke from the start but have now endured vindictiveness up close and personal. Their union is actively working for Bobot.

The state Democratic Party has also shown spine. It normally stays out of making choices within its own primaries but in June the party branded Clarke an "undercover Republican" -- and an ineffective sheriff at that -- and threw its support to Bobot.

Party affiliations aside, Clarke has failed the ability test, bending rules and civil service regulations to fit his vision, his spending and his politicking. (Back in the 2004 mayoral race, it was actually Bobot who pounded Clarke for his dubious petition practices getting on the ballot; Clarke finished a distant third and

disappeared for a while to lick his wounds.)

Now there's another election year and Clarke is back in uniform before the cameras whenever there's a crisis to exploit, ignoring the way the personnel commission and courts slap down his treatment of employees.

Once he pushed to give up park patrols. Then came shootings on Memorial Day. Along comes Clarke pledging to increase park patrols, while blackmailing the state for more freeway patrol money to do it. His pet projects seemed to divert deputies into showboat duty to help his re-election campaign. He pledges major budget cuts, then asks for a pass.

Wow, does the current sheriff have problems staying in his own lane in a complex law enforcement world, or even signaling a lane change.

Bobot in contrast is good with budgets and has experience building cooperation with the

community and within government. While Bobot can't do much about the image manipulation -- the incumbent always has the advantage -- he'll win if the voters are ready to choose competency over peacocking.

Clarke needs Republicans unexcited by the GOP attorney general competition to pretend to be Democrats for the primary purpose of voting for him. (Scott Walker's departure from the GOP gubernatorial battle may prove Clarke's biggest gift.) To counter that, Bobot needs a surge of inner city residents who recognize Clarke as a serial hot dog using their community's problems to push his own image.

Clarke: Relying on media manipulation - and media complacency -- one more time (or voters too stubborn to admit how wrong they were in 2002). Bobot: Pushing for voters who understand that someone who looks like a sheriff can simply be sent over from central casting. There's the race in a nutshell.

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Don't Miss Laborfest!

Zeidler Park Assembly 6-10 a.m.

Parade 11 a.m.

Festival from Noon to 5 p.m.

See stories on Pages 20, 21.

Wednesday, September 6

Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO

Delegate Meeting

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

Friday, September 9

United Way Labor Cabinet

9 a.m., Teamsters Local 200 Hall, 6200 W. Bluemound Rd.

Tuesday, September 12

Primary Election -- Be Sure to Vote!

See stories Pages 7, 8

Thursday, September 14

Labor Kick-Off Rally for United Way Campaign

6 p.m., Center of Excellence, 3841 W. Wisconsin Ave.

See story Page 24

Saturday, September 16

Labor 2006 Walk

9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, September 27

MCLC Executive Board meeting, 2 p.m.

MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Rd.

Janitors gain 'healthy' contract

Labor Press in July reported how the 350 downtown janitors of SEIU Local 1 were prepared to march all summer and fall if necessary to win a new contract -- one that no longer consigned 30% of its members to part-time status to keep them out of health coverage.

Turns out their marching days are over for now. Credit their determination - and perhaps the feet of public officials and community and religious leaders who rallied to their parades. But also credit the contractors on the other side of the bargaining table that bought into the common sense of the demands and the basic human responsibility.

As the old contract expired July 31, the contractors -- Modern Maintenance, Skyline Building Services, Performance Clean, Somers Building Maintenance, Regency Janitorial Services, and American Building Maintenance -- reached an accord with the union bargaining team on a new three-year deal the membership was likely to ratify in mid-August.

It not only provides wage increases but agrees to transition the part-time workers to full-time positions - and to accept a new SEIU-sponsored national health insurance plan that will bring more janitors into the health care system.

The janitors affected clean many of Milwaukee's downtown office buildings including US Bank and Chase.

The new contract (to July of 2009) not just reverses an unhappy trend that since 2004 has seen fewer janitors eligible for health insurance as companies moved them to part-time status. It also should stabilize the workforce.

Many custodians felt dumped out with the garbage - and wondered how they could continue -- as they struggled with \$10-\$11 pay to support their families without health coverage since they were relegated to part-time hours even with what was obviously a full-time workload.

"We may not be able to afford to live downtown," said one SEIU custodian during a march. "But at least we should be able to afford to work there."

Let's be YOYOs no more

Labor Day is a time to honor those who do the work and actually create the real wealth of this country: working people!

It should also be a time to reflect on what unionism is all about: Solidarity -- an injury to one is an injury to all. That is the basic principle of the Labor Movement, the understanding that we're all in it together.

Without romanticizing the past, that understanding also used to be a fundamental value among the vast majority of Americans. It was the way we related to each other as neighbors and as co-workers. It was the basis of community.

But today that sense of community has been weakened -- in fact it's under systematic attack.

The core question we face as a country today is this: Are we going to recognize that we really are all in this together, and we need to support and take care of each other? Or are we going to repudiate that value and any mutual obligations and say instead it's everyone for themselves?

Jared Bernstein from the Economic Policy Institute summed it up well in a recent article, saying it's YOYO ("You're On Your Own") vs. WITT ("We're In This

Official notice

By vote of the membership of Local 2150 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the following will hold office from July 18, 2006, through July of 2009:

Forrest Ceel, president; Hollie O'Neill, vice president; Nancy Wagner, recording secretary; Linda Keck, treasurer, and Daniel E. Sherman, business manager and financial secretary.

Nancy Wagner
Recording Secretary



By David Newby, President Wisconsin State AFL-CIO
Special to the Labor Press

Together").

For years the Right Wing has been promoting a YOYO vision for America. The entire Bush domestic agenda is based on the YOYO principle.

YOYO underlies Bush's attempt to privatize Social Security and leave our retirement income to the mercy of the stock market.

YOYO underlies the Right Wing solution to our health care crisis: not universal, quality, affordable health care for all, but high-deductible policies that expect us to "shop" for the lowest cost health care providers and which stress "personal responsibility" for our health -- as if we could all become mini doctors and could have complete control of our health!

YOYO also underlies the corporate shift from "defined benefit" guaranteed pensions to "defined contribution" pensions or 401(k)s -- which, like privatized Social Security, do not provide a guaranteed income, but an income based on how lucky we are in that grand casino called the stock market.

The fundamental goal of YOYO policy is to shift all economic risk to individuals and our families. Those currently in power

call it "personal responsibility" but in reality it means we're on our own, there's no common safety net. And if our health fails or our job is outsourced and we're not rich enough to survive on our own, then that's too bad, it's our own fault. We've obviously failed in our "personal responsibility."

The union movement has a completely different philosophy. Recognizing that "we're all in this together," we want to share risks and pool our resources. So that everyone, at a minimum, has the health care they need. So that all our kids have a good public education. So that everyone can retire in dignity. So that we have a floor beneath which no one falls.

Combined with Bush tax policies that are shifting vast amounts of wealth from working families to the super-rich (who can afford to be on their own), YOYOism sums up the policy agenda of this administration and its rightwing congressional majority.

These anti-worker policies are rapidly eroding the economic foundation for the middle class as well as rolling back the protections we all need by undermining everything from environmental standards to health and safety protections.

So on this Labor Day 2006, let's think a bit about the basic principles of the Labor Movement: Solidarity -- an injury to one is an injury to all. And let's remember why our government was formed: "... to promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." These are precisely the principles we all need to follow in order to meet the needs of the vast majority of Americans and put America back together again.

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Strategy steers Local 200 to better contracts

Two years ago, Teamsters Local 200 vowed to be leaner at the top and smarter at the bottom in pushing employment and wages for its 4,900 members.

Today the leaders who took over, Secretary-Treasurer Tim Buban and President Darryl Connell, are happy to rattle off the results:

- Focus on contract enforcement has doubled the number of working Teamsters at Tandem Transport.

- A new contract at Moore Oil (home heating suppliers) has expanded the union truck drivers from "Milwaukee area only" to adjacent counties.

- A new contract with Onyx puts its drivers on wage and benefit parity with the big kid on the waste-hauler block, Waste Management.

And in construction, a couple of deals fashioned by Local 200 are virtually unprecedented:

- Having brought the bulk of the ready-mix concrete compa-

nies into the union fold during the construction boom, Local 200 this June reached a three-year master agreement with these firms assuring standards in pay and benefits across the Milwaukee scene.

- And then it turned around and worked a similar master agreement for drywall hauling, also an ongoing part of Milwaukee's apartment and office construction surge.

"We are an unusual local," said Darryl Connell, a noted organizer with the local in the 1990s (the Snap-On tool deal) who continues to be consumed with converting non-union firms to Teamster drivers.

"We have one foot in the construction industry and one foot just about everywhere else."

Connell has seen that spread as an advantage - Local 200 is not some one-dimensional lug in the industrial machinery but an influential far-flung activist in the community. And companies are learning it

is smart business to work with the Teamsters.

Local 200 has not been averse to strikes and hard-bargaining (a famous legacy of this union) but the Teamsters have also demonstrated a profit value for companies.

"I think we're making these guys rich," laughed Buban. "They know we will talk them up and bring them clients."

The drywall agreement is a story of such aggressive enterprise. When they couldn't get the deal they wanted for its members, Local 200 turned to the strike. But while striking two drywall companies, they let a third one take the work - while they organized a fourth company and helped it gain business.

By the time the smoke cleared, it was advantageous for a number of drywall companies to form a master agreement for hauling, which also took labor costs off the table in their pursuit of work.

The ready-mix deal is another such story - and probably the one that gets the most attention these days, since the need for concrete is pervasive in the construction industry.

"We got rid of double-breasted companies," said Connell. "Double-breasted" is union parlance for companies that have a union division and then create a non-union arm as a way of sometimes undercutting their union workforce or keep it in check. "That's gone with the master agreement in ready-mix," noted Buban.

Connell estimates that 80% of the local's territorial ready-mix work is covered by the agreement, standardizing the wages and benefits across the industry, providing a smooth continuous work environment. Meanwhile, the Teamsters openly help these companies in the pursuit of work - which brings more work, which brings more employment. "Absolutely, we talk up companies that work with



The tactics planned by President Darryl Connell (left) and Secretary-Treasurer Tim Buban at their Local 200 offices aim to better both the Teamsters and the companies that work with them.

us," said Buban.

"Part of the success is the spread of what we do," said Connell. Having Teamsters as informal salespeople is no small thing, especially with truck drivers such an integral part of so many enterprises in construction, in freight and around the community.

That's why Buban and Connell have absolutely no hesitation about advocating for companies that go union -- "but another part of it is that we police our territory," Connell added. "The companies know we will keep an eye out for them and for our members as well as improving standards and efficiency."

Neither are the leaders shy about community home-cooking. They have opened up the union hall at 62nd and Bluemound Ave. to a range of public events and political meetings, to steward training by the School for Workers, to LCLAA (Labor Council for Latin American Advancement), to the United Way Labor Cabinet and even to the regular monthly meetings of other locals (UNITE HERE, the sheriff's deputies, railworkers).

Soon Local 200 will also conduct certified driver licenses classes in the building. The CDL

class is another way to make companies think of the Teamsters as one-stop shopping, the leaders say. Now the local with help find future drivers and train them in a complex world of hauling. (One license hardly fits all in this era. Different skills are needed for air brakes, multiple gears, flatbeds and even controlling the water and mixing speed as you drive a ready-mix vehicle.)

Buban, who cut \$25,000 in pay when he took over as secretary-treasurer (and he and Connell also recall that they came down to the same single pension the rank-and-file workers have, abandoning a multiplicity of pensions for the local leadership), feels that their whole attitude "has to reflect what the members go through - it keeps us in close touch with them." That incorporates organizing, bargaining and community issues.

And, Buban adds, the Teamsters can ill-afford not to keep active in what's happening in the community and with forming deeper partnerships.

Often active in Laborfest, this year Local 200 intend to double its vehicles streaming down the avenue. Year-round they are more visible in all the activities of the MCLC -- community meetings, political campaigns, forums.

They have confronted politicians, elected officials and city administrators on a regular basis about prevailing wage, standards compliance and open-door level-playing-field for union workers.

"I think it was the rare master agreement with the ready-mix companies that brought us attention this summer," said Buban. "But we intend all our members to have year-round work at good wages and benefits. We're attacking a historic problem for our members - slow times and down times."

The response is not always gratitude. Buban recalls wryly a call he got from a member who complained that Local 200 had brought his company so much work that he was no longer laid-off during deer-hunting season.

Elections and their meaning propel new 4th St. Forums

The one public TV show that puts notable guests on a panel and lets any citizen question them afterward returns in September with a series focused on elections and local government.

It's the new 4th Street Forums, taped on Thursdays at noon at Turner Hall, and then broadcast the immediate Friday and Sunday afterward by Channels 10/36.

Guests already lined up include Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, Common Council President Willie Hines, Milwaukee magazine editor Bruce Murphy and Roberto Suro, D.C. based director of the Pew Hispanic Center.

Veteran moderators include Jack Murtaugh, Enrique Figueroa and Denise Calloway. The topics, coming right after the Sept. 12 primary, are provocative.

Taping Thursday, Sept. 14: Election 2006: What Should You Expect From Government? Where are the politicians trying to take us?

Sept. 21: How Do You Judge a Candidate? Image, spin, and marketing.

Sept. 28: City And Suburbs: What Are the Greatest Problems? For more details, visit www.4thstreetforum.org

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Wounded Wal-Mart now snarls at citizens it ignored

The good news - Wal-Mart has accepted a union. The bad news -- the union is in China, government run, no bargaining power, company managers as leaders limited to such things as providing ping-pong breaks.

The good news -- Wal-Mart has raised starting wages by 6% at a third of its US stores. The bad news - it capped other wages, won't reveal where the increases are and avoided mentioning that even paying a few people 50 cents more still leaves it up to \$6 an hour behind competitors in wages and benefits.

The bad news for Wal-Mart shareholders - the conglomerate just posted its first quarter losses in a decade, and feebly blames the high gasoline costs that apparently didn't affect shopping at such better paying, better service and better quality rivals as Target and Costco, where sales are booming.

The truly good news - Wal-Mart is finally listening. It's circling the wagons and lashing out at the United Food and Commercial Workers and other unions, but it is listening 18 months after dismissing the Wake Up Wal-Mart union-driven campaign as a gnat to easily swat away.

Now every reaction from corporate headquarters in Arkansas -- from millions in PR campaigns, a right-wing laden war room to angry reactions to legislative action in dozens of states -- is a direct consequence of a groundswell from consumers and a growing grassroots awareness that Wal-Mart practices are holding the country down and holding wages back.

And it's not just because Wal-Mart is the world's biggest retailer. It's the record of how it uses its gigantism.

WakeUpWalmart.com, backed not just by the UFCW, the AFL-CIO and other unions but also by community and political groups, has more than a quarter of million members signed up to its Internet activism and street protests. Its promotional bus tour of 19 states and 35 cities in 35 days (actually underestimating the number of stops) visited Milwaukee Aug. 15, signing up 800 new members outside the



Sleeping 10 media and organizing specialists - piled in stacked cots in the back - picking up dignitaries and politicians on each stop, signing up thousands of new volunteers each day, the Wake Up Wal-Mart bus is ramming the box retailer head-on. Its Milwaukee stop Aug. 15 added a Serb Hall conversation with media master Joe Trippi (above right) talking about the power the Internet provides against established marketing techniques by giant conglomerates.

State Fair while inside the fair the Union Label Booth put together by the MLC signed up at least 500 more.

Potential Democratic presidential candidates have joined the rallies -- including Sen. Joe Biden, John Edwards, moderate Sen. Evan Bayh and New Mexico Gov Bill Richardson (also in town Aug. 18 to support Jim Doyle -- see Page 17).

As Bayh pointed out to the New York Times, rallies against Wal-Mart's substandard wages and health coverage attract both

Joe Lieberman, running as an independent for senate in Connecticut, and the Democratic rival who beat him in the primary, Neil Lamont, so this can hardly be dismissed as a minority movement.

The presence of such diverse candidates did provoke one of Wal-Mart's most laughable threats -- a letter to all 1.3 million of its workers (called "associates") urging them to rebuff such politicians.

Wal-Mart workers that Labor Press, Wake Up Walmart



and other community groups have talked to may still feel too intimidated to organize unions, but they are certainly not about to oppose a campaign aimed at improving their lot and preventing further discrimination and environmental abuse.

Wal-Mart's CEO now acknowledges his company is up against a sophisticated campaign using movies, video, press releases and mainly the Internet to combat the company's practices. And there he is right.

Joe Trippi, the marketing expert behind Howard Dean's Internet campaign, spoke at Serb Hall during the bus tour and pointed out that the power of numbers and financing represented by the web has ended the sense of isolation Wal-Mart opponents once endured, has balanced the playing field of getting the message out and reminded Americans that united action does

make a difference. The campaign is in laws as well as rallies. Chicago passed an ordinance -- quickly accepted by Costco and other retailers -- aimed at requiring a living wage at such box stores. Wal-Mart reacted with a threat to pull its new construction into the suburbs, though they've spent a fortune targeting the urban poor.

Wisconsin and other states are looking at laws to make Wal-Mart and other box retailers and large employers to offer affordable health plans so they no longer lead the statistics of workers forced into government paid safety nets because they can't afford health coverage. Environmental and discrimination lawsuits proceed apace.

Now, actually, there is good news for Wal-Mart. None of these opponents want to destroy the company, just wake it up. The constant theme is to "Change Wal-Mart, Change America," to bring it to elevating rather than destructive social behavior, to remind consumers that they have the power of the purse to influence giants.

Said Wake Up Walmart's communications director, Chris Kofinis, "Who can disagree with the proposition that corporations should provide affordable health care, pay decent wages, protect American jobs and help provide a safe and just workplace?"

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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The Labor Day parade will truly mark the end of summer for the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association. After marching hundreds strong in the parade and then helping oversee the children's area at Laborfest on Monday, the teachers head back to the public schools Tuesday for the first day of classes.

Another piece of homework awaits them - ratification packets explaining the new agreement reached by the union's bargaining committee with the Milwaukee Public Schools, extending back to

Union homework for MPS teachers

June of 2005 and forward to July of 2007.

You might think the 6,200 teachers just reached a contract, and you'd be right. That contentious affair wasn't settled until long after the time period it covered. The counter-offers went to an arbitrator, where the school administration's approach to health care won. (It's ancient history that if the MTEA had won, the taxpayers would be paying less for teacher

health care, certainly in the early years.)

The nice thing, both sides do agree, with health care set aside the new contract focuses on education and classroom initiatives.

Three pilot programs are part of the plan. They allow job-sharing in areas of high needs, collaborative planning time for schools and mentoring and additional support for teachers facing students with severe special needs.

Money for these initiatives was set aside in earlier budgets.

Sam Carmen, the MTEA's executive director, called the contract "a timely step toward refocusing the public school conversation on what is most important - teaching and learning."

Wage increases, most retroactive, offered in the tentative contract include 1.5% as of July 1, 2005, 0.75% as of January 30, 2006, 1.5% on July 1, 2006, and

1% on January 29, 2007 - a 4.75% increase overall.

Another unit of the MTEA, substitute teachers, are being churned through the QEO system for their 2003-2005 contract. The school board voted to impose the state law that allows minimal wage gains (a qualified economic offer) if other aspects of a contract remain the same. The likelihood is a one-tenth of one percent raise for the subs in the first year of QEO.

Two other units, educational assistants and bookkeepers, are on a different contract cycle.

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Fair proves a watershed moment for MCLC promotional item



It didn't seem like that big a deal when the labor council ordered cases of small bottled drinking water pasted with the MCLC icon and the theme "Working in Solitary." But it's being gulped down like the proverbial hotcakes.

The bottles proved the major attraction at the Union Label Booth at State Fair (left) -- quite something since letter openers and key chains were also popular while several thousand raffle tickets were simultaneously sold for the Laborfest Harley-Davidson motorcycle on display at the fair.

Patrons know the stuff at the Labor Booth, including information, is free, but they always seemed to ask for water. How did they know? Earlier visitors must have told them.

Different volunteer squads supplied by locals operated the booth each day (they also signed up hundreds for the Wake Up Wal-Mart campaign) and all gushed over the attraction of water.

The big power of these little water bottles also became clear on Labor 2006 walks, and we'll see if enough cases have been ordered to quench thirst at Laborfest.

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Labor can help Agnew's garment worker take NY art world by storm

It is a singular honor for Terese Agnew and her "Portrait of a Textile Worker." Milwaukee union people were the first to support the concept by providing boxes of clothing labels to the artist who always supports labor causes and helped create the Workers Memorial in Zeidler Union Square Park.

Now the top museum for contemporary arts, crafts and design wants the "Portrait" for its permanent collection — and on prominent display when it premieres its new home just off Central Park on Columbus Circle in Manhattan.

It's an honor that comes with a \$50,000 headache for Agnew and her supporters. The Museum of Arts & Design, affectionately known as MAD, has had to commit all its fund-raising and its half century of prestige to completing



Artist Terese Agnew

the building in time for its spring 2008 opening. It is \$15 million shy of construction costs despite a \$50 million endowment and major help from Mayor Bloomberg and the city of New York.

The "Textile Worker" would be a big draw in one of the most advertised museum openings in the world, but — MAD indeed — Agnew has to raise \$50,000 by the end of October to help pay herself for her own work and its

massive installation.

That is actually half the cost. Friends of the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center in Brookfield that first displayed it — and where MCLC members flocked to see it — are pursuing private donors to get the other half, an effort supported by the Milwaukee Art Museum, which wants the work at MAD to borrow it from time to time.

For years Agnew gathered thousands of labels (eventually going worldwide) and meticulously created a Bangladesh garment sweatshop that looks photographic at a distance but melts up close into a disturbing ocean of clothing brands.

She spent \$30,000 of her own money, 5,900 working hours and used the resulting posters and publicity to benefit international labor groups working to improve sweatshops around the world. Her



Detail from "Textile Worker"

hours of hand-sewing left repetitive stress injuries affecting her future output.

Agnew is not rich, except in

ideas. She knows working families aren't rich either but she has an idea. She will give a high-class poster of the work to anyone contributing \$50.

Checks made out to the Museum of Arts and Design, with the memo field indicating "for Agnew portrait," are tax-deductible gifts to a nonprofit. They can now be sent to a special address: Friends of Terese Agnew's "Portrait of a Textile Worker," P.O. Box 11093, Shorewood, WI 53211 Add \$4.05 for mailing costs.

Or save the mailing and come see Agnew at Laborfest where anyone who writes a \$50 check to MAD will get a personally signed copy of the poster in a mailing tube. Encourage you friends. The Bangladesh working woman made in Milwaukee deserves the biggest wall in the New York art world.

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Too late for printers here, ruling may help others

Added to organized labor's long list of moral victories that came too late the decision of an independent arbitrator Aug. 2 blasting Quebecor, the second largest printing company in the world, for violating by intimidation and interference its agreement with the Teamsters to remain neutral and allow employees to make their own decision to be represented by a union.

It was the second such ruling within a year by the arbitrating judge chosen by both sides.

This case involved the February election in Brookfield where an overwhelming majority on the non-union side of the Quebecor plant voted for representation by the GCC (formerly GCIU), which became part of the Teamsters umbrella in 2005.

Under the arbitration rules, the vote for union had to come from an absolute majority of the 159 workers. About 29 workers who had promised to vote didn't show up, leaving the union forces painfully five votes shy of an absolute majority.

Normally the arbitrator's ruling Aug. 2 would require a new election. But the Quebecor World facility in Brookfield is closed, throwing about 300 people out of work. The closing, all concede, was not directly related to the union issue, though indirectly you can wonder what it says about the limited recognition these days of good workers.

The Quebecor facility in Brookfield was old and outdated - it was the productivity of the workforce that kept it in the game.

But now that doesn't matter. The company is moving to more modernized sophisticated plants it invested in elsewhere. In this case, however, the moral victory might actually have a positive effect on Quebecor and its 32,000 workers, many of whom continue to battle for unionizing.

Clearly angry that for the second time in a year the company had grievously violated neutrality and engaged in a "systematic campaign to convince its employees of the risks and futility of unionization," the arbitrating judge took an extraordinary step.

He issued a "cease and desist" order giving the union the right to review any literature that the company plans to distribute to employees in future union election campaigns, so that "the

type of improper influence on organizing campaigns that tainted the Brookfield campaign and the previous campaign" can be prevented by prior review.

One thing was unknown to union printing trades workers and families when Local 577M threw a day-long picnic in West Bend (left). The local, which lost members when Quebecor World closed its plant here, and had previously "lost" an election to add more Quebecor workers, actually won. See story.

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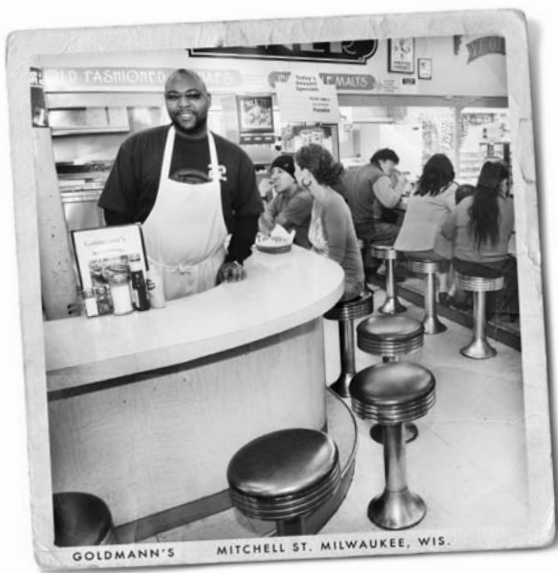
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Panel guides immigrants to citizenship

Millions of immigrants have the foundation to become US citizens if they wish but face delay, resistance, long forms, new demands to prove their character, conflicting instructions and rising costs.

Those born into citizenship, and those whose parents earned citizenship and thought that was tough, couldn't imagine the hurdles of today as described Aug. 5 at the MATC by the experts who deal daily with the legal thicket.

A rotating panel of federal employees and immigration lawyers described general procedures, specific issues and cases still unresolved three years later. A separate resources table for individuals and groups was staffed with translators and experts covering such languages as Serbian, Portuguese, Arabic, Spanish and Urdu.

The all-morning Citizenship Workshop was arranged by Gwen Moore, one of the US House representatives signed aboard to a nationwide effort to help current and potential applicants gain a thorough understanding of the eligibility and application requirements for becoming a United States citizen.

Official notice

Voting by acclamation, members of Local 815 of the International Longshoremen's Association elected the following unopposed officers to two-year terms at the summer meeting: Thomas Reitzner, president; Daniel Dziedzic, vice president; Lee Schlund, recording secretary; Douglas Kubic, financial secretary-treasurer and business agent, and Joe Smith and Thomas Schwarz as trustees.

Douglas Kubic
Business Agent

The workshop also covered the rights and responsibilities that come with citizenship and was aided by Local 212 of the American Federation of Teachers. The workshop also offered some important correctives to the built-in American myths about becoming a citizen. See related story on Page 23.

One surprise may be the simple cost, \$400 now and, said one panelist, about to cost any applicant \$800 by the end of the year.

Experts on immigration from inside and outside the government answered Rep. Gwen Moore's call and devoted a morning as rotating expert speakers at the citizenship workshop.





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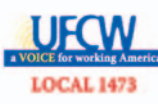


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New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, one of the names tossed about as a presidential or vice presidential candidate in 2008, was in Milwaukee Aug. 18 to boost a fellow governor, Jim Doyle. Outside a fund-raiser at Conejito's. Richardson met city housing leader Tony Perez as Doyle (background) went through his notes on a busy day of meetings and events. Both governors were greeted by an enthusiastic Latino crowd at the packed fund-raiser inside.

LABOR DAY GREETINGS



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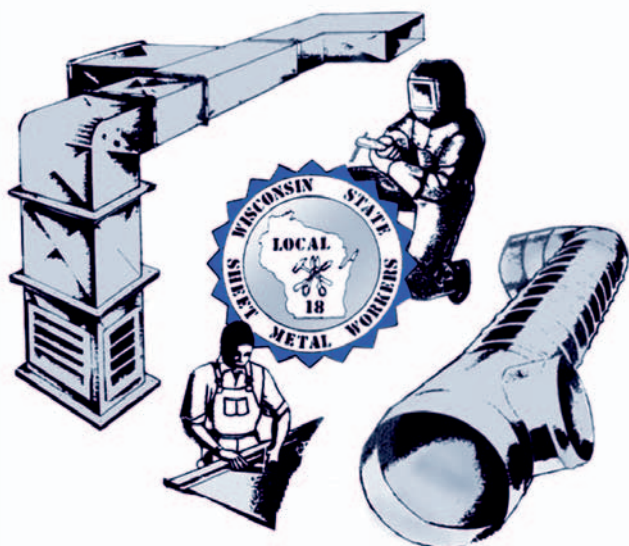
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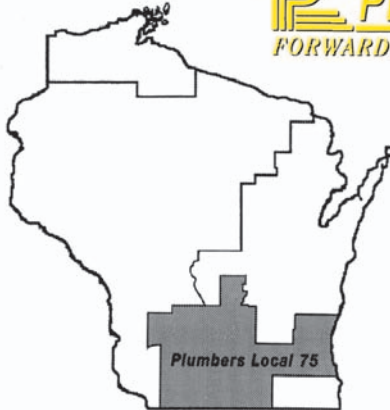


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Bad bosses endure a long hot summer of derision

It's been an embarrassing summer for bad bosses -- and the AFL-CIO was a big part of the media trend that produced diverse stories in hundreds of major newspapers and on TV broadcasts across the US. The timing was delicious but also frightening, as politicians living in an alternate universe continued to boast about the US corporate structure.

Humor proved a powerful balancing weapon. It started when the AFL-CIO, using its Working America site for non-unionized families, invited visitors to submit their Bad Boss stories and vote for the best (or worst).

More than 4,500 stories were submitted and turned out, alas, to be verifiable.

More than a quarter of a million visitors checked them out at www.workingamerica.org during the six-week contest.

So did hundreds of newspaper columnists who found incredible fodder -- "the boss who expects personal services, like back rubs or picking up dry-cleaning ... the boss who regards you as sexual chattel.... the boss who enjoys keeping you in constant anxiety about your employment status ... the boss who throws tantrums, along with various heavy objects."

Nearly 50,000 votes were cast and the grand prize winner was the New York dentist who makes \$1 million a year - but on 9/11, upset over all the cancellations while the Twin Towers were crumbling, made up for the losses by docking each employee \$100. He beat out the boss who

wouldn't give an employee time off to visit his dying mother.

News and entertainment events cooperated in the bad boss hilarity. CEOs were being tried left and right for pension and fraud violations, not to mention their distasteful high living and growing pay gap with their own workers.

NBC's TV hit, "The Office," was built around an inept self-absorbed sexist boss who in one episode inadvertently encouraged and then hysterically suppressed a union organizing effort.

On movie screens, "The Devil Wears Prada" allowed Meryl Streep to embody the bully boss from hell in the fash-

ion world. TV comedy shows skewered the efforts of big business and the NLRB to remove from overtime and union protection the construction foremen and nurses designated "supervisors" because they advise less-experienced workers.

The collision of events produced thoughtful commentary as well as humor.

Some writers cited the Gallup Poll of one million workers that found bad bosses are the No.1 reason for quitting a job. Other articles pointed out how few workers have the financial option of quitting. Psychologists explained how bad bosses relate to debilitating stress.

Author Barbara Ehrenreich, who took the nation's nickel and dime jobs (including a stint at Wal-Mart) in one of her best sellers, suggested that it's not particular bad bosses that are the problem but the prevalence of "Bossism." She identified it as a national corporate mentality "that generates arrogance among the bosses and learned passivity among the bossed, along with fatalism or corrosive resentment."

As bad bosses came to the fore, another stereotype of American humor receded - the lazy worker. That one's no longer viable, not when it takes two full-time incomes for a middle-

class family to tread water. Not when the productivity and spending of the American worker keeps the economy together.

Not when college graduates have joined the parade of workers whose wages have fallen behind inflation, energy costs and health care. Not when more than 20,000 working women, responding to an AFL-CIO survey, say more laws are needed to make companies balance family and work life - not just to help them out personally but to save the integrity of our communities.

Yes, bad bosses should be the butt of jokes. But what's creating bad bosses is not so funny. -- Dominique Paul Noth

FCC will get a grassroots earful here

Looking at the Internet explosion, satellite radio and hundreds of cable channels to choose from, the average consumer may think there are too many choices now. But abundance is not the same as a balanced diet.

Hidden in that glut are some harsh realities - a half dozen conglomerates control the bulk of the media and want to gobble down more. Even your kids don't know that Rupert Murdoch, the Fox News global mogul, now owns myspace.com.

The shrunken ownership and loss of independent voices -- and US legislation and Federal Communications Commission rules that would accelerate the pace -- have brought gigabytes of grassroots protest and a rare opportunity for Milwaukeeans to go on record with their concerns

at a town hall meeting with two FCC commissioners (out of the five who make the final decisions).

Organized labor, along with Common Cause, the journalism/communications departments of UWM and Marquette, the League of Women Voters and others, are supporting this "Town Meeting on the Future of Media" on Thursday, September 7. Information and flyers on the open event will be available at Laborfest.

FCC Commissioners Jonathan Adelstein (in the headlines for attacking the fake news TV stations are supplied by corporations without identifying the sources) and Michael Copps will hear the testimony and put it before both Congress and the FCC.

The main organizer is Free

Press (freepress.net), a national coalition of free speech and rounded journalism advocates.

The testimony takes place at 6:30 p.m. Sept. 7 at the big hall in the UWM's Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd. (between Prospect and Stowell).

Moderating the event is Janine Geske, the former state supreme court justice and interim Milwaukee county executive. Special guests include the founders of Free Press, Robert McChesney and Madison Capitol Times columnist and Nation contributor John Nichols.

Panelists include David Newby, president of the state AFL-CIO, Carolyn Castore for League of Women Voters, Diane Faretta of the Center for Media and Democracy and columnist Robert Miranda of the


Milwaukee Spanish Journal

Three years ago, the FCC drew howls of protest when it approved rules that allowed more ownership of newspapers, radio and TV stations by one company in a marketplace. (In Milwaukee, the rules already allowed one company, Journal Communications, to run the big newspaper, a circle of community newspapers and the most dominant radio and TV news and sports stations).

The FCC scheme was ruled an excessive reach in federal court. Now, slightly rewritten, Congress and FCC are trying again this fall -- which lends urgency to public feedback.

The meeting is also a chance to speak clearly about how the media currently serves our community.

Labor Day greetings from the officers of
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Hetero-skelter Constitutional amendment on ballot turns out to jeopardize all families, not just gay couples

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Labor Press Editor

Oprah, Letterman, Angelina, Tom Cruise, Goldie Hawn, Susan Sarandon, Mark Wahlberg, Heath Ledger — after rattling off these names, my waggish email friend in an Eastern state pointed out that not a one was gay, many are respected parents “and while I don’t think any of them would rush to domicile in your fair state, or spend their considerable income there, your citizens are making them think twice about even flying over Wisconsin.”

He was jibing me about the permanent change to the state constitution offered on the November 7 ballot. It states: “A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized.”

I’m not losing any sleep over these celebrities. (Except maybe Oprah, who has roots here.)

I think of the widower and the divorcee in my neighborhood who found each other in their 50s, share bed and benefits and aren’t married because their adult children oppose it out of feelings for the departed parents.

Or the seniors who found each other in a retirement village. Or the many parents I know who don’t want their son or daughter to marry, feeling their grandchildren’s future will be better if the couple lives together to work out career and direction.

I’m thinking of the businesses that would refuse to locate here or will even move out if this became law. Here are politicians telling families how to live their lives and what lifestyle choices they should make. And here are families upon families that make such decisions for themselves and want the state to stay out of it.

Looking at the range of diverse and often successful family living arrangements out there, I see no earthly reason for the voters to step into this. Particularly with a ballot sentence so vague that judges and lawyers shudder over the unintended consequences.

What kind of cases could now come before them? How would this affect probate, domestic abuse, child support, medical decisions, taxpayer safety-net costs, domestic-benefit contracts and a range of other issues? It is likely to be negative, topsy-turvy and upsetting — whatever your politics.

The celebrity example has one validity if you think about it. Rich people, gay or straight, will decide on their lifestyle regardless. They can afford to pay what they want to live as they and their families like. So here is yet another law from the autocratic extremists that puts huge finan-

Inside Politics

Families upon families make such decisions for themselves and want the state to stay out of it.

cial obstacles and confusions in front of those who can least afford it, including their own neighbors and fellow parishioners.

Of course, you may not realize this sentence is on the ballot, since most of the discussion of the mandatory constitutional change has focused on the first sentence:

“Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state.”

That sentence, bizarrely, changes very little, redefining marriage from the current husband and wife to man and woman: It doesn’t say as it should “gay marriage is already banned.”

Psychologically, the first sentence opens the door wide to transsexual couples (doesn’t say anything about being born man or woman). It validates our welcome to any heterosexual who spends \$50 on a Las Vegas marriage license for a string of one-night but legal couplings.

That first sentence doesn’t address the runaway divorce rate that makes so many suspicious of the current institution of marriage. It doesn’t touch teen pregnancies (though that second sentence certainly does negatively, since it could limit financial and familial support). It doesn’t affect ceremonial or sacramental marriage (defined by each religious group) and doesn’t alter any marriage license issued in this state.

It is meant to explicitly demean and reject homosexual partnerships. It is another effort to impose legal punishment on what some believe is religious

sin — just as they once thought marriage among races was a sin (read the history of our miscegenation laws), or drinking was a sin (prohibition) or giving women the right to vote was against the will of God. And they want to lock that punishment in before biology proves anything different.

In the real world, it won’t affect people’s choices or imperatives. It just imposes more financial and social burdens on families and taxpayers.

Only on some abstract religious level, or personal bigotry, can the average citizen feel injured or threatened by homosexual couples. But the amendment would state loudly that Wisconsin society is not interested in caring families or human circumstances but wants to hammer home a division that even ministers have a dilemma sorting out.

Future generations of citizens may do better approaching the issue with scientific and social understanding, justice and compassion, so the amendment is really a cynical effort to impede such change.

As despicable as the first sentence is to the homosexual community, the second sentence extends the war to everyone struggling how best to maintain family. Heterosexuals without a marriage license are in equal trouble.

Proponents have engaged in a defense of these two sentences that is ludicrous as well as hypocritical. The change is needed, they say, to prevent some “activist” liberal judge from expanding the definition of marriage to cover homosexuals. Yet in most states those liberal judges

have said husband and wife or man and woman are equally clear in intent and language.

And can we also speak truth about activist judges? Most these days are conservative, given the political climate. Their construction is hardly strict — it is a tangle of excuses and tortured interpretations that duck the intent of many laws they don’t philosophically agree with. They have not hesitated to stretch the original language to limit worker rights, environmental protection, voting rights, and civil liberties.

Just imagine what they could do with a loose cannon like any “legal status similar to” marriage “shall not be valid or recognized.”

Thoughtful conservatives recognize that such amendments are as much an attack on religious freedom as legal equity. John Danforth, the noted Missouri Republican and an Episcopal minister, says it would be hard to find a constitutional amendment “sillier” than one on gay marriage and recites the history of failures in using constitutional amendments to change human behavior.

This from the senator who shepherded Clarence Thomas to the US Supreme Court.

These sort of laws are most associated with theocratic societies, such as Iran.

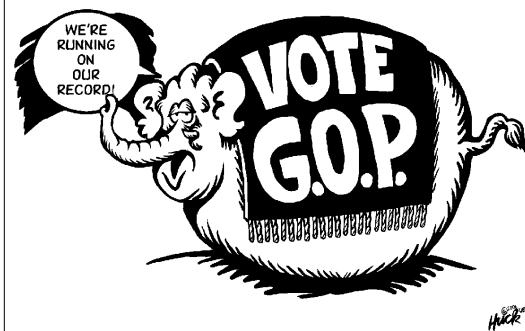
They are most common when an autocratic leadership recognizes its policies are failing and tries to codify past mistakes into law.

This amendment also flies in the face of traditional Republican approaches of restricting the role of government in personal life and it slaps around the basic concept that constitutions in the US protect and recognize human rights rather than narrow them.

But this amendment is in one American tradition — misdirection. That’s what political parties do when they sense their candidates are in trouble and their base is rebelling. Put something on the ballot that has nothing to do with good government but can agitate the base.

Well, this should certainly activate the conservative base — into opposition. Read those two sentences again — this is not mainly about gay marriage. It is an intrusion on personal family decisions.

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Two marches for solidarity timed as one smooth chain

Laborfest

From Page 1

company -- will already be underway before the Voces marchers reach the grounds.

But they will find bilingual tables staffed with union and community information, bilingual booths to buy food tickets and a vast supervised children's area speaking the universal language of clowns, magicians, jugglers and playgrounds.

The final marchers, in fact, should be at Summerfest in time for the brief opening ceremony at the Miller Stage, where select dignitaries will welcome the crowd.

Then the party really swings out with two professional bands on two stages - Laborfest veterans Spider George & the Web at the Miller, newcomers Resonance at the Harley-Davidson stage.

The dual musical dance barge signals how MCLC has expanded the available Summerfest space as well as its Laborfest offerings. More vendors, food ticket booths and industry displays are planned.

Topping the list of corporate sponsors for the event are AT&T, WE Energies, Bechtel and Miller Brewing. Unions have also been generous in their support.

MCLC, the main sponsor along with the Waukesha and Washington counties labor councils, has for thirty years invited the entire community to watch the parade and enjoy the free festival at Summerfest.



Milwaukee police officer liaisons and combined parade marshals planned details Aug. 19 with leaders from Voces de la Frontera and the MCLC, including Sheila Cochran (center left), chief operating officer.

Insurance requirements mandate advance approval of groups in the march, though MCLC has always invited community partners and outside work groups along with member unions. Political candidates can only march if a union invites them, though they always freely mingle with participants before and after the parade.

The coordinated plan for 2006 should add thousands to the march and hundreds to the Laborfest activities, which enter the final stretch about 4:30 p.m. with the announcement of the winners of the free raffles (both children and adults, who must be there to get their prizes) and the winners of the purchased raffled tickets for a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and cash prizes.

The event also could add a lot of spectators for what is like-

ly to be the biggest and most diverse march of working families in Milwaukee history. They will see trolleys, plows and flatbed trucks carrying the elderly, children, activists and even a traveling orchestra (as part of the combined MASH unit of entertainment locals).

The number of (union-made) American flags typically ordered for this parade has been increased to 5,000.

Many unions will distribute to their marching members special T-shirts with coordinated colors and messages. Teamsters Local 200 expects more cement trucks and other large construction vehicles than in years past. Cases of water bottles bearing the MCLC logo and the slogan "Working in Solidarity" remain to be given away to participants.

Last year at this time, a split at the national level between the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win unions

reduced units in the parade even as it reduced membership in the MCLC. This year, all those unions are back together within the MCLC.

So Milwaukee's labor council is bigger than before, and other unions that are not fully MCLC members continue to value togetherness. Marching units are planned by the carpenters, the UE and the Milwaukee teachers union, to name just a few.

Laborfest's slogan this year is understandably "Working in Solidarity."

Meanwhile, deeply disturbed over the continuing negative rhetoric and confused divisive attitudes surrounding the issue of immigrant rights (see story on Page 23), the national immigration movement proclaimed Labor Day a national day of action and worker solidarity and encouraged marches around the country.

Rather than two competing marches built around the same solidarity theme, and recalling a basic principle of the union movement, that "an injury to one is an injury to all," MCLC invited Voces to retain its independence but unify the marches.

Noted MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Cochran with some amusement, "For years my one pain with the parade was that no union wanted to be last in line. When Voces volunteered for that spot, it took away a major headache."

Of course, the end portion could easily match or beat in size the thousands of union members in the front lineup.

Unions, however, have historically relied on rallies and marches to bring attention to their issues, so they admire the

courage of workers anywhere who speak out. The AFL-CIO and the other union federations are also united against depriving worker rights for anyone -- and the national AFL-CIO executive council on Aug. 9 officially extended a partnership to the worker rights centers exploding in activity around the nation.

But, just as the country has failed to reach consensus on a future path for immigrants, there are still union members uneasy about the best course.

Two leaders of trades locals, citing the presence of the immigrant workers, said they wouldn't let their members march as a group this year, but that was quickly countered by new locals that asked to be there and construction and building trades locals that pledged to increase their participation.

Voces and MCLC have recognized the problems with sensitivity and without open criticism but are determined that this holiday will celebrate the positive force of work within all communities.

Both groups are also experts at handling mass events and media attention, working closely with police and other officials.

By request, a bilingual unit asked to be positioned toward the tail-end of the union lineup, so it could offer a strong welcome - LCLAA, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement.

Several immigrant members of the construction trades union plan an informal togetherness of their own.

They will march with their unions at the front of the parade and then circle back to join the immigrant workers.

LABOR DAY

GREETINGS

From

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Laborfest highlights

The only remaining positive meaning of "cruising" is attached to the annual Laborfest "Cruise Show" when privately owned vintage American-made (and hence union-made) cars are lovingly polished by their owners to follow hundreds of Harley motorcycle riders at the front of the parade.

These automobiles, some dating back more than 70 years, are driven right over to the north end of the Summerfest grounds and are on display throughout Laborfest.

Other Laborfest attractions:

- Adult bingo remains an afternoon attraction, suitably at the Potawatomi stage.
- The Union Industry Tent and nearby display areas have expanded this year as both unions and community groups are providing exhibits and brochures
- Until about 4 p.m., raffle tickets will continue to be sold for those eager to win the Harley-Davidson 2007 Sportster given away at the Miller Stage about 4:30 p.m.
- Meanwhile, the grounds are dotted with special boxes for the free raffles - toys for children and hotel and restaurant packages for adults. (Remember -- unlike the Harley raffle, winners must be present at the 4:30 p.m. event to collect).
- Look over at the sports area south of the children's area to find the pro wrestling ring and staged violent clashes of good and evil from the Midwest Pro Wrestling independent alliance.
- Corporate mascots, fire



A young art lover hung around at last year's Laborfest to see how Reynaldo did his sketch magic.

and police vehicle displays and much more will sprinkle the grounds.

Supervised by MPS, that children's area is dotted with clowns and face painting and offers a continuing series of shows on the children's stage by expert jugglers and magicians.

Scheduled for the children:

- Magician Glen Gerard on the children's stage.
- Also on that stage, shows from Ken Head's "Heads Up Juggling Revue."
- Matthew the Magician, alias Mathew Morgan, is on the children's stage but also performs throughout the children's area.
- "Mom the Clown" & Company will provide face painting in the children's area.
- "The Pocket Lady" (Kathleen Mohr) will be providing stories and activities.

Unless, as in some years past, they are forced to head south to help restore power to hurricane victims, the WE Energies bucket trucks will be back north of the children's area to take the brave high into the

air, courtesy of IBEW Local 2150. The operators of the bucket trucks ask those who can afford it for a \$1 donation to the Hunger Task Force.

In what is emerging as a popular Laborfest staple, Reynaldo is back with a group of artists similarly adept at quick sketching. Reynaldo is responsible for many of the murals that dot Milwaukee, including the one at the back of Esperanza Unida visible to freeway riders. The sketch artists can deftly reveal your personality in art.

Remember that Laborfest is handled by devoted volunteers who hang the banners, operate the food-ticket booths (expanded and bilingual this year) and quietly complete an amazing number of backstage tasks and chores. Be nice to them, and stick around at 5 p.m. to help with the cleanup.

Zeidler Park traditions unchanged – but staging area moved for cars

Unchanged by the largeness of the parade will be the morning activities at Zeidler Union Square Park, between 3rd and 4th Sts. on Michigan. The workers park remains the unions' staging and pre-march party place.

But new signage, gathering spots and staging areas were required months ago by city of Milwaukee decisions. The officials asked the MCLC to keep a downtown hotel exit on Michigan St. open (last year, the hotel complained, some guests were late on an airport run).

Union members gathering that morning at Zeidler Park must not only keep that hotel entrance clear. They also should look for yellow signs telling them where their union or local is assembling for the march, because it might be a different spot in or around the park.

The MCLC has also been given a new area north of Wisconsin Ave. on 4th St. for lining up vehicles. The Harley motorcycles and vintage cars that lead off the parade will gather there, facing south.

Some marshals for all facets of the parade will be connected by walkie-talkies, others are in contact with law enforcement, so there is instant communication to help prevent gaps or confusion. All participants should heed the instructions of the folks in the orange net vests.

Radio starts interviews at 6 a.m.

The Zeidler Park events actually start at 6 a.m., when WMCS 1290's Morning Magazine hosts, Cassandra Cassandra and Joel McNally, start broadcasting from the central gazebo. They will interview union members and leaders - and the inevitable politicians and candidates - who stop by, a practice that will pick back up at 2 p.m. on the Summerfest grounds, when 1290's Eric Von does his afternoon show.

Shuttles run until noon

Back and forth from Summerfest to the parade remains a snap for marchers and spectators, since a free shuttle service operated by ATU bus drivers runs from Summerfest parking lot P and the main gate to Zeidler from 8 a.m. to noon.

Prayer service at nearby postal hall

Another tradition is scheduled nearby at 9 a.m. - coffee, donuts and prayer. The ecumenical prayer service organized by the Faith Community for Worker Justice and open to all will again take place at Postal Workers Hall, 417 N. 3rd St. Prayer leaders already include the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths.

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Layoffs

A common word murders America's work ethic

“The Disposable American.” That book title kept bubbling in my head as I was interviewing Delphi workers about the forced layoffs disguised as buyouts ripping through the twin plants in Oak Creek — a muddled saddening portrait of Milwaukee workers in limbo that will be explored in a future edition.

New stories about the latest national layoff decimations have focused mainly on economics:

Auto industry cuts affecting Delphi, Ford and GM will put 60,000 workers on the sidelines over the next few years and radiate out to eliminate thousands of more jobs in affected communities (supermarkets, pharmacies, the car and home sellers, health care providers).

Replacement jobs will cut salaries in half, and thus buying power and family expectations in half.

Barely touched in the coverage is the true moral and social cost, which is far more than trouble paying the mortgage or the college tuition.

Yes, America's plunge into layoffs/buyouts/retirements — call it what you wish — has broken promises made to workers about how they will survive in their twilight years.

But that's just part of the tragedy.

The trend has also broken the back of an American ethic.

Slowly the mainstream media and businesses are re-evaluating the real consequences. Both layoffs and bankruptcies seem to be costing America something irretrievable and devastating. They have undercut the

historical strength, optimism and devotion to productivity of the American worker.

That theme has echoed in my own interviews and it is unavoidable in “The Disposable American: Layoffs and Their Consequences.”

The book stems from an unlikely source, a national reporter best known for recording the view from Wall Street and the opinions of CEOs.

But Louis Uchitelle, the veteran New York Times reporter with centrist credentials, describes how over the decades he became more and more worried about what he was seeing.

His details and analysis offer a scary outlook across the political spectrum. Policymakers, economists, political parties and even mental health professionals cannot escape the conclusions. Average workers are also to blame, so imbued with American pride and belief in self-determination that they don't own up to genuine depression and disgust over what has happened to them and their families' dreams.

Unthinkingly, Uchitelle relates, America has accepted the simple word “layoffs” as an inevitable consequence of the ups and downs of company fortunes.

Erroneously, financial experts and average citizens alike trusted that CEOs know best about how to protect their investors and the companies' future.

Bankruptcy reorganization laws (intended in part to protect workers at failed companies) have been perverted by CEOs and vulture capitalists to dump legacy costs and elevate profit by any

means to be king.

Again and again, while acknowledging that some layoffs are unavoidable, the book exposes what one reviewer called “the economic irrationality” of the layoff fever. Companies did not emerge better or stronger.

Managers did not know best. Neither did unions or US presidents of both parties, Uchitelle suggests.

Many modern CEOs took avenues that their predecessors would have found unthinkable and even shameful, reinterpreting the definition of business success in order to dump fellow citizens.

Uchitelle traces that CEO journey downward, exposing how each generation at many large companies — not just union companies — came to accept that breaking their moral obligation to their workers was acceptable, even necessary. It was a lack of imagination, a lack of trust, a shift to financial finagling and “service-driven companies” rather than running a company that produced products of real consequence and creatively anticipated impending change.

The values of job security and American employment growth that made so many companies successful were early casualties of competitive pressure. The corporate assumptions were based on abandoning commitments to expanding or even maintaining the US workforce. But that could only happen by deliberately narrowing the traditional meaning of success.

Politicians — confused by global competition and technological advances — also lost trust in American enterprise while giving lip service to its future greatness. They allowed policies that disintegrated the American workforce and put all their eggs into vague trade expectations, job retraining and even vaguer

entrepreneurship. Meanwhile, hungrier foreign entrepreneurs ate us for lunch.

Unions, since it is part of their basic definition, focused on protecting their existing workforces and their retirees, but once managers abandoned a similar commitment the unions were often doomed to be on the losing end of short-term thinking.

Layoffs, the book suggests, have not just proven devastating in human terms. They rarely produced efficiency and long-term profitability. In fact, while some of what took place is inevitable, the book personalizes how many corporate decisions were economically counterproductive. And Uchitelle speaks as a globalist.

Worse, he concludes, the American dream has been destroyed for millions and may have been destroyed for future generations in these families. Layoffs, that simple word that Americans have been retrained to think is inevitable, emerge as a direct attack on hallmarks of the American character — self-confidence, belief in work, conviction that the aching bones of today will produce a better future for our children.

The psychological impact of the layoff policy has been pervasive. The call to the American worker to “buck up, brace up and find a new job” was nonsensical given the depth of betrayal and dislocation. Uchitelle's book is now being studied in mental health circles as a revelation about the levels of depression, isolation and denial. Many workers have too much pride to think of themselves as victims. Thus they disguised the pain, the loss of self-esteem and self-worth. Simply put, they blame themselves for not being able to adjust.

But for many workers, these were not simply jobs lost. These were careers to which they had

THE DISPOSABLE AMERICAN:
Layoffs and Their Consequences
By Louis Uchitelle
283 pages. Knopf.

devoted decades. Expertise, competence, did not keep their careers.

The wounds within them and their families have been largely invisible. But quietly they abandoned belief in the American dream. The union workers among them were demeaned for fighting for economic security while what they really were fighting for, though seldom articulated, was a continuation of a basic life narrative in which work was an essential component.

Uchitelle finds skilled workers who kept on with their careers, several by becoming bosses' pets and ultimate brown-nosers to retain employment. He finds many others who moved from high skill jobs to custodians or deliverymen, so painfully resistant are they to the corporate environment where they were denigrated and laid off regardless of how good they were.

He suggests — and I found in my interviews — children and spouses who see what was happening and will probably never embrace this American work ethic again.

The evidence surrounds us in Wisconsin — a growing shortage of skilled workers, a push to interest young people in these jobs, a threat by companies to take the work elsewhere if we don't deliver.

Yet the loss of manufacturing jobs in the last decade leave the community loaded with skilled veteran manufacturing workers in their late 40s and up who will never go back.

This is beyond a public relations problem for companies, which is how most respond.

Uchitelle not only traces the U-turn in American corporate thinking about the importance of job security. He also slams the self-help naiveté that American society, even workers themselves, came to accept: If you can't adjust it's your fault. It's a personal deficit if you can't respond to the loss of stability, decent wages and pensions by stepping back on the rat wheel.

In reality, it's a severe change in American values and a fear of being conned again.

Today, Uchitelle points out, layoffs are hitting every income strata, robbing Americans of self-esteem and conviction. He finds enough blame to go around, but unquestionably short-term bottom-line thinking has been a major component of the storm.

Basically, as Uchitelle told an interviewer, “We are destroying the communal nature of our lives.”

-- Dominique Paul Noth



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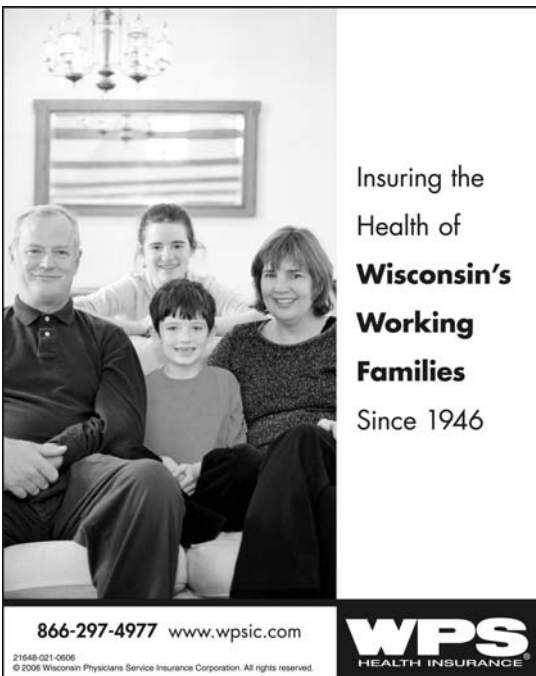
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Author shatters myths that cripple immigrant debate

From 1900 to 1920, out of every 100 immigrants to this county, 36 returned home to stay. Today, our confusing policies married to grim invecitive have blocked such natural and-fro.

Foreign-born workers represent half of our current workforce in such skill areas as development and research (and a fourth of our doctors and nurses). They are only 20% of the most common stereotype -- low-wage workers..

Such realities, debunking America's self-created myths about its immigrant past and present, were factual jaw droppers when Michele Wucker talked to a crowd at Downer Avenue's Schwartz bookstore this summer.

A former Milwaukee Sentinel reporter -- now a noted author and senior fellow at the World Policy Institute --Wucher walks between the extremists on both sides of the immigration debate, bringing human stories as well as statistical economic insights to the discussion in "Lockout: Why America Keeps Getting Immigration Wrong When Our Prosperity Depends on Getting It Right."

She knows those seeking to shut America off from a free flow of ideas, growth and immigrants are on a self-destructive self-injuring path of xenophobia (fear of strangers). But she also knows all sides have to swallow some bitter horse pills of common sense.

First, Americans have to accept we are a nation of immigrants almost in spite of ourselves, given the hostility each established wave of arrivals

employed to greet new arrivals. Such hostile attitudes were not about color, though Wucker notes how often color was invented as a reason of opposition not limited to Africa, Latin America and Asia.

Even well into the 20th century, cartoons and popular articles demeaned the physiognomy of Italians, Eastern Europeans and Jews. Established US families may have talked eloquently about being a part of a national melting pot, but they "hardly regarded these arrivals as white," said Wucker.

Today this physical difference may not seem as obvious as brown skin, but it certainly produced stereotypes and added decades to the pace of acceptance.

This is merely one aspect of Wucker's persuasive litany of how Americans manufactured and romanticized their immigrant heritage. She also points out that the common dream about America did not bring abandonment of roots - the same as today. That American ideals of democracy were inextricably wed to better opportunity.

Nor is the issue of border crossings new. Undocumented workers from Mexico and points south go back in large numbers more than a century. It's the treatment upon arrival we've further demeaned and the return rate we've limited with all this emphasis on walls and jingoistic patriotism.

Wucker is most disturbed how we have actually blocked the world's best and brightest from thinking of America first as they



Michelle Wucker

so often did.

Her early chapters emphasize Congress' long pattern of reacting to public attitudes with contrary edicts. This legal maze was expanded not clarified by 9/11, with laws and bureaucratic layers that did little to make us safe and cost the economy billions of dollars -- from 2001 to 2003, student visas dropped 27%, or 60,000, and skilled foreign workers also dropped 27%, by 60,000.

Wucker amusingly debunks the "English only" attitude toward new arrivals, since our long past confirms the tradition of second generation Americans learning the new language - and then, perversely, the third generation being discouraged from continuing such skills.

Yet the US to its economic

detriment actually lags on language skills, which are a vital path to economic growth. Wucker points to her own experience - bilingual ability has been part of every job she's gotten.

If there are no incentives toward legalization or permanent status in guest worker programs, she asks, why should these workers even bother to learn English?

Wucker does more than detail how America fabricated the belief that all Ellis Island immigrants thought America so wonderful that they wanted to forget their pasts and become permanent residents. She is also emphasizing the need for attitudes and laws that assess individual circumstances and needs.

Our current debate is not motivated by such frank assessment.

It's not about how we should deal with the problems of outside countries to help families stay where they want to, nor does it reveal how often new blood has brought the US inventions, entrepreneurs and jobs.

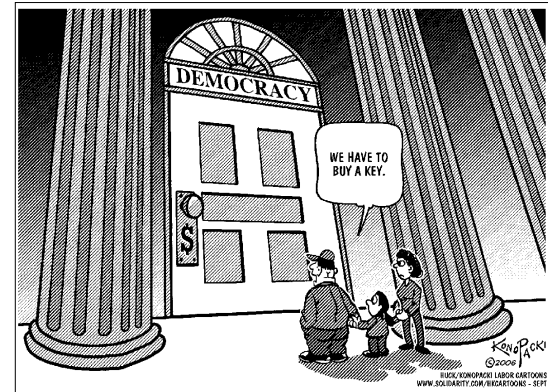
And historically, hostility has backfired, as Wucker's book points out. Immigration quotas first imposed in the 1920s against Europeans have been revealed as unneeded and probably bad policy that interrupted a natural ebb and flow.

Lockout: Why America Keeps Getting Immigration Wrong When Our Prosperity Depends on Getting It Right.
By Michele Wucker.
May 2006. Perseus Books. Excerpts at www.wucker.com.

Some of her recommendations are economically generated but worth discussing. Because of family reunification rules in legal immigration, only 16% of today's legal immigration is economically based, she notes - and argues that the laws should focus on unifying spouses and dependent children far more than on other adult relatives.

But a central theme of her book is that "draconian measures" don't work while moderate measures do exist - as long as we look honestly at "our own role in shaping how people come here and how well they fit in."

Historically, she states, immigrants are wrongly blamed as the cause of problems when they are symptoms, and "we make policy based on emotion that blinds us to our own self-interest."
-- D.P.N.



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United Way again relies on labor's organizing might

It formally starts right before Labor Day (August 31) and closes December 5. But it takes more than three months to pack enough awareness to raise \$40 million for Milwaukee's essential charities and services.

That's why hundreds of volunteers and leaders have been working all year on the annual drive supporting 60-plus major agencies in such fields as early education, teen pregnancy, elderly care, workers in trouble, the homeless and children.

This massive effort is banded together as United Way of Greater Milwaukee. The community campaign relies on both individuals and group giving through companies and payrolls.

Organized labor is a crucial link and has been planning all summer how to invigorate both worksite and personal giving.

The Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, offers its own Labor Cabinet meetings to increase activity, chart progress and further fund-raising — and this year the monthly gatherings are at union halls.

See schedule in article and make sure your local is represented.

Such advance planning helps put Milwaukee's United Way community campaign among the nation's most successful. Last year it increased contributions by 6.2%, topping its goal and collecting \$39.3 million to help some 300,000 clients of its agencies.

The headlines go to the million dollar corporate contributors — and they deserve applause, since their gifts reflect both executive and workforce giving.

Statistics confirm, however, how much the effort relies on the average citizen.

More than half United Way's contributors (about 40,000 persons) give \$100 or less each.

This is the bread and butter of United Way activity — the people hardly rolling in money who give as much as they can or more than is comfortable. That commitment makes United Way work.

Unions are among the leaders in elevating workplace giving while also providing treasury gifts through locals or union councils. Union workers are also among the volunteers running special events and other charitable giving.

A major arm of the Milwaukee County Labor Council is also an affiliate of the United Way. The AFL-CIO Community Services/Field Liaisons do double duty, they help workers in trouble with advice, tools and publicity, and they focus on charitable campaigns and workplace initiatives for United Way.

It is a diplomatic and occasionally overwhelming task, as has been frequently pointed out by Sheila Cochran.

The MCLC secretary-treasurer sits on the United Way board as the labor representative and also oversees the field mobilizers who promote union events and both union and United Way causes. Among these is the annual Health and Hygiene Drive now so vital to Milwaukee's homeless shelters. The shelters rely on this union effort to keep their budgets manageable. The campaign also educates Milwaukee's elementary through high school students on the circumstances of the homeless families.

The diplomacy comes in recognizing where union prominence helps and where it doesn't. As strange as it may seem, since this is all about charitable giving, corporations that resist unionizing their workers are sometimes wary when it is unions leading their workers' donations to



United Way officials sat in on the Labor Cabinet at Plumbers Hall.

United Way. Conscious that the community's needs come first in this campaign, and how many essential services are under the United Way umbrella, unions work to maximize giving from all companies.

The strategies they help develop to motivate their union brothers and sisters flow into non-union workforces as well, though the unions sometimes keep their involvement hidden.

The "overwhelming" aspect of the task stems from the current economy. Amazingly, despite their own woes and despite the demands of global tragedies from the tsunami to Hurricane Katrina, Milwaukee workers have remained generous to United Way — and union workers have been particularly generous even as wages have not kept pace with inflation.

But that doesn't happen by accident. It requires consistent pressure and reminders of the needs of the local community, needs that currently are growing because of Milwaukee County's crippled safety nets and the drumbeat of poverty's pressure on the metropolis.

It also requires creativity and imaginative approaches to keep the average giver from getting jaded, and it requires constant

attendance at union and United Way meetings.

Unions will hold their own kick-off festivities the evening of Thursday, September 14, at a new and meaningful location — an emerging facility for the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership and Big Step. This major effort to connect labor, management and Milwaukee residents with family supporting jobs is exploring converting a factory at 3841 W. Wisconsin Ave. into a training center, and Labor Kick-off offers something of a sneak peek at the progress.

The labor event will also include food, speeches, dignitaries — and announcement of the most prestigious community award offered union members, named in honor of a legendary labor and United Way leader. The annual Werner J. Schaefer Community Service Award recipient is recommended by union members and selected by a committee of the AFL-CIO Community Services. Nominations are open until Sept. 7.

All this unfolds while the field mobilizers are shorthanded because of the return to full-time officer duties by Doug Curler, the secretary-treasurer of Lodge 66 of the IAMAW. That lodge, through mergers and other

changes, has ballooned in membership. Curler, prominent as a field mobilizer full time for the past two years, is needed full time to serve this expansion.

Cochran interviewed candidates and named Jay Reinke from the UAW as a replacement to join Annie Wacker and Mike Balistriere in September.

Make sure your union or local has a participant at the Labor Cabinet meetings. Here is the schedule (all times 9 a.m. Fridays):

- September 8, Teamsters Local 200 Hall, 6200 W. Bluemound Rd.
- October 20, Yatchak (Assembly) Hall, 633 S. Hawley.
- November 17, AFSCME District Council 48, 3427 W. St. Paul Ave.

To sign up for the Labor Kick-off Rally and submit nominations for the Schaefer Award, contact Wacker (414-771-9830 or annieaflcio@sbcglobal.net) or Balistriere (414-771-9829 or mikeaflcio@sbcglobal.net), or visit Suite 106, 633 S. Hawley Rd. Milwaukee, WI 53214

To learn hands-on what United Way does — and be part of \$100,000 worth of volunteer support, join the Days of Caring Sept. 11-22.

It is an occasion of valuable and visible impact as volunteers sign up to paint and repair, read to children, care for the disabled or simply collect school supplies, and non-perishable food.

For more information on Days of Caring, contact Lane Pearce at lpearce@unitedwaymilwaukee.org or 414-263-8160.

Learn more about United Way's efforts, agencies, community reports and initiatives at www.unitedwaymilwaukee.org or calling 414-263-8100.

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IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATION through ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPERVISORY EXCELLENCE

Salute to all workers on

LABOR DAY

BOILERMAKERS & HELPERS CONSTRUCTION LOCAL 107
James Garfield, Bus. Mgr.

Superior Linens fires one, and officials fire back

The most vulnerable and often the bravest workers in America. Sheila Cochran reminded the MCLC delegates at the August meeting, are those without a union but still willing to blow the whistle on dangerous practices.

The secretary-treasurer had just learned that a Latino worker at Superior Health Linens who had provided such public testimony was fired by the company within days of speaking out — and within days of being assigned to a new piece of machinery.

As recounted in last month's Labor Press, the retaliation was feared by the family involved at the public hearing on Superior's protection of its own workers and its laundering practices for hospitals and nursing homes. The bilingual hearing in Oak Creek was attended by Cochran and many other community leaders.

Raquel Patino, with her newborn baby in her arms, gave her own account and then read into the record the experiences of a fellow worker, Vicente Martinez, her husband, despite her obvious fears that the company could retaliate by taking away the entire family's livelihood.

A week later her husband became the second union activist fired.



Channel 4's John Mercure (second from left) takes notes as UNITE HERE organizer David Unger talks with state Rep. Christine Sinicki and state Sen. Jeff Plale about rules for the rally on North Ave.

The dismissal for "trumped-up reasons," as UNITE HERE points out in an NLRB complaint, followed on the heels of the NLRB case of Silvia Serna, fired just after bringing her complaints to a state official, Jeff Plale.

The state senator is engaged in a re-election bid but pointed out in an interview that he organized the public hearing because he was touched by the workers' complaints, fearful of how well Superior was cleaning hospital and nursing home laundry (often with government money) and

thought putting the problems forward would pressure the parties to work together.

He conceded that what he and other officials got — including state representatives Pedro Colon, Christine Sinicki and Josh Zepnick — was a slap in the face by Superior's owners. It was a demonstration of the worst of "corporate culture" attitudes, said Plale. Added Sinicki, "They did it because they think they can get away with it." And, for a while, they probably can.

That corporate attitude was

reflected in Superior's letters to its clients, blaming all the complaints on UNITE HERE (which represents 50,000 laundry workers nationwide) and proclaiming there was absolutely nothing important and little accurate in the charges.

Weeks after these company letters came an official Dane County government report that revealed otherwise.

Voluminously documented, the human services report exposed that the company had not shared as promised to its clients its violations and fines under the OSHA rules, had not fully cooperated in audit requests, had hidden the serious violations, had not revealed its internal infection control issues and had not proven, as county contractors must, that it was abiding by living wage requirements of \$9.07 an hour.

The report did not say Superior's problems were irreparable, but it led Dane County Board Chairman Scott McDonnell to tell the Wisconsin State Journal, "It's hard to have any confidence that we are getting clean laundry from Superior Linens."

The report warned Superior to get in compliance or face having Dane County pull its \$50,000 contract. In Milwaukee, the company's obduracy and retaliatory methods brought a rapid outcry and street protests.

On Aug. 2, a delegation from supportive unions and the faith community went to the company's Cudahy plant to present a letter of concern. They were intercepted in the parking lot by a manager who refused to identify himself by name, took the letter and then ordered the delegation off private property.

A week later, with TV news

cameras rolling, a larger protest took place at 75th St. and North Ave., including workers in the company, ministers and elected officials. Plale and Sinicki, accompanied by Cochran and David Liners of the WISDOM faith coalition, then presented a copy of the Dane County report to managers inside Lutheran Home, another Superior client.

Now the public hearing officials have sent an open letter to all Superior's clients outlining their findings and asking them if this is a company they want to contract with.

But what further action will work? As Cochran reminded MCLC delegates, as union members they are protected from retaliatory firings. There are stewards and even lawyers to represent them, federal rules and clear procedures absent in both non-union workplaces and in workplaces struggling to organize.

Often these fired workers win pay, fines and even their jobs back after a couple of years in court, but meanwhile their families scramble. Martinez, for example, immediately sought work in the temp help field.

His wife, Raquel, is back at Superior after maternity leave. She is looking over her shoulder while still struggling for a union. As she told the TV camera, she expects the company "to find ways to get rid of me." Holding her baby daughter while she spoke was Serna, the other fired worker.

"There are a lot of smart people in this room," Cochran told the delegates at Serb Hall. "We have to find better ways to protect and support these workers. We can't tell them how much better the union world is and leave them hanging when they try to get in."

Steelworkers' fight started before Enron

Five years after going to court, workers at

Harnischfeger are receiving a \$10.8 million settlement in their federal lawsuit charging failure of fiduciary responsibility in the handling of pension funds.

The case received little attention when the steelworkers began it, but it actually predated Enron and other notable scandals that raised similar issues. Harnischfeger made its own stock a key selling point to members of its 401(k) retirement plans. When Harnischfeger went bust, so did its common stock and millions of dollars in worker retirement expectations.

The June 29 settlement allows neither side to claim victory but benefits only steelworkers and salaried employees (and their lawyers) who were members of these 401(k) plans from November of 1997 to March of 2000 and primarily invested in Harnischfeger stock.

Championed by the steelworkers (now USW) Local 1114, the class-action suit on behalf of

fellow 401(k) participants was brought by John Kling, vice-president of the local.

The key issue, which kept several laws firms busy on both sides, was whether the trustees of the 401(k) plan — top financial officers of Harnischfeger — had an obligation to advise participants that "purchasing company stock was not a prudent retirement investment," as it was put with profound understatement by Doug Drake, the staff rep for USW District Two and a member of the MCLC executive board.

Harnischfeger is now Joy Global, enjoying large profits and international reputation for its massive mining equipment. See Page 27.

Local 1114 has a strong new contract there, yet Joy Global has fought hard in federal court against the concept of a larger than mechanical responsibility in its operation of the 401(k)s.

But two years ago Federal Judge Morris E. Lasker in Boston gave the workers a strong

opening. He saw merit in letting the suit continue and rejected the company's arguments, emphasizing that the company officers had a duty to monitor the activities of its appointed fiduciaries — which in this case included members of Harnischfeger's pension investment committee, the pension committee of the company's board of directors and the Fidelity Management Trust Co.

Two years after that decision, with the plaintiffs ready to go to court, both sides agreed to a \$10.8 million settlement. Administrative, court and legal fees will reduce the money going to workers, perhaps as much as 30%. But by agreement the amount to plaintiffs directly will not be less than \$7.6 million and workers can roll over their settlement gains into current 401(k)s.

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LEFT: Shipping supervisors and longshoremen slowly load just one portion of a P&H Mining shovel arm aboard the BCC Shanghai. The gigantic mining shovel and its components made in Milwaukee were bound for Siberia. See story opposite page. ABOVE: Doug Kubic, the longshoreman local's business agent, walks through a terminal that only weeks before had been stacked to the ceiling with food sacks bound for African relief efforts. More such shipments will again allow Kubic to hire dozens of Milwaukee residents for hard work but good pay.



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Port stirs, awash with potential

The ship named the BCC Shanghai was actually headed toward the North Sea. Crews from Local 815 of the International Longshoreman's International at the port of Milwaukee spent several days this summer lifting, hooking, hoisting and lowering aboard just two shovels to fill her up.

But these were enormous mining shovels. The first shovel and lines in the hold were manufactured by P&H Mining (Joy Global, formerly Harnischfeger) and would travel by ship and then train to Siberia. The second, made by Bucyrus International, would be dropped off in Canada and be reassembled at mining fields there.

Monster of size even disassembled (with the smaller parts crated and stamped with instructions in Russian), the P&H products were carefully stacked. The Shanghai then shifted to the north side berthing slip on the canal to store the pieces and counterweights of the monster from Bucyrus.

Fifty feet away, at another slip, the ship Marinus Green was using three unions (longshoremen, boilermakers and operating engineers from Local 139) to unload gigantic electric generators and hubs destined for a windmill farm in Illinois.

So there's not just a new global appreciation evident of the quality machinery from Milwaukee steelworkers. (Bucyrus in fact is advertising a need for 200 more machinists and welders at family-supporting wages.)

Also on display were the precision and economic effectiveness of global shipping, coming and going.

Most residents neglect the port of Milwaukee, even as they speed high above it on the Hoan Bridge. Yet there is increased commercial recognition.

Milwaukee's port was honored in July as a pacesetter by the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corp. for a 17% increase in port cargo in 2005. By all accounts, 2006 will be even better.

The gains were credited to international trade even while intra Great Lakes activity dominates. In 2005, some 3.4 million tons of freight, general cargo and dry goods moved through the port, which is owned by the city and leased for operations to such shipping giants as Federated Marine Terminals (which is really the Canadian owned FedNav).

It's good news for the longshoreman's union, which has a new five-year contract with the Great Lakes employers. But Milwaukee longshoremen also provide a dose of reality.

The work levels remain erratic and the port should be



Bucyrus shovel parts wait on the dock to be hoisted and loaded after the P&H shovel is aboard. In the background, masked by afternoon fog at the port of Milwaukee, is the ship that will transport the Bucyrus cargo. Labor Press photos by Dominique Paul Noth

doing better, they say bluntly and without nostalgia.

Of course, "it will never be what it was," says Doug Kubic, business agent for Local 815, pointing to a historic photo on the wall of his office in one of the terminals.

Back in 1968, the local had 36 gangs at regular work plus 150 members in nearby warehouses. A gang in longshoreman terms is 18 workers.

Today, Kubic can put together two such gangs, "three in a pinch." That reflects a slide in full-time workers that reduced the local's membership to 145 by 1992 and about three dozen today.

Yet the longshoremen still have leverage in elevating Milwaukee's economy, said Kubic, who constantly presses terminal operators to get a fair share of the new work.

"You should have been here two weeks ago," Kubic said as we crunched over a thin carpet of leftover dried peas, soy and corn in the vast terminal under his office. That's when the terminal was bulging with 11,000 tons of these goods headed to Africa as a relief aid shipment under an ongoing US Department of Agriculture program.

Loading that shipment allowed the local to reach into the inner city and hire 45 extra workers at \$18.50 an hour plus benefits for 44 days of work.

"I expect us to land another like this, and there's no reason we can't get even more," said Kubic. "This port can handle a heck of a lot more."

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