

Season's Greetings

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LEFT: Milwaukee labor council leader Sheila Cochran was caught in animated chat with the county board chairman, Lee Holloway, at the AFSCME open house Dec. 2. Holloway is anticipated to become acting county executive by the first of the year.

RIGHT: Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, who knows council VP Annie Wacker's crucial role in organizing candidate interviews, was introducing Meagan Holmon (right), who is running for a seat on the school board.



AFSCME party peeks at county's political future

By Dominique Paul Noth
Labor Press Editor

The earliest union holiday party of the season turned out to be the most politically eclectic. Candidates and potential candidates of all persuasions - exploring races for the judiciary, county executive seat, school board and county supervisor -- bundled into the decorated basement of AFSCME District Council 48 along with union members and service providers on Thursday, December 2.

This annual get-together as customary featured bustling camaraderie and a delicious assortment of goodies wolfed down by hundreds of guests and provided this year by Wine & Roses Catering.

While a lot of the talk was about union issues and increasingly narrow media coverage of what was actually happening to workers' income and living standards, the evening was a particu-



larly fascinating curiosity for political insiders. Rep. Jeff Stone, who is being pushed by many in the GOP to run for Walker's current seat, may have been seeking advice across the aisle about county politics from new Sen. Chris Larson.

They could watch the ebb and flow of unlikely bedfellows of local and state politics, the practical realities of potential deal-making, decisions to run or not to run, plus a genuine com-

mitment (at least on the surface) to put aside partisan animosity and work for the general good. You could also learn a lot about who was in, who was backing them and who was thinking about running -- and who hadn't made up their minds

as we went to press. The event took place two days after the candidates could start circulating nomination papers under the law. But only one came with an ally prepared to pass around the clipboard for sign-ups, and that one was something of shoo-in.

Pedro Colon had just been invested as Circuit Court judge in Milwaukee, having been appointed to the vacated seat by Gov. Doyle after stepping down from his seat in the Assembly (where he was ably replaced Nov. 2 by JoCasta Zamariippa). But political reality intruded within weeks. The politically savvy Colon knows he must run for election in April and has already found support among both Democratic and Republican insiders, so one backer was kept busy signing up nomination support, carrying the clipboard from

talk cluster to talk cluster.

Also spotted in the constantly flowing crush were several announced candidates for Milwaukee public schools board elections. Peter Blewett, whose MPS term does not expire until 2013, was busy introducing some candidates he supports, among them a fellow MPS board member, Terry Falk, who in April will abandon his 8th District seat on the South Side (Bay View, etc.) to run for the citywide board seat currently held by Bruce Thompson, who may also decide to run again.

Also at the AFSCME gathering was a candidate backed by Blewett and County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic to take over Falk's District 8 seat. That's Meagan Holmon, a Harvard University alumni and education-

Party continued Page 14

Hard facts on who's wimping out

Here is the genuine head-scratcher for Americans -- \$2.8 trillion by some estimates in the cash reserves and stored assets of the country's richest 2% of Americans and corporations.

Yet there are nearly 27 million US workers either jobless or in need of full-time work, and

not all the jobs that could be available are conditional on "special skills" that America lacks. Not by a long shot.

Many corporations are making a profit without hiring more American workers by outsourcing, reducing inventory to the bone and/or loading more hours on their already burdened pro-

ductive employees.

Add some other dismaying facts. The richest 2% do help the American economy, spending on average about 40 cents of every dollar they make even with lower rates than yours on their income. Cynics will note that 40 cents on the dollar is precisely what we are paying in interest on the national debt, but the real issue is that giving more money to the very richest, which the president just agreed to do, is just about the weakest way to spend money within our economy and not help it flourish. In

Rich continued Page 5



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Holiday Joy and Glad Tidings

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, LOCAL 212-MATC

Trumka challenges America's workers

By Richard Trumka
Special for Labor Press

Before signing the Declaration of Independence, Ben Franklin immortalized one of my favorite quotes: "We must, indeed, all hang together, or most assuredly we shall all hang separately."

I don't think that's too melodramatic a statement for union members to consider today. We know we're in a political bulls-eye and that the goal of our opponents is to tie us up with defensive battles -- in Washington, D.C., and in the states -- because they think that will weaken our offensive for jobs, good living standards and an economy that works for all.

It's a perilous time -- but one that is also ripe with opportunity. Right now, the American people, who repeatedly have voiced their desire for change, are hungry for leadership.

Someone has to turn this economy around -- fast, before working families lose more jobs, more homes, more opportunity for a decent future for their children.

And it's not going to be the political lap dogs for Wall Street and the rich -- they're not going to fix this economy. It's not going to be the conservative ideologues or the haters.

This job falls to us: A united American labor movement.

The corporate agenda we've lived under for the past three decades and the recent economic collapse have left our unions bruised, smaller than we should be. So we have to be stronger than we've ever been to meet this responsibility.

That means hanging together. It means solidarity.

It means fighting together united by our common beliefs. It means giving one another the courage to take on those offensive fights. It means growing. And it means refusing to be divided.

For decades, we witnessed the erosion of our manufacturing sector -- the outsourcing of good, middle-class jobs. That didn't just hurt manufacturing workers. It hurt every one of us. It destroyed whole communities, fractured families, gutted the middle class and hollowed out our



AFL-CIO President Trumka speaking last September at Milwaukee's Laborfest

economy.

When President Reagan fired the air traffic controllers, it wasn't one union that was harmed. The message was clear to all of us: "Shut up. We make the rules and you can take them or take a hike. You can't stand up to us -- we'll knock you down."

When public employees are attacked because they have pensions and health care benefits, those pensions and benefits -- which should be a basic right -- are pushed further out of everyone's reach.

Solidarity has always been essential in our movement -- but never more than now. Sisters and brothers in one state will be fighting right-to-work-for-less proposals; in the next state over, they'll be fighting for a Made in America law. Building trades workers may face attacks on prevailing wages, while public employees are threatened with layoffs -- and transportation and manufacturing workers demand green energy jobs in this country. And everywhere, unions will be helping workers organize and grow our movement.

If we only fight our own battles, we're in danger of winning none. And we certainly won't demonstrate the leadership America is counting on us for.

And when I say "leadership," I'm not talking

The message was clear to all of us: "Shut up. We make the rules and you can take them or take a hike. You can't stand up to us -- we'll knock you down."

- Trumka on the attitude organized labor will be facing.

about me, or even your union president. I'm talking about you. As our political program demonstrates year after year, nothing is more powerful in turning co-workers into activists than your face-to-face, heart-to-heart conversations. That's leadership.

We have so much to do in the coming months and years. And it's a core of our history, of all we stand for, that the way we win is by winning together.

So hang together. Stand together. Fight together. Lead together. And no one -- no one -- can tear us down.

The author, president of the National AFL-CIO, has offered this editorial to all American publications.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



From Amalgamated
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Humble man takes new beginnings

By Lynnda Guyton

Editorial Assistant, Labor Press

After working 22 years as a tool and die maker and serving as the local's president for two years (at Master Lock where he was affiliated with UAW Local 469) Anthony Rainey has moved on to the UAW International Union Region 4, accepting the job as an International Representative.

The international leadership obviously saw something in him -- something that the Milwaukee labor council had seen for years as he served on the executive board and was given more prominent roles in the labor movement, such as community service leadership and United Way events hosting.

So the UAW move was something he could not refuse. It wasn't the easiest decision he ever had to make because of the many friends he has at Master Lock, the folks he says are very proud of him and gave him a great send-off.

Tony, which is what most people call him, is a very humble man. He said that besides God who is the head of his life he credits in his worklife Sheila D. Cochran, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, as a mentor shaping him into the man he is today in the labor community.

He recalled her call for leadership through the African American and Community Summit for men to step up and take their rightful place and he felt obligated to answer that call. He also mentioned that she was helpful in his overcoming the anxiety he faced in a leadership role because he sometimes wondered if he was up to the task. His motto has become: "Don't volunteer for anything, but don't say no to an opportunity."

In his new job, which he started in July 2010, he is responsible for servicing seven locals -- five in Southern Wisconsin, one in Minnesota and one in Illinois. An international's job is to lobby Congress for changes in laws that would benefit workers, send help to any locals that need it and coor-

Spotlight

dinate organizing efforts.

Specifically, Tony is responsible for representing the locals he serves in negotiations, grievances and arbitrations and to set up education and training opportunities. In addition, he is the skilled trade's coordinator for the region, which provides journey trade union cards to members in various skilled classifications and to review and approve apprenticeship programs. He also heads up three skill trades conferences held each year.

He noted that he has a great director in Ron McInroy along with the rest of the staff that made him feel very welcome. He acknowledges that the UAW has provided and exposed him to countless opportunities particularly in how to work as a team and realizing that "it's not about you" but about helping others. When asked one of his goals for the future, he chuckled, "Not to get moved to Detroit."

What makes him most proud is the ability to be a good role model for African American men throughout the community because at the end of the day he wants to be able to help somebody. How? By doing the best job he can giving the people he serves the tops in service and being accountable to them 24/7, he said in an interview.

Rainey wears many hats; he serves as an elder at his church, Emmaus Lutheran, and also works in the church's food pantry. Through United Way he is co-chair of the Labor Participation Cabinet and for the Milwaukee Area Labor Council he is chair of the Community Services Committee.

He has a life membership with the NAACP, is on the board of directors for WRTP, president of CBTU and sits on the state advisory council for MATC and the Unemployment Compensation council.

Looking ahead, he expressed his concern relating to union jobs, an area he agreed will be tough and under a lot of pressure in the public and private sectors. He spoke of the



Tony Rainey at a fall United Way labor event.

stigma the unions have suffered lately, the attitude that unions don't do anything for members.

He says we need union brothers and sisters to be more vocal about all the benefits they receive by being a union member, because with the recent election "we will be facing the

right-to-work legislation which will make it difficult to organize."

Yet he is totally confident and says there is growth for the International UAW in serious efforts to unionize foreign car automakers. He does feel there is a major need for a better job

reaching the community by taking "our message to the streets." He sees new International President Bob King as key to organizing the public. They need to be told that our message is the same as theirs, to have family supporting jobs with good wages and benefits, he said.

He reflected on the One Nation Rally he attended in Washington, D.C., earlier this year -- an appeal to our government that people want to work together with them. This was yet another example of people coming together with different ideas but a common goal.

Tony and special friend Alberta Walker -- he speaks very highly of her support for all of his endeavors -- also share a blended family of five children, eleven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. He is a graduate of North Division High School and has taken several college courses at MATC.

Traveling 800 to 1,000 miles a week, he notes, reflects the extended work hours that don't give him much time to enjoy stuff he loves such as reading history books, attending concerts and listening to music -- but he wouldn't change a thing right now as he enjoys encouraging all those he comes in contact with in his endeavors.



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CBTU host Rainey with founder Bill Lucy here last month.

Public teachers get new director and new contract

No sooner had Stan Johnson stepped aboard as new executive director for the Milwaukee teachers union that he got to announce some pretty good news -- the first ever four-year deal between the MTEA and the Milwaukee Public Schools, concluded in October, ratified in November and approved by the MPS in December.

Johnson came into the permanent leadership role this fall, taking over for interim managers after the sudden death of Tom Morgan. He brings remarkable familiarity with the Wisconsin education scene and a sizable reputation as administrator.

He served for six years as president of WEAC, the Wisconsin Education Association Council and its 98,000 members. His experience as both a teacher and an insider in state politics will prove vital for the future goals of the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association, which represents some 8,000 teachers and other education professionals at MPS.

As the new Republican lead-

ership struts into office clearly loaded to blame teachers, not funding, for the problems with education -- the new legislative controllers have already publicly indicated they are looking forward to "ruffling the feathers" of the union teachers -- Johnson's skills may prove particularly valuable.

The MTEA union president, Mike Langyel, has already pointed out how hard the teachers are working on solutions through such steps as this landmark contract. Some 86% of voting members agreed -- 3,615 votes in favor vs. 600 opposed. Langyel called it an important first step to long-term improvement of the public schools.

Given the current economic climate, the teachers made several sacrifices to further education goals. And both Johnson and Langyel called on the state to also step up to the plate by improving both its aid to education and its formula for aid.

Included in the new contract was a one year pay freeze and substantial employee contributions to the district's health

insurance costs.

In December the school board approved the contract, which will shift to a lower cost health plan. The pay freeze, which retroactively applies to the 2009-'10 school year when teachers were working under the old contract, will save the district roughly \$13.5 million in raises it likely would have paid.

The average salary of an MPS teacher is \$56,000 per year, slightly lower than in districts in outlying areas. Teachers will be in line under the new contract for a 3% raise for this school year and 2.5% for 2011-'12. Another 3% raise is set for the 2012-'13 school year. Unaffected are those teachers eligible for a step increase, an automatic jump in salary for teachers with a certain amount of experience.



Johnson at work in his new office at the MTEA on Vliet St.

Council sets UCAN training for all

The initials don't stand for "YOU CAN!" but they could. UCAN is short for Union Community Activist Network, which is certainly a "you can do it" revitalization of a half century of union participation as community volunteers and counselors.

Training in this UCAN program will be available in early 2011 for all affiliates of the Milwaukee labor council. UCAN is run by the national AFL-CIO through AFL-CIO Community Services, which in Milwaukee works closely with United Way and is operated by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. Of its three veteran field liaisons -- Annie Wacker, Mike Balistriere and Jay Reinke -- Jay

is the go-to leader for UCAN organizing, sign-up and information. (You can contact Jay at 414-771-9828 or jayaficio@sbc-global.net.)

Volunteers in the program can expand their skills, comprehension of available services, and ability to help union members and their families.

The training will be Tuesday evenings starting Feb. 15 and run for eight weeks, with classes

from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in halls near the labor council offices, 633 S. Hawley Rd. To defer the cost of materials, there will be a \$40 cost per participant.

While UCAN is a national program whose principles and practices are outlined in a manual, the Milwaukee UCAN is tailored to this region. It is also part of the guidelines to fashion each UCAN to the local community.

Save Jan. 8 to honor Dr. King

Marking the 21st year in which UAW Local 469 has participated in a tribute to the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. the union's civil and human rights committee will hold a special labor celebration event at 6 p.m. Saturday, January 8, 2011, at Laborers Local 113 Hall, 6310 W. Appleton Ave.

This year's theme is "Thinking Beyond a Dream" and will again feature special guests and entertainment. Since donations fund college tour scholarships for Riverside High School students, organizers are seeking financial sponsors (\$100 to \$500) and advertisers (\$10 to \$200) as well as citizens to attend the open event. For questions and more information contact DiAndre Jackson, at the Local 469 office, 7435 S. Howell Ave., Oak Creek, WI 53154, or (414) 659-4684.



MILWAUKEE TEACHERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The holidays are a time to give thanks...

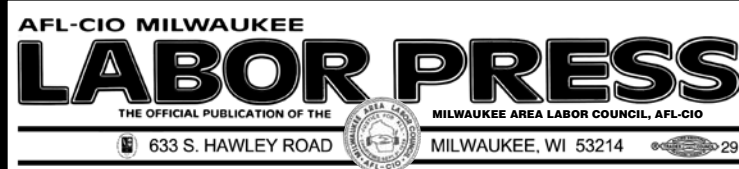
This holiday season, the **Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association** gives thanks for the individuals and communities who are working together to make Milwaukee's public schools great and create a brighter future for us all:

- ✓ Teachers and other education professionals who work in MPS
- ✓ Our students and their families
- ✓ The labor, activist, and education communities
- ✓ Elected leaders



Great schools are the result of smart investments and teamwork.

We look forward to continuing our partnership to strengthen our schools and improve the lives of the children and families we serve.



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Rich

From Page 1

contrast:

Mid-range middle class Americans spend 66 cents of every such dollar in our economy, and lower paid workers virtually all. So clearly extending the tax rates for the middle class on down will pay far more dividends in economic recovery. The very rich now have every incentive to continue nest feathering -- or even increase it.

Returning them to Clinton era tax rates sure won't hurt their comfort zone. The argument is that you don't raise taxes on anyone in a bad economy, though historical reality suggests that has actually worked.

Statistic realities are finally being exposed - at least a bit -- by newspapers on the right and the left, by federal watchdog statistics, even by honest counters on Wall Street. Blunt fact: America's corporations are sitting on record profits that could be used to put people back on the job. And some compassion for their fellows, or even the self-interest in expanding their own consumer base, have not led them to step to the plate.

This irony is especially cruel for the 2 million workers who will lose their unemployment benefits by the end of the year if the latest compromise

doesn't take because "corporate America's Republican friends in Congress," as the AFL-CIO has ironically labeled them, blocked an extension of employment insurance (UI) benefits for people who have been jobless for six months or more.

The president made extending such benefits a condition of the just announced tax deal, which also extends Bush tax cuts for the wealthiest for two years, bends on the estate tax but also provides workers a reduction for a year in Social Security payroll payments.

While it may make political sense, in not holding the public hostage to principle, facts do indicate that the very rich have avoided suffering in the interim.

The US Department of Commerce reported in November that American companies just had their best quarter ever, earning profits at an annual rate of \$1.659 trillion in the third quarter. The next-highest annual corporate profits level on record -- \$1.655 trillion -- was in the third quarter of 2006. So as lousy as the economy may seem to American voters, the corporations in total have sailed through in terms of gross profits.

In fact, American corporate profits have grown for seven straight quarters at some of the fastest rates in history. Profits

soared in the Bush years when jobs fell -- which sure explains why many CEOs want the status quo to continue --- and even in the last year when the economy has recovered under the Obama administration, at a rate everyone agrees is too slow, corporate profits not only continued unabated, they hit record levels.

Economists says the record profits can be attributed to strong productivity growth - companies making more with fewer people - and to companies spending the money in and sending jobs to fast-growing countries such as China and India. Given the Federal Reserve's consistent long-term lowering of interest rates, corporations have rarely had it better.

Consumer spending and the American Recovery Act have fueled what little growth there has been in the US economy, says Heidi Shierholz, an Economic Policy Institute (EPI) economist. One of the key engines growing the economy had been extended UI benefits. But now what?

Writing in the Huffington Post, Shahien Nasiripour says banks are loaded with cash as well. Through September, banks had \$981 billion in excess reserves at the 12 regional Federal Reserve banks across the country.

Now the corporations want the taxpayers to take on \$790 billion more in borrowed money, packed into the federal deficit over 10 years, by blindly continuing the Bush era giveaway to the wealthiest 2%.

Those expecting some of that wealth to trickle down to them would be better off believing that email from the "Nigerian widow" offering a share of her husband's fortune after you send her money. With her, you have a better chance of collecting. -- D.P.N.

Labor on film

Film screenings and lively class discussions are the main strategy of "Workers in the World Today" on Tuesdays January 25 to February 15, a presentation of the School for Workers in its Labor History Through Film.

This series (registration \$39.67) will be held at the MATC West Allis campus, Room 117, 1200 S. 71st St., from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. on four Tuesdays in a row. Registration at schoolforworkers.uwex.edu

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NOVEMBER 2010 RESULTS

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
CRAZY 8'S	50	34
GUTTER RATS	46	39
SLAMMERS	44	40
ONE BOARD OVER	41	43
PIN PALS	38	46
8 BALLS	33	51

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 500

ROGER BARANOWSKI	656
DAN LAACK	624
DON WIEDMANN	589
DEL GROSS	578
BOB WAGNER	536
WALLY GEISE	517
JOHN PADRON	498

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175

ROGER BARANOWSKI	245
DEL GROSS	224
DAN LAACK	220
DON WIEDMANN	216
BOB WAGNER	207
RAY ZETTEL	188
WALLY GEISE	182
JOHN PADRON	181

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 420

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	582
JOYCE KNIPPEL	520
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	471
RAE MATOWSKI	424

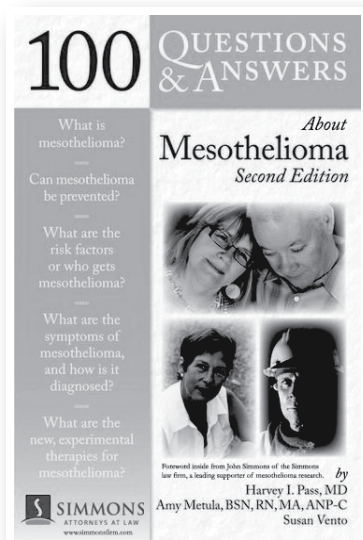
IND. HIGH GAME OVER 165

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	254
JOYCE KNIPPEL	197
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	184
RAE MATOWSKI	169

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Labor in D.C. looks far beyond Dems for inspiration

Washington, D.C. - The methods labor used to gain political clout and the targeting it conducted among workers largely flopped across the nation Nov. 2, retired New York City labor leader Ed Ott told labor communicators, and he said it was past time to rethink what unions are doing.

In a keynote address Nov. 19 to the awards luncheon of the International Labor Communications Association, Ott warned that, otherwise, unions would be left behind by groups -- particularly of immigrant workers -- who are organizing outside labor's existing structure.

His hard-hitting speech came at the awards event where Milwaukee Labor Press and its editor, Dominique Paul Noth, picked up several first place awards. Union editors from across the country were also honored for print and electronic media work.

More than 150 persons attended the awards gathering at the AFT headquarters in D.C., meeting for breakfast and lunch and a social media panel ahead of the awards ceremony and keynote address. Each table featured publications suggesting methods for the communications specialists, including copies of the Milwaukee labor council's political ACTION! publications.

Ott was asked to take over

At Issue

the New York City CLC (Central Labor Council) several years ago when former head Brian McLaughlin, who was also a state legislator, was found guilty of misappropriating funds and sent to jail. After straightening out the problems that McLaughlin left, Ott handed the CLC over to newly elected leadership.

During Ott's tenure, three big groups of unorganized workers made great strides in New York: Taxi drivers, domestic workers and free lance writers. As proud as Ott is of that work, he's even more interested in how they organized, who they organized and why they did it outside of the structure of the labor movement.

One big reason, Ott said, is that the labor movement in general spent its time these last several years working closely with the Democratic Party. And that relationship was like the song "Mercy," he said: "He wants something on the side, and she wants to be seen in public holding hands. And they don't want to be seen in public holding hands with us," Ott said of the Democrats.

The party turns to labor for money and ground troops but ignores labor's causes, he argued.

Other union leaders have made the same point, but behind closed doors, including AFL-CIO President Richard L. Trumka. But Trumka also ruefully says and truthfully notes there are no Republicans to work with.

Part of the strategic problem, other labor leaders suggested before and after Ott's speech, is how organized labor can effectively make its political choices stand by labor's central beliefs in a pressure cooker of partisan and financial excess. Another problem, several editors noted, is that individually unions sometimes pull away from each other out of their own interests, diluting the electoral unity and encouraging capricious behavior within federation memberships.

Ott suggests that politics should take a back seat to organizing, and organizing in new ways. It's not an easy issue, since political failure in the past has also led to calls to organize first and influence politics second, with little success. A deeper understanding of balance does seem necessary today but far more nuanced and complex than most labor groups realize.

"The question for the House of Labor is where do we go from here?" Ott asked. Saying that so far labor has "played the cards you're dealt...and we were dealt a bad hand," he advocated looking to understand better the ways the new groups of workers organized themselves - and didn't need to be inside organized labor to do it.

Those were three different methods he explored:

- The taxi drivers organized themselves through personal contact, especially at New York City's airports, talking about working conditions and banding together on their own to force the city's taxicab firms to bargain



Ed Ott during his speech, photo by David Katzman

with them - even without a contract. But they also shone the public light on their plight and exploitation and enlisted political allies. The firms had to bargain with the city's politicians looking over their shoulder.

- The domestic workers turned to the state legislature and, with union help, convinced lawmakers to approve a domestic workers' bill of rights, virtually the only labor legislation to clear Albany this year.,

- The Freelance Writers organized their own union, mostly via the Internet. And that group's leaders quickly determined that what the writers wanted and needed most was group health insurance and a method to ensure that employers would not waltz on paying for their work. The power led to discounted insurance and forced publishers to sign written guarantees of payment.

All three efforts resulted in mass organization of workers and all three took place outside the established union structure, though with union aid and support. They were "the most-gratifying things that ever happened to me in my 42 years" in unions, Ott said

Another area he explored at

length was the cause of immigrant workers, pointing out how union workers were particularly damaged by allowing a shadow economic system to exist in the US and not fighting for the changes that would bring the immigrant community into the light and into deeper cooperation with organized labor.

(In Wisconsin, such efforts have long been underway with cooperation between organizations such as the Milwaukee labor council and Voces de la Frontera. On the West Coast, such similar cooperation between union groups and immigration groups are being credited with many election victories, from Nevada to California.)

"Immigrants are not helpless... We need to side along with them, support them, nurture them, and find them. They will build the working class," Ott declared. Such outside-the-box organizing, rather than politics, should be emphasized, he contended.

Allying solely with the Democrats didn't work, Ott said. If labor were a corporation whose director came in and said "we spent \$200 million" on a campaign and utterly failed, "He'd be shown the door," he said.

A shift from politics to organizing, especially private sector organizing, is especially important, Ott said, because the incoming congressional Republicans "will put the boot to us," and because the majority of unionists are now in the public sector.

That's not a knock on teachers, fire fighters, sanitation workers and other public employees, he pointed out. But the imbalance - as high as 70% in New York City - is not good, he said.

"The big difference" between the two political parties "is that the Republicans have consistently said up front what they'll do" to break unions "and they've done it. This is not the GOP of Bill Scranton and Nelson Rockefeller. This is a party of haters."

The Democrats, however, mouth pro-worker positions but don't go to bat for labor, Ott argued, recalling cases where the party abandoned labor's causes over decades.

"There has to be a component of the labor movement that can step back and think," Ott said. "Forty percent of construction workers in New York City are unemployed. If we don't figure this out" about how to get them jobs and unionized "we will do so at our peril."

While some commentary in this article was provided by the Labor Press, many of the quotes and speech sequence come from Mark Gruenberg, veteran leader of Independent Press Associates Inc., which weekly provides news feeds for labor.

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The big climate change? It's now vital security issue

By Miriam Pemberton
for OtherWords

Comment

As deserts expand and droughts persist, desperate people begin fighting over the water that remains. Elsewhere, rising sea levels create mass migrations. These portraits of human tragedy caused by climate change have become environmental security threats that the US military now worries about.

The military is taking steps to reduce its own greenhouse gas emissions. Since it produces more emissions than any other institution on the planet, this is good news. But is it enough?

In a word, no. If climate change is the major security threat the military says it is, no amount of military greening will

be enough to reverse it. Only wholesale measures to curb emissions across our own economy -- and the world's -- will do the job.

Where will the money come from? Here's one big part of the answer: if arresting climate change is a national security imperative, then we need to devote a substantial portion of our security dollars to that purpose.

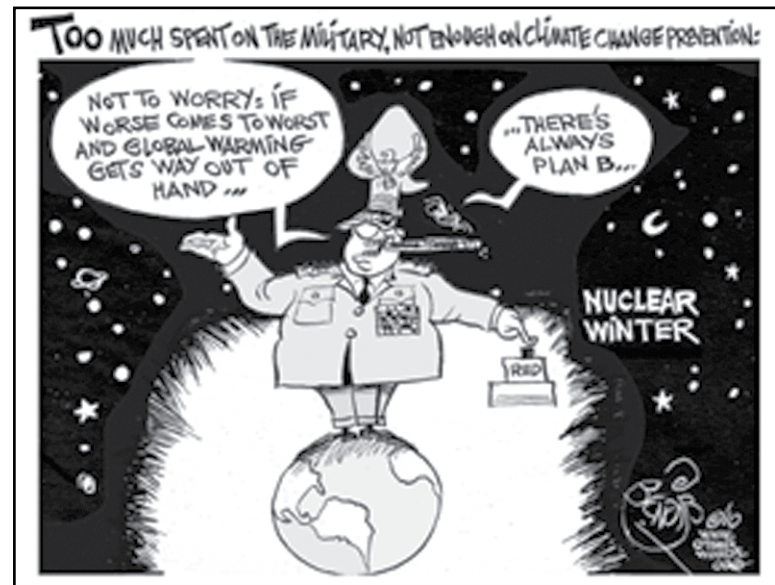
How are we doing so far? I have measured the balance of what the federal government spends on its military forces and on climate change since 2008.



Miriam Pemberton

The climate change budget has more than doubled since then, from \$7 billion to \$18 billion. During the same period, military spending has also risen, though at a slower rate: from \$696 billion to \$739 billion. As a result, we've cut the gap between them in half.

We spent \$94 on the military for every dollar we spent on the



climate in 2008. We'll spend at a ratio of \$41 to \$1 in 2011.

Obviously, this is progress. But check out what's happening in China, our primary global competitor. It spends about one-sixth as much on its military as the United States. It invests twice as much in clean energy technology. So its spending balance works out to somewhere between \$2 and \$3 on its military to every dollar it spends on climate.

And China is on track to become the world leader in both solar and wind technology by next year.

So our 41-to-1 balance looks good compared to where we were, but terrible compared to

our main global competitor. The extreme tilt in our budget toward military spending is leaving us way behind in two of the major growth markets of the global economy. For the sake of our economic health and competitiveness, then, as well as for the sake of our security, we need to tilt the other way. The balance between what we spend on traditional military tools and on climate needs to look a lot more like China's.

Miriam Pemberton is a research fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies, which recently released "Military v. Climate Security: The 2011 Budgets Compared" at www-ips-dc.org

Plight of jobless brings faith community out in force

In times of crisis, many American families turn to their religious faith for inspiration and hope. With millions of people unemployed, America's faith community, which includes many union members, is mobilizing to provide tangible, hands-on aid to families as well as spiritual solace.

As reporters for the AFL-CIO report, under the leadership of Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ), faith groups, political leaders and progressive activists joined in the Faith Advocates for Jobs Campaign, launched December 3 at a Capitol Hill meeting. The campaign will help combat the severe unemployment crisis that is devastating so many working people and families. It also seeks rapid action to rebuild the foundations of our nation's economy.

In its mission statement, the campaign says:

"As people of faith, we call for an economy that provides a job for everyone who wants and needs one. We affirm that all jobs should be good jobs, paying living wages and benefits, allowing workers dignity and a voice at the workplace, ensuring workers' health and safety, and guaranteeing their right to organize unions."

The campaign will begin an ambitious effort to organize 1,000 congregation-based unemployed worker-support committees in 2011. The committees will support working people and families economically, emotionally and spiritually, while also educating members about the unemployment crisis and advocacy avenues available to them.

The committees, composed of both the employed and the currently unemployed, will be part of a nationwide network that will push for new policy initiatives to address the jobs crisis, including

- An economic stimulus package to create and retain millions of jobs, including revitalizing the manufacturing sector.
- A public jobs program as a component of the economic stimulus package.
- A public jobs program that will create vital and sustainable jobs: jobs that will rebuild our nation's infrastructure; green jobs; mass transit; jobs that the private sector cannot create, such as expanded child care and clean-up of toxic dumps.
- Support for unemployed workers and families. This support should include extended unemployment benefits for the long-term unemployed, COBRA subsidies, food stamps, and other safety net programs.

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Fair traders reject Obama's pride in S. Korean deal

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Labor Press Editor

Analysis

In remarks December 2 defending the newly announced US-South Korea trade pact, President Obama reminded the assembled that "we did not finalize this agreement on my recent visit to South Korea -- and I didn't agree to it then for a very simple reason: The deal wasn't good enough."

"It wasn't good enough for the American economy, and it wasn't good enough for American workers. I'm not interested in signing trade agreements for the sake of signing trade agreements. I'm interested in agreements that increase jobs and exports for the American people and that also help our partners grow their economies."

The response to the deal has been enthusiastic from some familiar and even knee-jerk quarters, such as the pork growers, chambers of commerce, Republicans and business lobbyists. It has also been applauded by some consistent if moderate voices for fair trade including Democratic leaders Maria Cantwell, John Kerry and Steny Hoyer. It was welcomed by America's entertainment industry, including its unions, that see more protection of intellectual property and a growth for American technology within the deal.

And it has been roundly condemned as capitulation by fair trade advocates, intellectuals and activist groups. Once again, Obama is at odds with some of his most optimistic supporters of the recent past.

These fair trade advocates -- who can hardly be dismissed as extremists given the range of backgrounds, economic issues and social and economic beliefs

they represent -- see in the deal the same rules and thinking as existed in the NAFTA-like agreements. Those encouraged private multinationals to ride roughshod over environmental regulations that smaller foreign governments, laborers and farmers seek to impose on the misbehavior of outside investment groups protected by clauses in these trade deals.

To these individuals now facing rules imposed by the biggest more self-centered governments in the world, such deals emphasize the small fellow's lack of protection and how their own incomes and living standards have barely budged under existing rules -- yet their countries have become more polluted and poorer in the rape of the land by foreign profiteers and agricultural combines defended under trade policy.

But US negotiators are arguing that they did better with the South Korea deal, encouraging America's ability to tap a growing foreign market with American goods and services while keeping the door open here for Korean imports.

Obama's initial resistance to "let's make a deal" does underscore that he hung tougher longer than his predecessors. In particular his attitude carries weight in an America deeply concerned about keeping holiday meals coming to its own tables and to heck with everyone else.

Obama argued that manufacturers of American cars and trucks will have much more access to the Korean market, while also encouraging the development of electric cars and green technology in the US, as a



In speeches, the president insists he brought fair trade thinking to the South Korean table, but his critics don't think he fought for real balance and their labor and environmental issues.

result of getting the Koreans to agree to mutual quick cuts in debilitating tariff policies. None of this is instant cure, but it suggests stronger US revenue in the near future.

In agriculture, South Korea agreed finally to slow and then eliminate punishing tariffs on American beef. The tariff reductions in this agreement, the Obama administration argues in fact-sheets, are expected to boost annual exports of American goods by up to \$11 billion, supporting at least 70,000 American jobs.

"Today's deal alone will increase American economic output by more than our last nine free trade agreements combined," said Obama, who insisted this was a big step toward imposing fair trade standards on foreign partners.

It will certainly give more access to Korean markets for American goods while also giving Korea more access to ours.

The issues for fair trade advocates remain the looseness

in too many areas and the failure to get as tough about longstanding moral issues as about tariffs.

Fair trade spokesman Lori Wallach has pointed out that Obama negotiators sidestepped the pressure from many sides for stricter labor and environmental rules and made no changes from the Bush deals in language affecting foreign investor power over local regulations to protect workers.

The administration argues that it has set high standards for protection of workers' rights and that the environmental section demands -- on paper, that is -- open accountability to some general principles of environmental protection. And let's face it, we are closer to influencing South Korea's government than we are to many governments in Latin America or Africa.

But there's another issue -- simple history over the last several decades. The abuses that have long existed despite high sounding platitudes about labor and environmental protection

leave fair trade groups highly dubious that this represents any real change or real teeth in enforcement. The lack of specific details was particularly worrisome. So was the lack of will to fight for the issues of labor, environment and equity for everyday workers.

One fair trade advocate, hardly a radical, commented to Labor Press that the failure for true ethical balance in trade policy has more to do with the falling US reputation around the world than almost anything. "We give great lip service to the idea that we stand for justice and fair play," she said, "but the anger in so many countries about America has a lot to do with how heavily they feel the thumb of our corporations and the perception that we have a cavalier attitudes about their human suffering. We can give money for AIDS, but if we rob them of crops and daily meals, that sends a far more immediate message,"

It is a strong argument. It suggests why so many Latin American countries both hate us and love us - hate for what they see as our role in their poverty, failing agriculture and weak economy, and love that they would rather be among us looking out at the suffering than going through it. That is not a situation that builds long-term security for either side.

Behind the trade deals are lingering human issues that the administration will have to address, if it can ever get beyond its own immediate concerns.

Obama is clearly on a razor, eager to open up world markets to grow American economy while being asked to open his eyes to past US policy excesses that need to be cured before the world accepts his motives.

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Seasons Peace Holiday Joy



Decades ago, Mark Gaston Pearce worked for the NLRB as a deputy trial specialist. Today he is one of the feds' biggest cheeses – interim board appointment by President Obama, key voice on major labor issues. On his first Milwaukee visit he was also the keynote speaker for the LERA statewide conference here, which drew union leaders, academics, management reps and lawyers to its panels and lunch buffet. Pearce is shown with the LERA president who also sort of now works for him – Region 30 director Irving Gottschalk (left).

Too easy to find Scrooges

In Wisconsin the choice would be obvious, as revealed on Pages 16 and 24. But this is a national contest, and our Scrooge -- the governor-elect -- doesn't warrant a blip.

The nominations are in and across the nation there are seven great - let's rephrase that - mean, nasty, heartless candidates for the dishonor of winning Jobs with Justice's (JwJ's) Scrooge of the Year contest.

Now in its 11th year, the contest highlights the CEO, corporation or politician who has done the most to "scrooge" workers as in Ebenezer Scrooge before three ghosts scared the you-know-what out of him. But such a transformation is not likely from these Scrooge nominees.

Take a look at a short description of each. The best worst will be announced Dec. 20.

• Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell was nominated for leading the Republican Party in aggressively blocking legisla-



The final results won't be in until December 20, but the official illustration for the contest is making the rounds.

tion that would benefit working people;

• Express Scripts was chosen because, despite racking up profits of \$1.7 billion last year by processing 12% of the nation's prescriptions, the company is demanding draconian

concessions from workers and threatening to close facilities;

• Hyatt was nominated for trying to eliminate quality health care coverage and make the recession permanent for its employees, and for the Hyatt safety record;

• Rite Aid was chosen for failing to bargain a first contract with workers who joined a union two years ago, and for demanding unreasonable concessions from other workers;

• Publix was selected because it won't join other companies in pledging to improve wages and working conditions for the farm workers who pick the companies' tomatoes;

• Giumarra Vineyards is a candidate because of its long history of intimidating and bullying workers and violating their rights;

• The health and pharmaceutical industry was universally nominated for its single-minded focus on profits at the expense of our health.

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Construction union philosophy means economy might quit but they keep moving forward

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Labor Press Editor

About two years ago, the town of Vernon may have wanted to keep the large sports complex that entrepreneurs had attempted to run. But it failed, went into foreclosure and no one stepped forward -- except one group that wanted to turn in into a training center for future workers. What? Revitalizing our infrastructure more important than video games and tennis?

So suggested District Council 7 Painters & Allied Trades (IUPAT), a coalition of five trades and eight locals with about 2,400 members statewide. The painters are committed to continuous training since procedures in glazing, drywall and painting are ever advancing with new materials and methods.

As their members grow older, they want to add and train new members, update veterans and expand the sophistication of their operations.

There's a lot that painters do that your next-door neighbor has no clue about when he splashes store paint on the back door. Did you know that lead has now been outlawed in building material but that older structures built before 1979, including churches and schools, are riddled with that stuff?

That requires lead renovation procedures, which requires training. OSHA has also set safety rules for a number of other construction procedures painters and their related trades are engaged in. Other specialty jobs include forklifts and sophisticated certification.

The painters wanted a big place to operate, but that required more than money and elbow grease. It took tons of hearings to convince the town fathers that hard-working trades union people would be good for them.

It all came about -- even as the national economy tumbled, putting a fifth, then a fourth of union painters out of work or in trouble finding work, according to many statewide surveys.

Then came the fall of 2010 when many Americans, including alas some union workers, misread the cause of pain and voted out the bums who hadn't helped

them enough to replace them, sadly, with the bums who had never helped them and probably never would.

The consequence was probably inevitable if only now sinking in. Right away, the public is being told they voted for results they never thought of. That includes rejecting the bird in the hand for the pie in the sky.

The bird in hand was the manna that other states would be happy to receive -- \$810 million from the federal government for Wisconsin's portion of a high speed rail network plus 5,000 construction jobs in the next 18 months. The pie in the sky is a Brooklyn Bridge con-man's promise of 250,000 jobs that starts with eliminating those 5,000 jobs. Huh?

Part of the bamboozle? Construction unions who thought that, if Scott Walker doesn't like trains but loves highway money, perhaps the federal transportation secretary will listen to their letter suggesting he switch the money around. The result? Walker posted their letter on his website saying that labor now supports him! And the transportation secretary must cope with Republicans and Democrats who want the train network and would be happy to get the money.

It's a taste of the forked tongue future awaiting workers even before the guy's in the governor's office. (The second forked tongue came a week later when Walker said he would support Obama's health care reform if it were part of the "free market system," which anyone who has read the bill knows it already is.)

So here's a group of Americans whose first choices were beaten at the polls and whose jobs are now being tossed on the ash heap, whose income is devastated even as their members are accused of being too rich. Be truthful. If there were ever a group who would just want to toss the whole thing and go away to hibernate, muttering under their breaths about decayed American values, it ought to be union trades and construction workers.

Instead they're doing the exact opposite. Devastated by the current economic thinking, they are investing in future education, finding new workers, kicking up the opportunities for their mem-

SPECIAL REPORT BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES SEE PHOTO ESSAY ON PAGES 12 AND 13



bers. The major intense training centers for workers these days are either run by individual unions or supported by them. Union trades workers whose members can't find work are actually investing their savings and dues into helping training centers grow, getting ready for a better tomorrow that a lot of other Americans have stopped believing in.

Labor Press will spend several months looking at some of these training sites operating in hard times by the folks on the front line of hard times, as well-

heeled developers and recently elected leaders seem afraid to invest in crucial infrastructure and technology

To believe in the future is always an act of faith. To do so in an atmosphere of ridicule and dismissiveness is remarkable.

The painters' apprentice center is as enormous as the hope. Right now it is hardly crowded - except with that hope.

Sue Ruggles, the accomplished photographer at AFT Local 212 at MATC, was asked to provide a photo essay.

The council's apprentice

It was once just a big sports complex near Big Bend, and it took a lot of talking and enterprise to turn it into a huge apprentice training center and home for District Council 7 of the painters crafts. Step inside with photographer Sue Ruggles on Pages 12 and 13 and share the commitment to the future reflected in the world of trades unions.

trainer Adam Holmes helped her out. The days she went the glazer class was not in operation and some of the special machinery was not available. In truth, the new center is so big that it would take quite a boom in new work to fill it.

But the classes were intense in December and resume in January. MATC instructors Dave Strem (painters) and Bob Owsianowski (drywall) were driving the troops. Turn the page and step inside.



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So vast is the training facility at District Council 7 that it might seem the longest part of the day to an apprentice trainee is that long long stroll across the polished floor. To an observer it seems like quite an exercise just getting to the makeshift walls and scaffolding set up in a corner of the training center. But then the work and the scrutiny can really start as the trainee is watched. Step by step under inspection, he mixes the paint, demonstrates his technique, speed and accuracy high on the scaffolding and employs as needed various tools of the trade. Mask on? Mask off. It's all part of the regimen.

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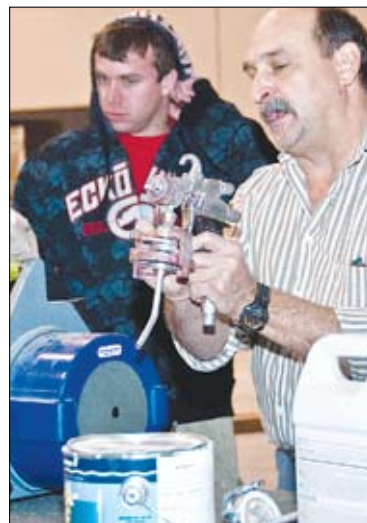
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Alternately perplexed and fascinated, a class of students absorbs the mysteries of technique and equipment explained to them by instructors from MATC.

Grim statistics bring stern call from labor

The health industry is employing thousands of more workers than it did a year ago in Wisconsin. Corporations nationally are enjoying healthier profits than they did in the Bush era. But for construction workers the statistics have just gotten grimmer.

According to the latest US Department of Labor data, the industry shed another 5,000 jobs in November, with overall jobs at their lowest number since March. With nearly 1.6 million men and women unable to find work, construction unemployment rose to 18.8 %, noted Terry O'Sullivan, general president of LIUNA (the laborers union). He spoke December 3 when bills were still being debated in Congress.

"The men and women who build America are facing a worsening jobs crisis," Sullivan said. "This is shameful. It is the result of the same weak-willed behavior that has allowed our country's pressing needs, such as roads and bridges, water resources and school facilities, to deteriorate."

Sullivan emphasized that all the dithering however it turns out reflects an indifference to the genuine plight of workers while much of corporate revenue continues to grow. He says it's past time to put people to work on surface transportation and weatherization efforts, real needs with real industry opportunities,

— Apprenticeship photos by Sue Ruggles of MATC Local 212, American Federation of Teachers.



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Party

From Page 1

al specialist who after the holidays will be busy introducing herself to voters door to door and at forums, she said.

Dimitrijevic herself was the object of considerable attention, though she doesn't face re-election in County District 4 for more than a year.

But upwards mobility is part of the discussion given her role and partnership abilities on the County Board. For instance, she is credited from back in 2007 with the Green Print initiative that, despite initial opposition and balky administration pace, has already helped save the county annual electricity consumption costs of \$800,000 and reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 6,500 tons per year.

A month ago she effectively led the board to override County Executive Scott Walker's veto of a study of the South Shore Beach location and why high levels of bacteria keep infecting that area, an issue of water quality and circulation that can be investigated in a 50/50 split with the US Army of Engineers without affecting Walker's tax levy schematics.

The study was such common sense examination of an issue affecting her constituents that even Walker's talk radio stooges, who tried to blame the problem on MMSD dumping into the lake (levels reduced considerable under Mayor Tom Barrett without much affecting reinfection by beach, bacteria), got nowhere. Knee-jerk Citizens for Responsible Government reacted to the radio stooges and shot another blank attempting a recall

effort against her.

Meanwhile, her name is being much floated as a candidate for county executive or maybe future chairman of the county board.

Someone who has a lot to say about when and if that might be was also at the AFSCME party -- Board Chairman Lee Holloway, who has announced he will not run again for a new term as supervisor but has been quiet in public about his next steps while saying he wants to return the county to a balance of service and budget savvy lacking under Walker. At the same time -- particularly on that ever stranger world of corporate radio -- he was acting like Walker's best buddy and needling partner, another way of signaling his ability to cooperate while being tough and also suggesting that he would be an important ongoing player in the shape of county governance.

On that point, few would disagree.

He is widely expected to name himself for 30 days as Walker's replacement -- as the law allows -- should the county executive finally do something on schedule and leave office at the end of December. (Walker takes over as governor in January, rebuffed at this point in his press release efforts to add Doyle days to his four years.)

Holloway could then appoint himself or someone else "acting county executive" for 45 more days. That could be a person announcing he won't run or could run. It could also be Holloway himself. But the contest for a new exec is expected to take place in the April spring election.

(If Walker resigns as expect-



Eyon Biddle (right), who wants to be a supervisor, chats with two who are -- Michael Mayo (top) and Willie Johnson. **SEE OPPOSITE PAGE** for more photos.

ed Dec. 28, to save taxpayer money by not requiring a special election, all filed candidates for county executive would appear on the Feb. 15 primary ballot and the top two finishers would square off in the April 5 general election.)

During the interim, Holloway's double duty as chair and supervisor actually requires one more vote than currently true to override his own executive decisions, giving him a slightly freer hand while also allowing several interested politicians some extra time to decide if or when to jump into the race.

Some already seem to indicate they have, including Republican Assembly member Jeff Stone, who was at the AFSCME party testing the waters at the largest public service union for the county.

But union is not as important in this race as countywide recognition, and most who have that have already declined to run (including Rep. Jon Richards and Sheriff David Clarke). Stone is largely unknown to the county at large.

Still on the fence as we went to press is respected county parks administrator Sue Black - one of several names floated as either interim or serious ongoing

candidate. (Publicly at the AFSCME event, Holloway didn't tip his hand about an interim choice though he has said he is thinking outside the county. At the event, several nonpolitical and respected straight-shooter current and former county administrators were mentioned pointedly as good interim candidates.)

Also at the party were two others who may be seriously contemplating running for county executive, though many doubt both would because they might knock each other off. Sheldon Wasserman, a noted physician and popular voice in the Assembly, has clearly been exploring the waters as has current but soon former state Sen. Jim Sullivan, the moderate who suffered a painful loss in Wauwatosa to the GOP blitzkrieg (and its most blitzkrieg member, Leah Vukmir). Both are Democrats.

Another potential candidate for the big seat is Dimitrijevic, who will probably wait to see what Wasserman and Sullivan decide.

Stone was seen warmly chatting with half of the new Democrats joining the state Senate. (Not there was Beloit's Tim Cullen, who replaces retiring Judy Robson.) Much con-

gratulated was the Democrat addition -- new Sen. Chris Larson, a departing county supervisor who defeated incumbent Jeff Plale in the primary. At the party he sure indicated that he can work openly with the opposition, such as Stone, and also when asked confessed that he had hardly expected that he would now be part of a new minority in the Senate. But he remained upbeat and quite experienced at working for progressive change without a majority of votes in his pocket.

Another senate veteran whom many will watch to see how capably she can handle herself in a minority role in Madison, Lena Taylor, also swept into the AFSCME party. As some may remember, she was the last candidate to run against Walker for county executive, and she fared more poorly than many expected (especially compared with a Nov. 2 election where he lost the county by 62% in the race for governor and failed to draw numbers among black voters here).

There were even more candidates floating about for insider watchers. Remember, the Nov. 2 results opened up several seats on the County Board, as Larson was elevated to the Senate and Beth Coggs roared to victory in the Assembly to replace retiring Polly Williams, which opened up her county 10th District seat.

Rumor unconfirmed at press time indicates that one of the Coggs daughters, if not two, will run for their mother's seat. That could be quite a holiday dinner table discussion among the Coggses, but one non-Coggs is certainly not waiting.

Eyon Biddle, a lifelong resident of Milwaukee's north side, a former organizer for Running Rebels and other community groups and currently the executive director for SEIU's Wisconsin State Council (doing legislative and political work for some 18,000 members), has already thrown his hat into the ring. He is supported by Dimitrijevic and has been getting a friendly hearing from county activists, some of whom are clearly waiting to see who else is running - and not just for the Coggs seat, but for county executive.



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OF COURSE, the conviviality wasn't all about politics, but some certainly was December 2 at the AFSCME open house.

ABOVE: Veteran Democratic activist Martha Love, recently honored at the CBTU conference, paused for a photo with newest county supervisor Nikiya Harris.

LEFT: AFSCME political and legislative director Doug Burnett at right was seen chatting at a busy table that included Cochran and service area organizer Jenissee Volpintesta (backs to camera), new State AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt and United Way CEO Mary Lou Young, who had just confirmed that labor unions had topped 110% of their goal, a record, in the latest campaign drive. United Way was announcing its final goals after Labor Press deadlines.

BOTTOM: AFSCME 48 staff reps Pete Swinford (left) and Malou Noth (center) at a table of guests.

RIGHT: MPS board member Peter Blewett (right) was showing around Terry Falk, who is running for the at-large seat, and Meagan Holmon, who is running to take Falk's current seat on the board.



BOTTOM: New Milwaukee Circuit Court Judge Pedro Colon (left), who faces election in April, watches Bobbie Webber (retired head of fire fighters, now executive with Dental Associates) sign his nomination papers.



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The party's calmest storm center

By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Labor Press Editor

The man in the bull's eye at the AFSCME 48 holiday party was not running for anything. He also wasn't running FROM anything. But he was all over the Wisconsin news and likely to remain there.

Marty Beil, who heads and negotiates for the state's largest union of public workers, had simply strolled down from Madison to join some old AFSCME and organized labor buddies in some laughs and festivities, as he has every year.

What's different this year is a governor-elect who has tried to put him in the hot-seat.

Scott Walker, believing that the voters agree with everything he's done, including blaming public workers for the state's economic issues, has gone out of his way and deliberately sought to create an enemy out of a union leader and state employees whose cooperation he deeply needs for creative solutions.

In picking on unabashed trade unionist Beil, Walker is bouncing headlong into a tough

but cooperative longtime partner to both political parties, a union leader who has seen the Walkers of the world come and go.

There is little in state politics new to the head of AFSCME District Council 24. As his colleagues well recalled, he picked up early on Walker's games as Milwaukee County Executive, where his own AFSCME brethren under Executive Director Richard Abelson of District Council 48 have also been the largest public workers union Walker had to deal with. And Walker didn't deal with them. His schemes are still a matter of coming attractions unsettled in money and in the courts.

"I've seen his tricks before," Beil has told inquiring TV interviewers. He might well have added he has seen ALL the tricks before, having worked for AFSCME under eight - EIGHT - governors.

Beil is a bear in size, a burly rumples-sweater kind of guy. He is also surprisingly soft-spoken and precise, warm and easy with a laugh, articulate and intellectually quick. Not to say he isn't

stubborn about the worth of his union and hardnosed about the value of public workers.

His pride in workers is the first thing out of his mouth and the only thing he worries about at the negotiating table, "trying to do right by them" while immensely knowledgeable about the economic realities of the state government. He points out to reporters that despite the myths they continue to accept, many of his workers already give to their health care and retirement benefits and they accepted further realities about all that at the recent negotiating table.

Under Gov. Doyle, the bargaining teams for most of the state unions agreed on wage freezes and higher contributions to the pension, reaching back in time so that the two-year deal fit the money put aside in the state budget. The contracts if ratified actually expire six months after Walker takes office. Starting with July 1 contracts Walker will have to start negotiating all over again, a financial reality that Beil would be the first to concede will be tough not only given Walker's behavior but also the state's economic distress.

All of which underlies why Walker's current demands are not just mystifying but self-destructive, as even many of his Republican supporters quietly concede. First, he could never get stronger concessions over contracts already 18 months old as the current governor has done. Second it is nigh unprecedented for a soon-to-be-governor to impose his will on a current gov-



Marty Beil, leader of AFSCME state workers, chats with Debbie Abelson, wife of AFSCME 48's executive director, Richard.

ernor, trying to be the puppeteer before he takes office in his demand that Doyle cease negotiations. To do so without hope of financial benefit seems doubly strange. And while it is fair for the legislature to know the contract details, they really are supposed to wait until the membership ratified --- the law of the land outlines steps in bargaining, as most officials know.

Doyle quite correctly refused Walker's demands, pointing out that stopping complete and hard-fought negotiations would be a classic case of bad-faith bargaining, as several lawyers Labor Press spoke to conceded. That would have exposed the state to textbook legal penalties -- big time -- in inevitable court cases.

Walker's very request casts a similar legal cloud on his future bargaining with unions, which can raise the issue of bad faith bargaining because of his attitude. One former state insider said Walker was flat inventing December 7 when he said he could get \$154 million more by reopening completed contract

negotiations.

If Walker couldn't get more and could have cost the state far more if Doyle had acceded, and if he is likely to cost the state more with his manner, I asked a Republican who worked with him, what on earth was he thinking? (To echo the famous question asked of Hugh Grant on the Tonight Show.)

"Don't tell me that the Democrats never strutted like a peacock after a victory," he shot back. "It might be bad form, but it sure feels good."

It also made headlines. So Beil just grinned at the party when I asked him how he enjoyed Walker's talk radio defenders describing him as a lapdog for Doyle and the Democrats. They sure don't know his history.

Beil mentioned how a recent interviewer in Madison asked him which governor he enjoyed working with the most -- and without hesitation Doyle came in third, "which probably didn't go over too well at the governor's mansion," Beil laughed. But history confirms the reflection. In terms of listening and acting at the negotiating table, Beil put Tommy Thompson first and the late Lee Dreyfus second, both Republicans he felt respected public employees.

Back in 2002, when Beil and his union actually opposed Doyle in his primary run - and ran billboards against his pledge to reduce the state workforce -- this reporter was there when, to put it mildly, you couldn't see Doyle and Beil through the thickness of bad blood. But elected officials have learned that Beil never takes the disputes personally. Respect and care for "my workers" is his bottom line and he is blunt about how deep that commitment is.

Asked at interviews what's the recourse given the current Republican hostility, Beil points out that he and his workers have never been shy about confronting "the dumb and foolish."

It's little mentioned in news reports that there are laws in place at the state about Walker's favorite device of imposing furlough days --- and that his county furlough impositions have not yet survived arbitration hearings and judicial courts.



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Putting a soul in the so-called faceless bureaucrat

By John Buell
for OtherWords

Comment

I had dinner the other night with one of those villains, a "faceless bureaucrat" working as a wildlife biologist for the Department of the Interior in northern Florida. A college friend of my wife, she had spent many years in research on endangered species, and now has moved into an administrative position where she supervises the research of other wildlife scientists.

On Fox News and CNBC and in many other media outlets, you can hear scientists working for Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), or the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) being labeled "faceless bureaucrats," whose mindless, nitpicky regulations supposedly disable the economy.

Many conservatives consider scientist civil servants to be over-compensated with salaries and pensions no one in the private sector can afford, thereby plunging America into debt.

After that dinner, I began to contemplate the term "faceless bureaucrats." Sometimes used as a casual aside, it's both derogatory and commonplace. But portraying that which is different

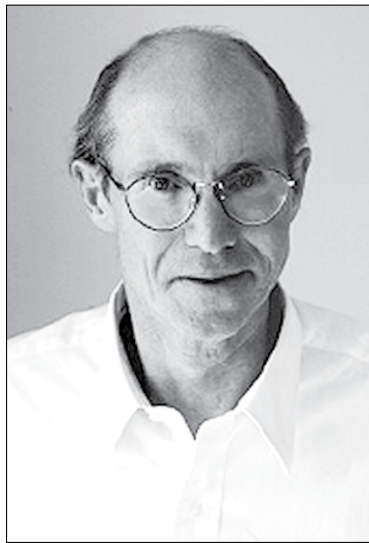
High school essay contest time

Get those bright high school students going. Time is pressing for the Wisconsin Labor History Society's high school essay contest for 2010-2011 with deadline for submissions of Feb. 15, 2011.

First place cash prize is \$500, second place \$300, third place \$200 and up to 5 \$100 honorable mentions can also be awarded for the best essays. Each essay should be about 750 words on the theme, "Unions have been important to my family and my community because . . ."

Many high school students already know the topic but you would be amazed how often the adolescents need to learn more or even some long-lost facts about union influence in their lives. So have your children talk to other family members, friends, neighbors about their unions and then let them decide if they have an interesting story to tell.

Send completed essays to: Prof. Harvey J. Kaye, Center for History and Social Change, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, Green Bay, WI 53411. Awards are made in April. Check www.wisconsinlaborhistory.org for more information.



Author John Buell

from corporate practices as dangerous and trivial can serve to shore up and rally pro-business sentiments in troubled times.

The term "faceless" seems designed to evoke fear and anxiety without having to enumerate and defend specific charges. Even the investment bankers who invent and trade arcane financial instruments are never called faceless. Nor are the border control personnel who target another great scapegoat: undocumented immigrants.

What has our faceless Florida friend been doing with our tax dollars lately?

Though the coastal area for

which she is responsible has as yet been unaffected by the BP oil disaster, her department is charged with the task of documenting the conditions prior to the arrival of any oil that might reach it. If citizens are to be compensated for damages, the government must be able to demonstrate the relatively pristine nature of those shores before the arrival of the toxic oil -- or the dispersants that were supposed to help minimize the spilled oil's impact.

Trouble is, of course, that if -- as we all hope -- the oil and dispersants don't reach that coastal area, her department will be blamed for wasting taxpayer money. Those funds, however, wouldn't have been spent were it not for BP's mistakes, criminal negligence, and ruthless greed.

Our friend's department is also assessing the implications of climate change for the region's wildlife. The unusually warm weather in the Everglades is, she says, threatening the crocodiles. Rapid changes in their habitat are a tragedy from an environmental standpoint and may also destroy an important source of tourist revenue.

Are government bureaucrats over-compensated for these tasks?

I've been unable to locate a statistical study of compensation for federal workers. But a recent study of state and local governments suggests they are not. "Public employees, both state and local government, are not overpaid. Comparisons controlling for education, experience, hours of work, organizational size, gender, race, ethnicity and disability, reveal... a slight under-compensation of public employees when compared to private employee compensation costs on a per hour basis," according to this from the Economic Policy Institute report.

"On average, full-time state and local employees are undercompensated by 3.7%, in comparison to otherwise similar private-sector workers."

With our growing federal debt and government regulations turning into the new bogeyman, I worry about the potential backlash against my friend the scientist and others like her. Yet wouldn't it be best to attack the deficit by making corporations pay for more of the work caused by their messes?

The author, a political economist and former columnist for the Bangor Daily News can be reached at jbuell@acadia.net.

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Facts about DREAM destroy prevalent myths in media

As we went to press the DREAM was unfulfilled, but not dead. First introduced in 2003, the bill would allow undocumented students graduating from a US high school to apply for permanent residence if they complete two years of college or serve two years in the US military.

Despite hyper rhetoric on radio and cable TV, the recipients do not get a place ahead of US citizens and they are not eligible for federal grant scholarships. The act would benefit the US economically by opening doors to higher paid careers in a less costly and speedier time frame than current rules thwarting skilled and motivated young people.

It would increase government revenue -- another example of how facts contradict what most Americans have heard about immigration, such as the rampant assumption that citizens are being gouged for public health and education costs without factoring in the billions added without chance of return in other taxes and payroll charges.

We can all argue if people should be in the country illegally in the first place but the economics of having them here actually builds government revenue.

In-Depth Report

On December 3, in fact, a new Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate shows the DREAM Act would increase revenues by \$2.3 billion between 2011 and 2020 and reduce the federal deficit by \$1.4 billion over that period..

Detractors have lent volume of noise but not similar analysis to the claim that undocumented young people ready for college will take the spots of US citizens. In actuality their ability to start a legal process toward citizenship will likely expand educational centers and other businesses.

The act doesn't give citizenship but would enable 800,000 young people to gain legal residence status and eventual citizenship. (The number could be much higher since it is largely guesswork about how many undocumented would qualify - most were brought to this country as babies, toddlers or younger than 16, the rules within the proposed DREAM bill.)

As Congress worked toward a vote before Christmas, the outrageous claims grew, playing into fears and jingoistic xenophobia.



A vocal younger generation -- not all immigrants by any means but ready to march on their behalf -- will make a difference in America as older political intransigence dies off.

The public has been so bombarded with comments about "aliens" in our midst that it's hard to remember how the DREAM started with bipartisan support (even with backing from the master of the back-flip, John McCain). In any other era it would be a slam dunk toward solution of immigration problems, rather than a detriment.

Surveys suggest that undocumented workers are mainly a threat to only one class of American workers, those who have not completed a high school education -- as one wag put it, Charlie Sykes' major radio

audience. On the other side, supporters sometimes inflate the DREAM Act as a solution to the nation's economic woes while in fact it is a slow steady climb up. The larger issue for America is its history of justice and open competition for people brought into this country before the age of consent.

Those who talk about such children going back where they came from or standing at the back of the line, forget there is not a line for them and the US is the only country most know. Denying long-term residents the chance to advance on ability also demeans the K-12 investment America has long made that all children should not run wild in the streets.

These immigrants emerge in surveys as among the strongest believers in law and responsibility who take American rights more seriously than many native-born.

If the bill does survive in Congress, it will actually be a testament to how thousands of these "sin papeles," or people without paper, have learned those American responsibility and rights.

Mainly on their own -- though backed by sympathetic neighbors and worker right groups such as Wisconsin's Voces de La Frontera -- for seven years they have marched, sat in, written letters and mastered every civil rights tactic available to get their DREAM onto the D.C. agenda.

Many of these *sin papeles*

have given new meaning to "coming out" -- declaring openly their lack of legal status in media interviews, defying threats of detainment. Three were arrested last May for sitting in the office of McCain (R-Arizona), demanding that he support the bill. They were released after a judge recognized the obvious: These were not "aliens" who might flee but political activists doing their best not only to stay in the country, but also to stay visibly here.

Since Nevada Sen. Harry Reid (who clearly owes his margin of victory Nov. 2 to an outpouring of Latino votes) announced he'd bring the bill to the floor of Congress, students have staged protests, sit-ins and a hunger strike at the University of Texas in Austin.

They've also used their activism despite an era in which more people - 400,000 last year alone - have been deported than ever before in this country's history. To highlight the connection between the bill and their challenge to the rising wave of deportations, four undocumented students walked for weeks from Miami to Washington, DC in protest.

These students and their supporters learned the lesson the civil rights movement of the '60s taught activists of an earlier generation: Congress and the political class in Washington could be made to respond to social movements in communities.

-- Dominique Paul Noth
See accompanying page for many of their stories.

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Fight for rights as Americans now out in the open

Fredd Reyes is living proof of how open support has become. Fredd's parents fled the massacres of Guatemala's counterinsurgency war in the 1980s, when President Ronald Reagan gave guns to that country's military, which they then turned on indigenous communities seeking social justice. Fredd was a toddler then. He was picked up last September as he was studying for exams at Guilford Technical Community College. Fredd was taken first to the North Georgia Detention Center, then to the Stewart Center in Lumpkin, Georgia. DREAM Act students mobilized and got Fredd released in time to return to North Carolina for Thanksgiving.

Jennifer Abreu had her Thanksgiving in Kentucky. She came to the US with her parents when she was 13. She graduated from Lafayette High School in Lexington, where she became an activist, performed Brazilian and Colombian dances at fiestas and dreamed of life as a journalist. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials picked her up but a campaign by DREAM Act students and their supporters set her free, too.

And in San Francisco, activists won freedom for Shing Ma (Steve) Li, a nursing student at San Francisco Community College. Immigration authorities detained him on Sept. 15, igniting a fierce effort to stop his impending deportation. Li became a living symbol for the national DREAM campaign.

Li's predicament was dramatic and unusual. His parents emigrated from China to Peru, where Li was born. They later came to the US, where their petition for political asylum was denied. That made Li an undocumented immigrant -- although he went through San Francisco public schools, he had no knowledge of his status.

Last year, however, Li and his mother were arrested. She was bailed out of detention, and now awaits deportation to China. But Steve Li was shipped to a detention center in Florence,

Arizona, from which he would have been flown to Peru, where he was born. He has no relatives or family connections there.

The union for teachers at the community college, AFT Local 2121, became part of a broad effort to win Li's release. The case became a cause celebre for the Asian Law Caucus, the Chinese Progressive Association and other organizations in the city's Asian community. Finally, Sen. Diane Feinstein introduced a private bill that would grant Li permanent residence status. Li was then freed by ICE and returned to San Francisco

His freedom is not permanent, however; it lasts just 75 days following the end of the current congressional session. (Private bills granting an individual legal status are rarely passed.)

Li and his supporters are grateful that he's not in Lima, but do not see the private bill as the answer. "As long as I'm here and able to use my voice and help myself and all those people in the same situation, I don't feel like it's a countdown," Li said in an interview. "It's just one step closer toward the DREAM Act." Recalling the other young people he met in the Arizona detention center, he said, "Their stories and faces will be with me for the rest of my life as I'm fighting for people who are law abiding, tax paying but are currently undocumented."

Many undocumented students can't gain admission to college, even if they've graduated from US high schools with excellent grades, because they're barred directly by lack of legal status. Others aren't able to attend even if they've gained admission, since they don't qualify for the financial aid that other students can receive. Undocumented students overwhelmingly come from working-class families.

In its original form, the DREAM Act would have allowed 900 hours of community service, as an alternative to attending college, which many can't afford. However, the



The T-shirts challenging the status quo have been showing up in Milwaukee for many months.

Pentagon pressured Congress to substitute military for community service.

Many young people are torn by this provision. Rishi Singh, of Desis Rising Up and Moving, believes "many of our families can't afford to send us to college -- for many of our young people, there would be no other choice but to join the military."

Said Gabriela Pacheco, "With the conditional residency, you are going to be able to work. Students might be able to find ways to ... pay for their college and university."

Mexicanos Sin Fronteras in Chicago argues that "undocumented youth are in an increasingly desperate situation.... With legal status as a

goal, many who otherwise might have dropped out of school could be motivated to graduate and enroll in college.... Instead, let's educate the youth about the injustice of these imperial wars and the historical government practice of putting the poorest and most disenfranchised youth on the frontlines. Let's encourage and support them in choosing the college option."

Most who call for reinstatement of the community service provision still support the current act regardless -- as a step toward comprehensive reform.

Luis Perez, the son of working-class parents in Los Angeles, will graduate from UCLA's law school this year and take the bar exam in January. But after that, without legalization, he likely won't be able to work. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act says employers may only hire workers who are citizens or who have visas that give them "work authorization."

The DREAM Act could resolve this problem. And yet no laws in Congress address the root causes of forced migration -- trade agreements and policies that uproot communities in other countries, and make migration a matter of survival.

And still the current law allows thousands of workers to be fired for lack of legal status.

Credit veteran journalist David Bacon for the interviews in this analysis.



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Defiance for DREAM brings arrests

Voces de la Frontera's Executive Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz, its Racine coordinator Maria Morales, and Horlick High guidance counselor Al Hutton were charged with trespassing after a peaceful civil rights protest Nov. 29 at Rep. Paul Ryan's Racine office. The congressman was not there but more than 100 supporters had attended the vigil in support of the DREAM Act.

Ryan has backed away from the bill after previously announcing support for its principles, a flip-flop that was part of the statements and led several in attendance to stage the peaceful sit-in, which led to the arrests. The DREAM Act has been supported by educators around Wisconsin. Milwaukee Public Schools, Racine Unified School District, and the University Of Wisconsin Board Of Regents have all passed resolutions in support.

Horlick's Hutton said participating and being arrested was an easy decision for him. "All I had to do was to think about the students who have sat in my office crying because they could no longer continue their education because of a broken immigration system," he said.

Reporters noted that this was the first act of civil disobedience in Ryan's district in some 50 years. A legal defense fund has been established for those arrested at (414) 426-6891.

Visit us on the web at www.habush.com

Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Friday, December 17

Holiday Open House

Food, drink, camaraderie, open to all union members and affiliates, noon-4 p.m., Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Friday, December 17

100th Anniversary Gala
Building Trades Council
 Special dinner and program,
 Hilton Milwaukee

Monday, December 20-Monday, January 3 Happy Holidays! MALC Offices Closed

Saturday, January 8, 2011

UAW's Annual Dr. King Celebration
 Thinking Beyond a Dream,
 special program and entertainment

6 p.m., Laborers Local 113 Hall, 6310 W. Appleton Ave.

Wednesday, January 12

Monthly Delegate Meeting

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

Wednesday, January 26

Executive Council Meeting
 2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, February 2

Monthly Delegate Meeting

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

Tuesday, February 15

UCAN Training Open to All Affiliates
 6-8:30 p.m. for 8 Tuesdays, 633 S. Hawley Rd.
 Contact Jay Reinke (414) 771-9828 to sign up.

Social Security polishes its services

By Karyl Richson

Special to Labor Press

Probably the last thing on your holiday shopping list is among the most important, but who wants to spend precious time at a Social Security office waiting to conduct business?

Fortunately you don't have to. The busiest times for Social Security field offices and the agency's toll free telephone number are early in the week and early in the month. So if your business can wait, it's best to contact us at other times. The same is true during the holiday season - especially the week between Christmas and New Year's. If you must do business with Social Security during the holidays, you may experience more busy signals on the telephone and longer wait times in local offices. And yet there's a better way, and let's dismiss the myth that older people aren't connected to the Internet. A

quick look at who's doing online shopping and blogging dispels that canard. And it is a better way to conduct your essential government business: online at www.socialsecurity.gov.

Now, just in time for the busy holidays, the website has been redesigned to offer a new look and faster service.

Our redesigned homepage now features a service channeling guide on the left side of the page, which lists the most sought-after services and information on the site. You'll find the information or service you want quickly and easily, including links to:

- applying online for benefits;
- estimating your retirement benefits;
- Extra Help with Medicare prescription drug costs;
- services for people who already receive benefits; and
- getting or replacing a Social Security card.

IAM offers college opportunity

The IAM (International Association of Machinists) has a college scholarship opportunity for children of members either for two year technical college certification or for bachelor degrees.

A full brochure of special rules and guidelines can be downloaded at www.iam.org. Briefly, a special Selection Committee makes the awards for a specific period from one to four years to enable the member to earn a Bachelor's degree or a two year vocational/technical certification.

Children of members can receive \$1,000 per college academic year. All rewards are renewed each year until a bachelor's degree is obtained up to a maximum of four years.

For vocational/technical schools, the award is \$2,000 per year until certification up to a maximum of two years.

An eligible applicant must be an IAM member or son, daughter, stepchild or legally adopted child of an IAM member in good standing. Applicants may apply either when entering college or vocational/technical school as a freshman or at a higher lever with some college credits already completed; may apply as a full time or part time student; and if not a winner, may apply again the following year.

The deadline is Feb. 25, 2011.

You can find great information categorized by general topic at the top of the home page, including Retirement, Disability, Survivors, Supplemental Security Income, Medicare, and Business Services.

At the center of the page you'll find information targeted for specific groups, such as Congress, the press, wounded warriors, government employees, as well as useful links ranging from emergency office closings to getting help with your situation. You'll also find information about our agency, such as careers with Social Security, and the history of Social Security.

A news section keeps readers up to date on important Social Security news, and a large question mark to the right of the page takes you to our frequently asked questions.

Visit our website at www.socialsecurity.gov and save yourself a call or a trip to our office. But if you do need to speak to a Social Security representative one-on-one, we'll be there for you that way as well.

Incidentally, this was our diamond year, the 75th anniversary of Social Security, the nation's most successful domestic program.

So we launched an important new service in 2010: the online Medicare application. It allows people reaching age 65 who opt to delay receiving retirement benefits to apply for Medicare coverage from their computer in as little as 10 minutes. Visit www.socialsecurity.gov/medicare

The author is the Social Security public affairs specialist in Milwaukee.

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Veteran activist and labor presence Doug Curler heading up north

In September, Doug Curler of the IAMAW was honored for four decades of service to the community and to organized labor when he received the

AFSCME vows to fight liars

Angry at the misguided clobbering they are taking on national cable news and in mindless blogs, public workers are fighting back through an AFSCME-created website and write-n campaign at www.afscme.org/stophelies.

When the pundits and talking heads attack public employees they are attacking "the very folks whose work you benefit from -- from providing basic public safety, to fixing potholes in the roads you drive on, to making sure clean water runs from your tap," the AFSCME campaign informs the public. And it offers a way for all who agree to join their efforts, including an open letter about the issue. The union intends to fight back with words and arguments when it hears local radio, TV or newspapers pick up the lies.

What do you tell the falsifiers? That Wall Street CEOs -- with the help of their political friends in Congress and the media -- are trying to divert attention from the simple fact that they caused our economy to collapse. And the campaign of deflection seeks to blame public employees.

AFSCME International, led by President Gerald McEntee and Secretary-Treasurer Lee Saunders, have announced the Stop the Lies campaign to make sure the liars are not going to get away with this. The campaign will "let no attack against us, or the vital public services we provide, go unanswered," the organizers say. "We will use every tool at our disposal: hard-hitting videos; rapid responses to attacks; advertising in national and local media; online actions targeting those who seek to harm us with their hypocrisy and lies; ground actions in state capitals across the country and more." The union is also organizing community by community to fight against exaggerations and demonization.

Werner Schaeffer Community Service Award. The presenters at a United Way ceremony may have gotten the well-deserved honor in under the wire.

Curler is retiring and moving to near Antigo, passing along some of the current duties he is most famous for, such as running the newsletter and lodge facilities of United Lodge 66 Machinists Union at 2611 W. Oklahoma Ave., where he has also served as secretary-treasurer.

A veteran, he also worked some 27 years at Johnson Controls. Those who know Curler as both a frugal fiscal

wonk who kept his lodge out of black for years also know him as a ferocious activist.

Looking back at his union years at Johnson Controls, he can't resist criticizing today's version of the company as one of the "many Milwaukee manufacturers taking advantage of low wages and exploiting the workers in Mexico as it moved its operations over the border."

Curler also served a stint for the Milwaukee labor council and United Way as an AFL-CIO Community Services field liaison. He continued the lodge newsletter and community activities -- and this is a newsletter

that has won national communications awards, to go along with the personal honors Curler has won.

And those familiar with Doug's energy know he intends to continue to be active in the community when he moves to Neva Lake near Antigo, having already volunteered to help the archery club as well as the snowmobile club and machinists and AFL-CIO service organization in the north central region.

Curler, an MALC delegate, will depart after the January monthly meeting, where many intend to thank him before he heads north.



A surprised Curler receiving United Way honors in September.



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Grad assistants gain new life in ruling

One of the most egregious decisions of the Bush-era National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) was the 2004 ruling in the Brown University case that graduate teaching and research assistants were not employees and could not form a union.

The Obama era NLRB began to set things right by reversing a ruling based on that case which prevented some 1,800 graduate assistants at New York University from voting, as they had previously agreed to, for union representation.

The board reversed a regional director's dismissal of an election petition by the Graduate Student Organizing Committee/UAW (Local 2110). Even though the board stopped short of overturning the Brown University ruling, it did say there are "com-

PELLING REASONS" to reconsider the 2004 board precedent. The board remanded the case to the regional director for a hearing and development of a "full evidentiary record" on the election petition.

The Bush NLRB decision was condemned by the United Nation's International Labor Organization (ILO) as a violation of the internationally recognized right to organize. Dissenting board members called it "woefully out of touch with contemporary academic reality." The ruling also nullified union authorization elections at Brown, Columbia, Tufts and the University of Pennsylvania.

NYU's graduate employees won their first NLRB election in 2000, followed by university recognition and a first contract in 2001. The contract, the first ever

to be won at a private university in the United States, included a 40% salary increase, fully paid health care, sick leave and workplace protections.

But after the Bush NLRB ruling, NYU withdrew its recognition and refused to negotiate a second contract.

Protest in Milwaukee

In a separate event related to the continuing efforts for better recognition of the importance of graduate student teacher organizations, the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association (MGAA) picketed in opposition to several benefits-related proposals made by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in bargaining for a new contract.

The organization is pushing the administration to recognize that family friendly benefits are



key incentives to recruit and retain the best teachers and researchers at any university.

The university is also pushing to retroactively increase health premiums, which would force graduate assistants to pay the increase from the first of the

year. This proposal not only requires current graduate assistants to pay the increases from an average salary of \$10,287 per year after fees, but also would require those not currently teaching or who have left to reimburse the university.

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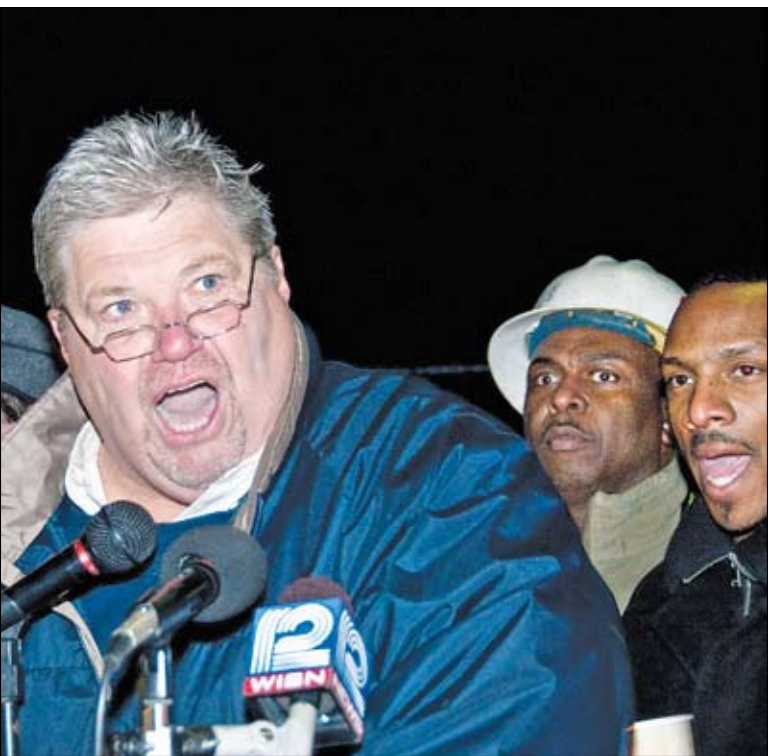
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Hope flickers out at Talgo as light of reason fades



Candles gleamed and young and old kept vigil. Organizer Robert Kraig of Citizen Action listened as Voces de la Frontera Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz added her fighting voice, as did (below left) State AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt. TV camera carried the sound out of the dark, but the real question was answered December 9. They were not being listened to by the resister in chief, the governor to be in Madison.



A candlelight vigil -- to bring the governor-elect to his senses and save Wisconsin jobs and the economic initiatives so desperately needed for the inner city -- was held right before Thanksgiving. Scores braved the cold along the 27th St. parking lots between Hopkins and Townsend -- near the evolving Talgo railyard where 124 jobs are being created to build trains for Oregon, one of many states quite happy to become part of the nationwide initiative for a better high-speed

rail system.

Those jobs are a commitment that will keep Talgo in Milwaukee until 2012. But what will happen then? Part of the answer came December 9 when the federal government pulled virtually all of its \$810 million planned for Wisconsin and gave it to other states.

This happened despite the money invested by Talgo in its new assembly structure, despite the city of Milwaukee's investment of \$33 million to build the Century City project to leverage hundreds of inner city jobs with Talgo as the anchor. There remains a real question about Wisconsin's job future, of keeping modernized technology companies in Wisconsin when Scott Walker opposes biotech initiatives and the federal government's \$810 million in federal

grants to Wisconsin to develop more efficient Madison to Milwaukee train connections as part of the national network. Some 5,000 immediate construction jobs will disappear.

The business community and Republicans have lent long-standing bipartisan support for the Hiawatha route (leading to Chicago).

Walker's resistance seemed to have been tempered given his recent flirtation seeking to guarantee what no transit system has ever expected -- no ongoing maintenance costs for the state.

Milwaukee citizens had clung to some hope that common sense might prevail, and they were fighting by the hundreds. More rallies and discussions were being scheduled just in time for Christmas as the announcement of cancelation occurred.

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