



THIS IS GOODBYE

From the publisher:



Sheila Cochran, COO of the Milwaukee labor council, teared up telling delegates at the March monthly meeting why the executive board had decided to put the newspaper to bed permanently.

April 2 vote to restore justice

More election choices on Pages 4 and 7.

The gloves have come off - at least on the ruling conservative side in these supposedly "nonpartisan" judicial elections of April 2.

72-year-old incumbent Patience Roggensack is fighting to retain her Wisconsin Supreme Court seat for another 10 years, which requires hiding her loss of judicial balance. She has emerged as the enabler protecting colleagues accused of judicial corruption and unethical behavior. Without her they couldn't survive and the legislature would have to return to common sense.

So her handlers have now called out the right-wing troops to protect her flank. The big money that supported Gov. Walker in his campaigns, the GOP insiders who run that party's machinery, have taken over her to emphasize who she is really beholden to and seek to demean her articulate opponent, Ed Fallone.



Ed Fallone

Similar gloves-are-off tactics are taking over Milwaukee County's Branch 45 race. Any semblance of nonpartisanship has been abandoned by Walker's appointment to the bench, a leader of the young Republican lawyers and the Federalist Society. Now Rebecca Bradley is calling in the money chips from the most extremist supporters in that camp.

Why? Because she's opposed by the most qualified and experienced prosecutor running who has emerged as a quite persuasive presence in forums.

Janet Protasiewicz, not only labor's candidate, is openly

Justice continued Page 8

When I was a little girl growing up in a union household, I was always told to look to the Milwaukee Labor Press when it came to how to vote and what was good for working people.

When I became the head of the council I became the publisher of the Labor Press and was very proud of what was and continues to this day to be a nationally recognized and award winning publication -- the most recent award being the 2012 Saul Miller - Best Collective Bargaining Story of any international, national and other labor organization.

I would like to thank our readers, Editor Dominique Paul Noth and Editorial Assistant Lynnda Guyton for all their hard work and dedica-

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

You are reading the last edition of the AFL-CIO Milwaukee Labor Press, the monthly newspaper of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council.

It is a sad moment among many for the Wisconsin tradition of a proud independent working class -- the final issue of the Midwest's largest labor newspaper, which has lasted and grown in influence over 73 years.

There is a national pattern of changing technology that has affected print newspapers, but in

tion, not only to this publication but to the hard working men and women of organized labor who have over time, much like I was as a little girl, been steered in the right direction by reading the Milwaukee Labor Press.

As we put this paper to bed, our readers should understand that this isn't the death of the voice of organized labor. We will continue to move forward and do our work. But it is the last issue of this very proud and independent voice in print form.

As its publisher I join my editor in this final issue of our proud and prize winning publication.

Sheila Cochran
Chief Operating Office
Milwaukee Area Labor Council

From the editor

this specific case change arrived prematurely because of circumstances unique to this state.

Many print newspapers that relied on advertising for profit suffered reversals or disappearance because of how consumers receive local and global information and opinion in a new media era. The majority found answers by merging or transporting into the online and digital world. Labor Press in contrast never

sought profit, just enough advertisers to augment the commitment of its readers to collective voice in the public square.

But right now it is loss of money not of impact or reputation that is leading the newspaper to shutter its doors and end home delivery while continuing as best it can its influential portal, milwaukeeelabor.org.

In this state public sector unions can no longer negotiate directly on behalf of their members' health and retirement care or other benefits and can only negotiate wages within a narrow cost of living index.

While the courts are still hung up on full implementation of these restrictions, leaving the window open for unions with contracts to seek extensions, it is a perilous crack that the courts or future elections need to resolve. Left behind or in limbo are the state's teachers, garbage collectors, water-main fixers, horticult-

Goodby continued Page 3



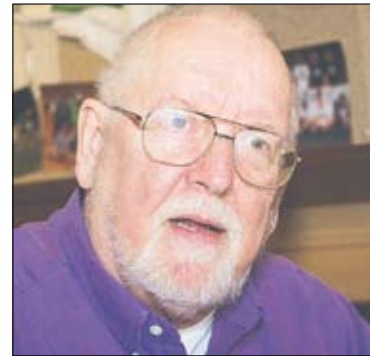
Janet Protasiewicz chats with Cochran and other labor leaders at the March delegate meeting, asking for voter support April 2.

Celebrating the champion of seniors

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

Leon Burzynski is retiring. Again. He's frankly lost track of how often he's retired. But this time a vast community of friends and beneficiaries - pretty much all of Wisconsin - will gather to honor him for so many years of great service in a combined fund-raiser and tribute April 4 at Serb Hall.

Of course, if this is retirement, it's time for a new definition. While moving to emeritus status from founding president of the influential Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans (WIARA), he's spending his spare time working as a tax adviser and



Leon Burzynski embodies the ever-active retiree.

helping US senators like Tammy Baldwin (he's a big fan) promote legislation to force the feds to negotiate lower drug costs -- something Bush refused to do when he pushed the Medicare Advantage sell-off on the public

nearly a decade ago.

I interviewed Leon between tax preparation sessions and strategy meetings with Citizen Action of Wisconsin. An acknowledged whiz at retirement financial issues and national health care facts, Leon continues to be called on to speak at public events, work with the legion of political figures he has courted over the years (honoring many at power luncheons) and writing provocative articles, as he recently did for WIARA's newsletter:

Republicans in Congress, pushed by the self-righteousness and ignorance of their Tea Party nutcases, stand in direct opposi-

Leon continued Page 5

MATC, AFT action a model for public unions

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

The decision of the Milwaukee Area Technical College to negotiate a cost-savings contract extension with its experienced teaching staff brought howls of dismay from Gov. Scott Walker's minions for slapping Act 10 in the face. His legal hires said the college had gone out on a limb to thwart his removal of comprehensive collective bargaining for public employee unions.

But it turns out it was those hired guns far out on a limb. The actions of Local 212, American Federation of Teachers, and the community board of the college are actually proving a model for other unions. It is a loud trumpet to the union movement to stop sitting on its hands and move rapidly forward on successor contracts.

Within a month of its decision, the MATC was given considerable cover and legal justification by an appeals court. In a ruling March 12 unanimously rebuffing a challenge from the Walker camp, it rejected that argument frequently advanced on the extreme right that a circuit court judge had overstepped in blocking aspects of Act 10.

In the contrary, the appeals court said, just who and what Act 10 impacted was still a matter of legitimate litigation about constitutional overreach. The court unanimously said it was unpersuaded by the right-wing argument that the circuit court decision was causing the confusing among local authorities rather than the law itself.

It was Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen, often so quick to do the GOP's bidding rather than his job for all the people, that had asked the 4th District Court of Appeals to place the September ruling of Dane County Circuit Judge Juan Colas on hold. He was stoutly rebuffed.

"It appears to us that the sort of confusion . . . is not a product of the circuit court's decision, but rather a product of ground-breaking legislation that is now subject to constitutional challenges. Litigation on this topic will not be lessened until the merits of the constitutional issues are finally resolved by action of our supreme court," the court concluded. And, of course, if the April 2 election restores a semblance of reasoned balance to the court, Act 10 is clearly in further jeopardy.



At a recent public event, Supreme Court candidate Ed Fallon and Local 212 President Michael Rosen chat with union workers.

Unmentioned in the ruling was the living example of brave management-union cooperation on moving forward. That is the one-year successor contract negotiated in February by the MATC board and Local 212. The early-negotiated contract freezes faculty wages for a third time in four years but saves Wisconsin's most successful technical college - with an extraordinarily student employment rate - from losing hundreds of experienced teachers.

College President Michael Burke pointed out that the deal was good for the college and the MATC faculty, counselors and professional staff. It is expected to save the college \$14.3 million in the short-term but maintained retirement provisions that ensure that senior faculty, counselors and professional staff will not retire immediately.

The agreement generates permanent long-term savings as well, Burke noted, including a reduction in overload and part-time pay, and online instructor salaries. It effectively ends early retirement health benefits for employees hired after Feb. 16, 2014. They would need 20 years of full-time continuous service and to work until age 60 to qualify for retiree health care, while current employees may retire at 55 with retiree health benefits.

So despite the screams from the right, the deal saves a

lot of money. Its legalities were scrutinized in depth and in advance by the college and the AFT legal experts and even by the law firm that drafted Act 10 for the governor.

The right-wing attack "is more sour grapes," said Local 212 President Michael Rosen. "They can't attack us for the economics since the cost savings are so large. So instead they question its legality. This contract takes into account the political realities of the state's public employees who have been made scapegoats for Wisconsin's economic problems."

Since "tech college funding was slashed to finance corporate tax breaks and property values plummeted reducing MATC's revenue, the deal enables MATC to protect students, experienced faculty and the health of businesses and the community."

Asked if the boldness reflected by the college and the union was the correct course - in other words, a road that more unions should be taking -- Rosen agreed.

"Act 10 has been declared unconstitutional by Judge Colas. While it is working its way through the legal system, unions have the right and I would argue the responsibility to their members to negotiate successor agreements," Rosen said.

"Walker's goal was not as he said to balance the Wisconsin's budget, but to break unions. We must do everything we can to protect what our members have fought so hard and long for, including their right to union representation."

Rosen also noted that unions that think they can work with Walker are deluding themselves.

"He may not be pursuing 'right to work' legislation right now in part to help Roggensack" -- whose loss could tilt the high court away from his methods -- "and in part to help himself in his re-election bid. But he will aggressively go after private sector unions as part of his campaign for the presidency."

The MATC contract now runs through Feb. 15, 2015. It has hardly escaped noticed that this is after the next gubernatorial election.

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Carpenters Local 264
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Graphic Communications Conference/IBT District Council 1, Local 577-M
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers District No. 10, AFL-CIO
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2150, AFL-CIO
International Brotherhood of Teamsters
International Union Operation Engineers Local 420
Milwaukee Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Sheet Metal Workers Local 18, AFL-CIO
United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1473
United Steelworkers International Union Local 2-209, AFL-CIO
Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals AFT, AFL-CIO

Treasury Gifts

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AFSCME Local 1954, AFL-CIO
American Federation of Teachers Local 212, AFL-CIO
American Union Embroidery & Silkscreen
Brewery Workers Local 9, UAW, AFL-CIO
Carpenters Local 264
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, Milwaukee Chapter
Communications Workers of America Local 4603, AFL-CIO, CLC
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers District No. 10, AFL-CIO
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers Lodge 66, AFL-CIO
International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers Lodge 1845, AFL-CIO
Labor Community @ Work
Laborers Local 113

Milwaukee Area Labor Council, AFL-CIO
Operating Engineers Local 420, AFL-CIO
Painters District Council No 7, AFL-CIO
Plumbers Local Union 75, AFL-CIO
Power Plant Management Coop Trust
Sheet Metal Workers Local 18, AFL-CIO
UAW Local 469, AFL-CIO
UAW Southeastern Wisconsin Area CAP Council, AFL-CIO
United Food & Commercial Workers Local 1473
United Steelworkers District 2, AFL-CIO
Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals AFT, AFL-CIO
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Goodby

From Page 1

turists and on and on - the labor community that represented the majority of our federation membership.

Walker's related economic maneuvers since have also kept Wisconsin lagging in the national recovery. That's not a political statement but a statistical reality. There were some - still are -- who accepted Walker's policies as an effort to cut the fat. He has now cut into the heart muscle. What used to be the lifeblood of democracy - the freedom to communicate and organize - has become a punctured artery.

It may not last. There is a strong streak of rugged individualism in the American character that works hand in hand with collective workplace action. Unions long provided a balancing wheel for these two American strains, encouraging individual freedom through the power to improve the work arena. But if you stifle the voice of one side, the other side gains power. At least for a while.

There is a special bargain between a union and its members - work together to better our working lives and earn respect. No one has yet figured out what will happen in the long run when unions are thwarted in carrying out that basic bargain. Will the workers rebel? Will the voters change the power structure? Or will the pressure for short-term salvation - putting food on the table - win over long-term strategic thinking? It's the same dilemma between short-term profits and long-term strategy that too many American businesses admit they succumbed to, choosing the wrong side. It remains to be seen if the working community will do so as well.

Some accuse unions of being old-fashioned in their beliefs. But it was a fashion that created paid vacations, the eight-hour day, the end of child labor, the end of employment discrimination. It was a fashion that created the federal safety at work agency (OSHA), employer paid health plans that remain the basis of the national system, the 5-day workweek, overtime rules, Social Security and on and on. Those much maligned dues pennies have raised up the standards for the nation and actually reflect what many think of when they talk about the exceptional rewards of United States democracy.

Organized labor can - and is -- modernizing its methods and tactics. But it cannot now refashion beliefs to fit where the money is -- unlike newspapers that can change the color of their principles to pursue any reader and any advertiser despite political winds.

The different philosophies that have always existed about how to create jobs, organize for growth and raise workers were



At a 2010 delegate meeting, US Rep. Gwen Moore surprised editor Dominique Paul Noth by presenting him with the Congressional Record honoring the multiple Labor Press national honors.

welcome to discussion in the Labor Press and welcome at the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. It is open not just to AFL-CIO unions but to groups and individuals moving in the same direction, such as retirees, fair trade advocates and others. The open door succeeded as did the newspaper for a long time.

The newspaper entered 2010 with nearly 50,000 households receiving the home-delivered monthly newspaper as an automatic part of their council dues (signed up through their own locals and unions), second in the state only to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, which is also losing home delivery.

While unions continue to be derided as peas in a pod, Labor Press readers knew better. The newspaper devoted a lot of stories to exploring freely the debates among unions and the different paths and policies under sometimes volatile discussion. It championed the goal behind the different methods -- a healthier working class and middle class economy, the value of education, of community charity, of how best to create family supporting

jobs, improve workplace safety and fair treatment across races, personal beliefs and genders.

At different times, some union leaders weren't happy with the research or with the political tilt, but they respected the direction of Labor Press' concerns. And they appreciated how our commentaries allowed their views to change.

There is considerable irony in removing the newspaper from the public arena, as labor leaders will be the first to tell you. It's an economic necessity not a matter of influence. Labor Press has actually grown in national reputation.

In its earliest decades as a large weekly (1940s-1960s) it was like other successful newspapers -- full of recipes, female cheesecake, press releases, social gatherings - a veritable collage of attractions. Until the exodus of manufacturing jobs in Milwaukee, its weekly home delivery stood at 150,000 even into the 1950s. What still made its coverage unique from those decades as scholars keep discovering was solid in-depth reporting of union negotiations, delegate events, candidate profiles

and topical rallies, protests and strikes often neglected in other media. Even today these old bound archives provide fascinating reading.

As a monthly from the 1970s forward and particularly in the last decade, Labor Press tightened its focus and broadened coverage beyond the typical union issues of wages, hours and working conditions, reflecting the complicated changes in social policies affecting workers. Trade, race relations, immigration, economic analysis and even issues like classroom sizes were suddenly part of the agenda that had to be dealt with.

So Labor Press converted to full color, provided diverse and harder news topics, in-depth examination of working families issues and detailed political commentary. While acknowledging its more conservative members and unions with full coverage, the paper made no bones that the times called for a liberal tilt and it would fulfill a full-bore journalistic mission of robust discussion.

Under the fifth editor in its long history, it became internationally recognized as a progressive leader, every year winning first-place honors in national and Midwest contests.

The Labor Press' journey into the online world, while not headline spectacular, has been quite successful in the last six years, currently adding some 4,000 new readers a month at milwaukeeelabor.org. Most are not even union members. To the tune of several hundred a weekday, they have been taking advantage of professional updated news reports between print editions, an active events calendar and the hefty Take Action section of state and national publications on current issues. National news sites regularly reproduce the work while people curious about member-

ship check out basic information pages.

This portal won the national award as the most excellent online labor news outlet among hundreds, an award honored in the Congressional Record. That was 2010, the same year the print newspaper won the national award for overall general excellence in a competition of all the large labor federations.

The five-year archive of Labor Press publications now at the portal have also proven vital to historical research since they cover a particularly fomenting era in state and local politics. While our online presence will continue, some aspects will be difficult to maintain without professional help.

Terrific as these added eyeballs are, they do not translate into revenue, which is what the newspaper needed to survive. Labor federations face some harsh realities. They will have to examine whether they should seek fresh ways to raise money (something other than dues), work principally with coalitions to get the message out and heal the rifts the opposition constantly concocts to turn worker against worker. The discussions of how to best advance core principles are ongoing. But for now financial realities prevent Labor Press from being part of that journey.

Once we were nationally famous for the Wisconsin Idea - progressive social policies and pioneering in labor laws, worker rights, public union organizing. It will take years to restore such values. The focus on "profit at all cost" has thrown the Wisconsin tradition of values out of whack. In the fight back to common sense, there will be losses before there are gains.

One of those losses lands today - the finale of the publication once hailed as the voice of Milwaukee labor.

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More candidates needing district support

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

There's only this tiny April 2 window for Wisconsin voters to put a crimp in a sketchy Madison legislature economic agenda. The policies that put the state on the bottom rungs of the nation's job creation are dependent on a complacent judiciary to rubber-stamp constitutional and environmental excesses.

That makes a restoration of balance -- represented statewide by **Ed Fallon** on the state Supreme Court and locally by **Janet Protasiewicz** for Milwaukee Branch 45 of the cir-

There's also a huge election for voters in West Allis and Greendale who may not know the secret issues involved in Milwaukee County Board District 17. See Pages 6 and 7.

cuit court -- the labor endorsements featured on Page One.

But voters see the same spring election as a key chance to reaffirm a progressive vision for the Milwaukee school board and validate the responsible vital role of the Milwaukee County Board.

Voters in school board District 7 are being encouraged to dump incumbent David Voeltner, a veteran firefighter who sometimes is a reliable vote. But what MPS needs now is more fire-breathers fighting for children and public education, not a vague follower. A new leader with experience in government and labor roots is running against him to provide fresh views -- **Claire Zautke**, strongly educated in public education policy and values.

Similarly someone with deep skills in working for and



Claire Zautke

educating children is needed to represent the newly reconfigured and diverse District 6, where longtime activist Peter Blewett is retiring.

And deep skills describe the only real Latino powerhouse in the race, diminutive education specialist and veteran mentor **Tatiana Joseph**, backed by every major community group in the region including Voces de la Frontera. Running against her is a frequent candidate for anything, Angel Sanchez, whom the voters have frequently put on the shelf and need to do so again. Joseph not only has hands-on experience in the field, she has the articulate personality to immediately impact MPS policy.



Khalif Rainey

In County Board District 2, an attractive but crowded race came down to the best two candidates, so the inner city community in one sense can't go wrong - both survivors are willing to work full bore for the community and represent fresh new faces.

But in March, the labor community gave its enthusiastic



Tatiana Joseph

nod to **Khalif Rainey** who has the track record of thoughtful progressive community service as a veteran aide to US Rep. Gwen Moore. He spent eight years in her office working for constituents. He is also known as the personable offspring of popular UAW leader and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists organizer Tony Rainey.

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Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Tuesday, April 2

Spring General Election

Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., check MyVote.WI.gov for your location

See our endorsements Pages 1, 4, 6 and 7.

Wednesday, April 3

Delegate Meeting

Installation of Officers and New Executive Board
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Saturday, April 20

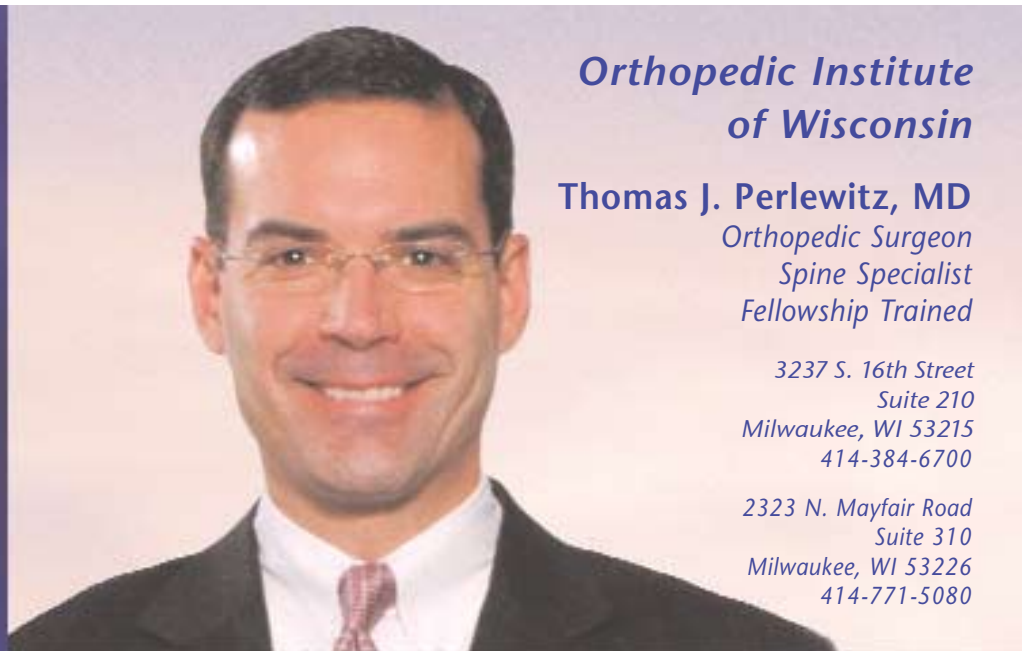
Labor History Annual Conference

Keynote speaker Bill Fletcher in daylong conference, 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Machinists Local 1377 Hall, 1726 S. West Ave., Waukesha.

Sunday, April 28

Workers Memorial Day

'Save Jobs, Save Lives' -- Remember at 5 p.m. ceremony, guest speakers, Zeidler Union Square Park, between 3rd and 4th at Michigan St.



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Leon

From Page 1

tion to the over 70% of Americans who believe Social Security and Medicare should be strengthened, not weakened. These are the same Republican political powerhouses who have a social conscience somewhere between a carrot and a rutabaga. Most are millionaires and have no idea what life is like for American workers.

Before you call such rhetoric inflammatory, it is earned. Leon, hard to call him Burzynski after so many years of acquaintance, always has the facts and statistics deeply on his side. It is a research ability unions know well from his decades at Local 494, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. His brain power and negotiating skills rose him quickly through the ranks from journeyman electrician to business representative.

Then came his first retirement. Sort of. When he left IBEW he and his wife ran a senior center and retired from that. Then in 2005 he became founding president of the WIARA.

I had resigned in 2004 from the AARP (which once stood for American Association of Retired Persons but strategically eliminated any reference to "Retired" and changed its official name to its initials, AARP). That strange game probably propelled the emergence from other groups of the WIARA. That was when AARP started calling Bush's donut hole and no power for the government to negotiate costs the "greatest advance in health care" since, apparently, sliced bread. It was a high moment of stupidity.

Burzynski recalls he was far more prescient, dropping the AARP much earlier when "it clearly no longer was talking for retired people."

"Even its magazine started featuring celebrities barely 50 and hardly retirees," he laughed. "It became a huge selling machine for insurance and other products built around its reputation for speaking for retirees."

Today, the AARP is stealing back toward courting the retirees it stopped emphasizing, not quite apologizing for its past behavior, yet its main business still selling products and now even its own Medicare Advantage programs. But it is approaching more nicely people like Burzynski - perhaps because WIARA has become the established powerful voice of seniors in Wisconsin and is much envied for its feisty believability in this field. Meanwhile Burzynski continues to attack AARP for its ambiguity on protecting Social Security and for being more concerned with selling than representing seniors.

Burzynski has a simple and typically blunt explanation of why his group is more trusted: "We don't sell insurance and we don't sell trips." Even ahead of the strong Florida chapter, the Wisconsin chapter he led is the most vital in the nation.

In our interview we discussed how poorly US journalism has been reporting on the economic and retirement issues where he has become a walking encyclopedia. Surely the media must know that, contrary to excessive right-wing myth, Obama cut the deficit and slowed spending to its lowest level in 50 years.



Burzynski during the Labor Press interview

This is the avoidance of math that also leads to false facts. And Leon sees it happening with the Big Three. "Journalists screw this up all the time about entitlements," he noted. "They lump very different programs together in generating fear, such as Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid - all in the same breath as if they were the same program."

"Can we get real and look at the facts? Social Security is not in trouble, not with \$3 trillion in the trust fund."

In 1983, the government through a commission established that paying into Social Security should be indexed to 90% of America's income level, not cut off far below as is currently the case (83%). So while the salary median soars, only \$110,000 of salary is subject to SS taxes. If

the formula had kept pace the cap would be around \$145,000 a year, some economists say, and \$200,000 according to others. Raise the cap and all debates about raising the retirement age or other phony fixes would go away.

"Now I agree that we have to do something about the cost of health care (Medicare and Medicaid)," said Burzynski. "But that has more to do with the 25% to 35% administrative costs of private health providers compared with the 1% to 2% efficiency of Medicare."

"So first we have to stop mixing all that in with Social Security and then we have to look at the much lower health costs with equally good or better results being produced in other countries. The Affordable Health Care Act is doing something

about that" - quite an admission from an advocate for single-payer and the public mandate, but he happily points out how ACA has done wonders for lowering costs for seniors.

Leon is still combative about the White House tendency to dea-making with proven enemies of Social Security -- "particularly if they are willing to slice benefits. They're going to have a fight if they try that."

Even as he has made a major difference for retired Americans, he has a regret.

"One thing we haven't accomplished is to educate younger people who have the most to lose and are the hardest to get to listen," he noted. "It's understandable. When I was 30 retirement was furthest thing from my mind."

"If it's hard to explain health care to retirees, imagine how far removed are the young people. Yet they are the ones most likely to be duped because it is not yet upon them. So they are the ones we really need to educate and be fighting to protect."

If Leon is right, it is young people even more than the seniors and union members who know him well who should flock to a celebration for him, scheduled from 4:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, April 4, at American Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave. A \$25 donation is requested since the event is also a fundraiser for WIARA.

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Media misleads on value of county board

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

Comment

History teaches that virtually all scandals at the county have emerged from the offices of the executive. Time and again it has been up to the county board, however excoriated and wacko some of its personalities, that actually stepped in, thought the problems through and rescued the situation.

One recent result - the rise from the ashes of a pension system once demeaned when an executive and his hired hands in 2000 saw its heady gains as an opportunity to save taxpayer money, took outrageous steps and temporarily collapsed both the pension and the budget. Inevitably the public took it out on the supervisors.

Well, March 14, the county pension through careful watching and feeding has earned more than \$50 million and bailed out many income problems despite excessive payouts that should never have been allowed. It is now proving the long-term value of the traditional defined pension. It's a money-saver for taxpayers. But it took many partners, including the board, to nurture it back to robust health.

Often characterized as a many-headed demon, the board is actually the legislative body

standing guard over excesses. It gives the voters a direct role in fighting greedy self-serving use of public resources. It can be quickly scotched if it oversteps thanks to new controls it initiated. It's hardly perfect, but it is the people's chamber.

Even the current county executive, Chris Abele, after dabbling with political hires of his own choice and losing strong-willed leaders such as Sue Black and Frank Busalacchi by failing to give them space for intelligent vision not his own, is now turning to people who actually know local government in detail, not some corporate right-wing think-tank abstraction, to take key roles in his administration.

Recently he added Julie Esch who came out of research analysis to be director of operations for the Department of Administrative Services, Brian Dranzik to the Department of Transportation and Rich Ceschin as deputy director of the Department of Human Resources. Some may have taken the new jobs out of worry over the Madison maneuvers to curtail their future as board advisers, but all clearly learned the administrative ropes working for the county board.

It took Abele some time to learn their value, but these key appointments were hardly reported in the newspaper because they didn't fit the prevailing right-wing vision of an inept board.

There are certainly supervisors hard to herd. But only three seem so concerned about their own religious backers or conservative support that they balk at good ideas of full-time pay and service.

There remains a comfortable majority voters of 14 or so members in a loose, sometimes opinionated but always hard-working coalition under new chairperson Marina Dimitrijevic.



Yet newspapers and radio suggest that this new coalition is not a demonstration of better public service but opportunism by Dimitrijevic to position her to run for county executive in 2016. Well, better public service is sure one way to position for the future.

I suspect her reputation as a liberal who keeps her own counsel and her emerging abilities clearly threaten the alphabet

soup of business organizations - GMC, MMAC and WMC - that still long for a free hand to grab whatever county lands and services they can for their own profits. They are left to hope that at least West Allis will be vulnerable to their blandishments.

This is the issue the community needs to discuss because it lurks under the District 17 race. But don't look for local establishment media to openly explore such nuances.

They seem quite willing to lie on the tracks as the Joe Sanfelippo-Alberta Darling train bears down on them, with insider corporations serving as conductors for a Madison bill to take away more local control. County government is a creation of state government, but local control used to require local origination.

Madison may derail this train when the 71 other counties realize they might do to Milwaukee what they would vehemently oppose happening in their own backyards. The idea of shrinking the county board to part-time pay or status is really a statewide issue about fundamentally reducing the people's voice and expanding the power of the executive - the sort of things that journalists usually leap to oppose.

But here they haven't - to the point that the executive and the business community know the press won't pay much attention to the board's effort to reach out to ask the community for its own vision of the size and reach of the board in public forums known "Outreach for United Reform" (or OUR). Certainly it's a publicity ploy by the board to remind everyone they should actually hear from citizens first - and belatedly March 15 the media had to report the public wanted a strong full time board.

The game was more clearly exposed in other recent news stories. In one case, the business community and the county executive

called a county audit about who does the real work, supported by supervisors, a "delaying tactic" rather than a much needed clarification.

In other stories, a casual reader would have thought the mayor, the governor and the county executive had done the legwork in announcing a major lakefront gateway project west and south of Summerfest through the Third Ward and down the corridors along the Hoan Bridge.

Aside from a new office building for Northwestern Mutual and the plans for the Couture, the architect's renderings detail expanded roadways, research centers, retail and office projects on long-neglected parking lots - simply put a major economic and development boost without threatening the public trust involved in lakefront parks and resources north of Summerfest.

Yet the media knows that most legwork on such concepts has been evolving through supervisors, data crunchers, administrative committees pushed by the board and community input through forums, along with high-powered stubborn initiatives from independent administrators like Sue Black, who was summarily fired by Abele from leading the parks without his ever offering a clear reason.

It's easier to profile and applaud the visionary financier who outlined the development, Michael Cudahy, but even he knows how much detailed grunt work was involved.

The supervisors over the years have helped do the heavy unpublicized lifting. Now the bigwig politicians with a media push are taking the bows. The county board is largely silent, mainly because they just want things to get done.

But is this a further effort to diminish the genuine value of a strong, sometimes plodding but detail-oriented independent board?

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Full time ideals hidden issue in District 17

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

It's in District 17 of the Milwaukee County Board that many of the vital issues of genuine public service lurk. This April 2 race if nothing else ought to be a cold slap in the face to the West Allis and Greendale community to come back to the real world of effective government - and for union voters, who represent a sizeable portion of those working families, to take a major step to restore sanity and full representation to their lives.

It basically comes down to whether District 17 wants to be part of some cosmetic notion of European austerity or wants to be part of genuine economic growth.

Without realizing it most of those citizens were paying full freight for part-time service, but now they are being lured to pay part-time for what they once paid so much not to have. It is a future vision of public service that can only be stomachable by the already wealthy or those who make their living by other means anyway.

You don't want to call West Allis and Greendale voters unaware because they wasted years paying for full-time service from a supervisor preaching part-time - and living what he was preaching because of private wealth.

Well-dressed, well-spoken and hard right Joe Sanfelippo has long said the community didn't need more than part time representation, though he never moved to return his \$50,000 a year salary. Supervisors who exhaust themselves working for the troubled residents of their diverse districts, north, south,

east and west in the county, said he must be joking, or lacking in understanding public service, in pushing part-time pay for what genuinely should be more than full-time work.

But he could afford to. He spent most of his time counting up his millions at the family taxicab business and investing in real estate, according to recent reports.

Where Sanfelippo is credited with working hard on county business, other than always voting in the minority against forward-looking legislation, was in health transportation. This is government-paid taxi service for the elderly and ill, something cab companies directly benefit from. Now it is no surprise that he is pushing the Madison legislature to pass a law that would strengthen his holdings in the Milwaukee cab business.

He moved on to Madison because an Assembly district (15) expanded outside county borders to include Waukesha and protect whomever ran as a Republican, icing out the voting base of long-term Democratic representative and well respected Tony Staskunas. In Madison, Sanfelippo quickly colluded with state Sen. Alberta Darling, another intrusive conservative voice from outside the county, and even sweet-talked Sen. Lena Taylor through her voucher school enthusiasm, to push for reduction of the county board - and hence, of course, further weaken the Democratic movement that has kept Milwaukee's economy thriving despite the machinations in Madison.

Staskunas, in return, long known as a moderate but a lawyerly worker for the citizenry, has taken his case to the commu-



Why Tony Staskunas deserves robust support for West Allis-Greendale District 17 of the Milwaukee County Board.

nity, believing his vision of public service fits best for County Board District 17, and he is fully endorsed by the labor community. The contrast of his experience and track record ought to be striking to West Allis voters April 2, since he reflects the values of the region as well as the desire for more involvement in county government.

The Sanfelippo forces are putting their support behind a freelance local musician, Tony Anthony (whose actual name is Tom Zoell) largely because he echoes the call to be a part-time supervisor and can try to sell himself as working for less whatever the community is losing through such laziness.

Though supervisors are only paid about \$50,000 a year - less than a city alderman -- most put in 60 hours a week in public hearings, courthouse meetings, neighborhood forums not to mention conversations with constituents. West Allis just hasn't enjoyed the fruits of that.

Since the 18 supervisors are divvied up so that each speaks for about 60,000 county residents, this is a price bargain for the taxpayers (less than a dollar a year per person) that has not been part of the public discussion.

The pushers of the attack on the board think that, in hard economic times, people are so selfishly concerned about their own incomes that they will become like the meanest boss they ever had when it comes to dismissing the value of policy oversight affecting, parks, transit, courts, safety nets and efficient spending.

The big surprise is that the citizens who know otherwise have now organized. They want more representation, not less, and they are hitting the streets to point out that that the county board is one of the best values in government employment and a representative voice of the people - in effect, the local legislative arm for the county, the controllers of the purse that gets far more money from the federal and state governments than from local taxpayers and an equal partner with the executive branch, not a rubber-stamp.

If there is redundancy in regional government - and there assuredly is, something we should work on - it comes from local insistence that every community should have its own municipal hall, mayor and so forth. It comes from a sheriff who does little but strut volumes and has angered most of the real law enforcement experts in the community.

But even desire for local

identity and publicity doesn't mean that each municipality, each neighborhood shouldn't coordinate through the county for regional cooperation on parks, water, hospitals and mental health services, courts and public transportation.

That is the purpose of county government, which also oversees economic, fiscal and even physical growth, protecting public trust agreements and setting standards for public projects construction, judicial practices and more.

The city is still the giant in the county, but even the city needs the county to push regional policies. The people? They need more voices, not fewer.

And if you get a county exec who seems aloof, you need a strong legislative arm to speak out for you.

Yet taxpayers are being lured by the vision that somehow cutting the board will reduce their own kitchen table expenses -- forgetting that better oversight of the money might actually require deeper investment, not some 50% or 70% slash. It's sort of like cutting back on tax collectors without think of the long-term cost of failing to capture billions of dollars in uncollected revenue.

That may be what this election is really about in West Allis. Tony Staskunas, if all things were equal, would normally be a shoo-in. But coverage of the real issues underneath the race is so lacking that voters may be seduced by short-term gains in salary cuts without weighing the full consequences.

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Justice

From Page 1

supported by popular DA John Chisholm and championed by many business leaders and community groups. As a student before becoming a lawyer, her smarts charmed the late Clement Zablocki into hiring her. Then she worked her way through two law schools before racking up an impressive conviction rate as assistant DA. Her endorsements listed at www.janet4judge.com range across the political spectrum.

Walker's pick lacks anywhere near that hands-on experience and shocked interviewers by declaring Clarence Thomas her model justice.

"There is nothing detestable about having a right-wing philosophy," one Protasiewicz supporter told me. "But it is detestable to use political opportunism to push right-wing money to back her campaign rather than ideas and it would be detestable and shocking to Milwaukee values to impose her as a judge. I think Walker just wants a reliable stooge."

In the Roggensack case, also reliant on GOP money, it's campaign strategy to keep to the bare minimum of debates and public TV interviews with her opponent (sometimes not even in the same room at the same time, certainly ducking live telecasts) and spend most of her time in

the protected GOP banquets to make her pitch. (Things went badly the last time she actually mingled with real people at a Voces de la Frontera gala. Story online at milwaukeeelabor.org/in_the_news/article.cfm?n_id=320.)

What are she and the Tea Party worried about? It became clear when they started describing Marquette University law professor Fallone - who actually made his bones listening to all sides and teaching future legal leaders - as "the liberals' candidate." She herself referred to him openly as the "working people's candidate," suggesting he would lean to that side in his decisions.

Usually the next step in this game is to seek out if he ever "chummed around" (an echo of the Palin attack on Obama) with people who once were in trouble with the law, a guilt by association attack that is basically anti-American and says nothing about behavior on the bench. You learn more about that from who justices take money from.

All of which amused Fallone in a recent interview. After all, no one is calling Roggensack what she has clearly become - "the business people's judge." As Fallone suggests, all he wants to be known as is the "people's candidate," willing to listen civilly and fairly to all sides of an issue before making up his mind, which is what he teaches students and what assuredly he lives



Janet Protasiewicz

by, as a long series of his online blogs reveal.

Frankly it is the lack of such listening openly to all sides, instead placing bets with the folks whose money brung you to the table, that explains so much of the bickering and throttling that the court uses to silence opposite views on the bench.

It is this dysfunction that Roggensack's removal can end. That makes April 2 just about the most consequential election Wisconsin faces.

If justices are supposed to be above political corruption, why is so much money associated with right-wing campaigns flooding in to support these candidates? Can the voters be bought? Again?

In his campaign Fallone has doubled down with such hard realities, asking voters just to think. He wants judges to be elected by voters, he has stated. But he also wants the court to overturn what he has appropriately dubbed "The Roggensack Rule" -- the media calls it

Related links: The history of Roggensack's deception - host.madison.com/news/local/writers/steven_elbow/justice-ann-walsh-bradley-unloads-on-david-prosser/article_08cd5a34-7619-11e2-a3cc-0019bb2963f4.html
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"Legalized Bribery" -- that allows uncontrolled big money to dominate judicial campaigns. Roggensack wrote the rule that okayed justices sitting on cases directly involving companies that provided big political donations.

"The issue isn't the public's ability to participate in the elections of justices," he noted. "Voters do that by voting. The issue is whether Supreme Court justices will be perceived as just your common ordinary politician, thought to be willing to dance with the folks whose big money brought them to the ball."

Similarly, Protasiewicz is being encouraged to take off the wraps and let the public see the personal appeal, lawyerly balance and convincing family values that have led her to succeed, not hide behind the platitudes that dominate her opponent's radio interviews. That is why, if her campaign managers can raise enough money to counterattack the right-wing blitz, look for TV commercials for Protasiewicz in this race to emphasize her personality, directness in court and natural compassion for fair treatment.

Such ads were once unusual for a local judicial race but now deemed by insiders as necessary when the Sykes-Belling-JS thumb so tilts the conversation scale to give more space to Bradley and Roggensack than to Protasiewicz and Fallone.

Judges are not exactly Brangelina in terms of celebrity status to drive up public interest. Judicial races just don't have nor should they have that sort of Pitt-Jolie oomph. So they have to work harder to counter incumbency and well-oiled party machinery.

Yet today's extreme right has

become so obsessed with calling Fallone a liberal pawn that they misquote his writings.

When he criticized the US Supreme Court's Citizens United decision as "particularly poorly reasoned decision that has disastrous consequences for our democracy," he agreed that "involuntary money for campaign purposes, in the form of dues" from unions was not health for democracy either. The right has now seized on that as hypocrisy because of the \$40,000 his campaign has raised from unions, but those came from contributions earmarked for political action, hardly a case of "involuntary" money.

The New York Times in a recent editorial called the behavior within our state supreme court "shameful" and picked out Roggensack for showing "astounding disregard for legal ethics and every litigant's right to impartial justice."

Fellow justice Ann Walsh Bradley, after sitting quietly for 18 months to let the justice system work, became disgusted with Roggensack's re-election oriented comments that everything was hunky-dory on the court. So she issued a history of events and pointedly itemized Roggensack's dissembling.

In Branch 45, similar issues of honesty are underway. Protasiewicz told labor delegates that she would love to just discuss accomplishments and future actions on the bench, but feels like "I'm running against the entire Walker campaign machine just to get a fair hearing."

She remains confident that Milwaukee County voters prefer fairness and will hear her out.

-- *Dominique Paul Noth*



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Fever starts now to elect new sheriff in 2014

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

Getting angry and raising money early may be the wave of the political future for citizens who want to fix what's wrong with America.

That's explains why you're going to hear a lot right now - 20 months ahead of the election - from Christopher Moews. He wants to replace David Clarke as Milwaukee County sheriff and he has a tons of company that can hardly wait until November 2014 (a time, you may have also heard, when there's also a governor's race to fix things, though no single candidate has yet emerged as Gov. Walker plummet in all economic polls).

So don't wait to start the energy and moneyball rolling. In that concern, Moews, the highly regarded city police lieutenant, is not waiting around this time. His campaign via media and community events is already raising money and pointing out how Clarke has become the clown of Milwaukee law enforcement.

One factual quote Moews is using extensively in his email campaign comes from Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn, whose forceful presentation galvanized national attention at a Senate congressional hearing on gun legislation. In the inner city, Flynn has a ways to go to reassure residents of the sincerity of his community policing given the callous behavior of some of his hard-bitten officers. Though data problems pre-date his reign, he has clearly made an enemy of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel for forcefully criticizing its shallow reporting.

But the nation woke up to and embraced Flynn's combative common-sense when he talked back to Congress about the need to establish simple background

checks and straw purchase controls. When Sen. Lindsay Graham tried to sidetrack him into whether he prosecutes people who fill out background documents wrong, he refused to play that word trick, pointing out his job is to get criminals off the street not engage in some useless "paper chase."

For that sensible remark embraced by the real professionals in law enforcement around the country, pretender Clarke went into full radio talk mode to criticize Flynn and demand he apologize to assault weapon gunhawk and apparently warhawk Graham.

Here comes the quote - a famous rejoinder from Flynn after Clarke's recent radio tirades: "The data continue to show that no one has more to say about law enforcement in Milwaukee County and less to actually do with it than Sheriff Clarke."

The truth apparently hurt. If anything it seems to have enflamed Clarke into more outrageous statements against other public officials. Steaming over controls on his budget and his distemper toward judges, Clarke now accuses public officials of penis envy and being weaklings on law enforcement, largely because they insist he should start following the rules.

No wonder Moews has had it. "I've served as a police officer for almost 20 years," he said. "I lead a team of detectives that solve and prevent crime every day. My team has the highest clearance rates in the city of Milwaukee for solving violent crime. I'm running as a Democrat because I share the values of the Democratic Party. But I don't think the sheriff should be a partisan office.

"It's just time for David Clarke to go."



Christopher Moews, who brought one of his kids to an MALC event, is shown chatting with Rep. Moore's aide, Shirley Ellis. The Milwaukee police lieutenant is determined to be our next sheriff.

2014 may be just the right time. Clarke was appointed to the sheriff's seat in 2002 by temporary and short-term governor, Scott McCallum, who was promptly defeated and now is shunned like the plague by the GOP.

Clarke immediately proclaimed himself a Democrat, knowing only Democrats could be elected in Milwaukee County, and proceeded to sound Republican and John Birch-ish to raise his profile in our hard-right media environment - radio entertainers Charles Sykes, Mark Belling and more, and quixotic editorial writers at the JS, who know that quoting Clarke is silly

and demeaning to fair play -- but it does sell newspapers.

Moews, who ran strongly against Clarke in 2010 - not a great year for Democratic candidates - may have made one mistake back then. He didn't start early enough yet still came close. Now times have changed and reality is sinking in.

Appointments by political opportunist governors no longer fly in the law enforcement and judicial world (*See Page 1*).

Few now think of Clarke as anything but a national extremist stooge, embarrassing the city and the state. If he tries to run as a Democrat again, there will be outrage. If he runs as a

Republican he could drag Walker down in Milwaukee.

So Moews has already launched a major fund-raising effort to be strongly positioned. "Is everyone else as sick of David Clarke's grandstanding as I am?" he asks in his most recent campaign e-mail. "He presumes to speak for Milwaukee citizens and law enforcement - whom by massive margins agree that we need to strengthen background checks for gun purchases - in his campaign against public safety."

At least Clarke has inadvertently created unity, Moews notes. "There's broad consensus among Republicans and Democrats - among citizens - that we can respect the 2nd Amendment while also giving the police better tools to make our communities safer."

Only Clarke is standing in the way. The election to remove him may not occur until 2014 but the campaign is already hot and heavy, report Friends of Chris Moews, which has set up an address for volunteers: Chris Moews for Sheriff, 5027 W North Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53208. A major fund-raiser for his campaign is scheduled at 5 p.m. Monday May 6 at Gus' Mexican Cantina, 6520 South Lovers Lane Rd., Franklin.



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Strange bedfellows loosely outline immigration reform policy

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

Strange bedfellows climbed under the same covers Feb. 21 - agreeing on central issues of comprehensive immigration reform:

American workers should have a first crack at available jobs but businesses should be able to hire "foreign workers without having to go through a cumbersome and inefficient process."

And the US needs to make its immigration system more transparent and "build a base of knowledge using real-world data about labor markets and demographics."

It dumfounded think-tanks such as the Economic Policy Institute that long pushed the same ideas. Delighted with the statement of principles from the US Chamber of Commerce and the National AFL-CIO, the EPI particularly embraced "the notion of using real world data to determine the future flow of employment-based immigrants and temporary foreign workers. These important decisions should be based on facts, not assertions or myths."

The Chamber is not nearly as big and clearly not as politically inclusive as the AFL-CIO, which has welcomed worker rights centers, such as Wisconsin's Voces de la Frontera, all pushing for the Dream Act.

But there was sweeping agreement on the shape and purpose of guest worker programs.

What's going on here? This is something like "The Miracle Worker," the dramatization of a blind, deaf, mute and stubborn child named Helen Keller. Her frustrated teacher, whom Keller refused to deal with directly, had to employ a third party to trace the correct spelling on the young Helen's hand, waiting for the dawn of realization and real education to begin.

These strange bedfellows are in effect being used to trace the right language on the palms of obstructionist politicians who refuse to touch Obama's flesh. The Chamber, long a fund-raising ideological mouthpiece for the right, is expected to help the blind hold out their hands for tracing.

Normally the only place the AFL-CIO and the US Chamber

can be found cheek to jowl is the email in-box. I receive separate come-ons from both.

I enjoy the AFL-CIO news, along with policy comments from President Richard Trumka, because they're detailed, sometimes quite basic, sometimes quite progressive. A labor federation is only supposed to be working on behalf of its existing union members, but the AFL-CIO always reaches out beyond trumpeting its own members, which it surely does. It understands how collective power affects not just those in unions but all employees, so the AFL-CIO speaks to divisiveness that impacts all workers. Its 11 million members plus affiliates also support the business community, since unions don't create jobs (though they always get calls from people begging for work).

No wonder the AFL-CIO blogs have become intellectual, economically focused and socially provocative while seeking to pound people into grassroots action, with mixed success.

But at least the federation is not schizophrenic, which can't be said of the US Chamber, which has long claimed to speak for

three million businesses but only has 300,000 official members. I've been following the vagaries for more than two decades. It was an evolution to being a pawn of transnational plutocrats. The public is only now catching on to the change. Unless you read the email blasts you may not detect how they speak for an ever narrowing sliver and their fiscal austerity advice is rejected by thinking business gurus.

The AFL-CIO may have been goaded a bit into expanding its horizons but today it speaks for the diversity of the working community. The Chamber typically does not reflect the same diversity for the business community. There is a range it doesn't truly address - entrepreneurs, businesses ethical on the environment, technological risk-takers, startups sharing neighborhood development, smaller companies itching to grow.

Typical of the mixed messaging was the email blast about the sequester from senior VP for public relations Rob Engstrom in which the chamber admitted that wholesale unthinking cuts (supported by the GOP majority in the House) were appalling but then felt compelled to add that increasing government revenue was even more shameful.

The giveaway: "Even though they just finished raising taxes, they are coming back for more of your hard earned money." The "your" is weird. Nothing in the Obama proposal to raise revenue -- eliminating tax loopholes such as corporate welfare to oil and gas companies, balancing policies for companies offshoring jobs, fixing the tax code to

level the playing field for startups -- truly affect "you" unless "your hard-earned money" is invested in hoarded accounts or hedge funds.

A shame, really, since the AFL-CIO needs sound business minds to create jobs, not some Chamber of Regressive Horrors. And that may be starting - a forced foray into common sense.

It reflects the loosening framework for bipartisan accord being developed in Congress.

But the Chamber never agreed to pushing a path to citizenship. Yes, fix the system, it said, but never addressed the obvious --- that visa programs without speeding a pathway to citizenship will never fly with either the immigration community or the American people. It is also flat absurd to expect families that have been working hard in the country for more than a decade to wait another 20 years in some artificial line before they become full citizens.

After early decades of reluctance because of some xenophobic unions, the AFL-CIO has actually embraced this principle of a road to citizenship. Yet that is not spelled out in the joint agreement. It won many details thank to the sternness of Trumka in negotiations but it couldn't push the Chamber to mention aloud the path to legalization.

AFL-CIO leaders quickly reached inside the statement to note that nothing is more urgent than "the legalization of the 11 million undocumented workers in the US. We are fighting for that and a potential roadmap to address it."



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Why Walker is all wrong on education policies

By Benjamin Rifkin

Special to Labor Press

Why does a guy who works in New Jersey care about Governor Scott Walker's plans to defund the liberal arts in Wisconsin's public colleges and universities?

I lived in Wisconsin for 15 years, while serving on the faculty of the UW-Madison. My wife's and my children were born there and I count among my dearest friends both colleagues and neighbors with whom I shared picnics and play-dates, little league and soccer games and parent-teacher nights. Even though I live in the land of the Eagles, in our family we are Packer fans. I care deeply about what happens in Wisconsin.

I was very disappointed to read about Walker's plan to make significant changes to state funding for education in Wisconsin. Walker said a number of things about education, including this:

In higher education, that means not only degrees, but are young people getting degrees in jobs that are open and needed today, not just the jobs that the universities want to give us, or degrees that people want to give us?

This approach is all wrong. And it's wrong for four fundamentally important reasons:

First, the "Walker Plan for Higher Education" seems to be premised on increasing the efficiency of the pipeline from higher education to the economy. But the assumption that the state can predict which programs of study would be most beneficial for the state's economy is false, as demonstrated by some spectacular counter-examples.

It might seem that the study of medieval history and philosophy would not be a good start for someone who might contribute a lot to the economy. But Carly Fiorina, one of the most important women in American business today, majored in (you guessed it) medieval history and philosophy. Indeed, many chief executive officers for some of the most successful companies were liberal arts majors including history (John Loose of Corning and Sam Palmisano of IBM), sociology (Bradbury Anderson of Best Buy), philosophy (Carl Icahn of just about everything, but also currently a major stakeholder in Netflix), economics (Meg Whitman of Hewlett Packard and Donald Trump of, well, Donald Trump), and Asian studies (Sue Krosnick of Federated Department Stores).

And it's not just business leaders who majored in the liberal arts: many leaders in government did, including Supreme Court justices on both the right and the left: Elena Kagan, John Roberts, Antonin Scalia and Sonia Sotomayor all majored in history. Indeed, there is no cor-

relation between one's college major and the career that unfolds throughout one's life.

Second, the Walker Plan is wrong philosophically. Governor Walker's political party has emphasized its opposition to allowing the government to "pick winners and losers," rather than allowing the free market to do so. But if a state agency is charged with selecting the academic programs for which students would be eligible for state funding, the state would be picking "winners and losers" in higher education.

This is reminiscent of a Soviet model of education in which the state paid for students' education and then assigned graduates to their first jobs. Walker has identified neither the state agency that might be charged with the task of identifying the programs eligible for funding, nor the criteria by which the selection would be made. I wonder how these choices would be made and if those making them would have the critical thinking and problem solving skills necessary to make wise decisions when confronted with complex datasets.

I wonder if the study of Arabic and Pashto, which are now critically important for those conducting our country's foreign policy, would have seemed worthy of funding in Wisconsin in the year 2000. Of course, we have no federal university to address such decisions on a federal basis: all our public institutions of higher education are state-based institutions.

Looking back is easy, but I wonder who Governor Walker



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will tap to predict what Wisconsin's and our nation's strategic needs will be 20 years from now, because if you decide to fund a university program now, you should be prepared to spend 20 years building up the expertise and strength to achieve excellence.

Third, Governor Walker's proposal will not help students, as he suggests, but rather will hurt them. As a college dean, I have seen far too many students miserable because they are majoring in a course of study for which they have no intellectual passion only because their parents believe that program is linked to a well-paying career. These students do poorly in their courses and ultimately are unable to garner strong letters of recommendation from their faculty. Students who major in programs for which they have great passion get higher grades and establish better relationships with their faculty

Guest Column

mentors. They find it easier to move forward from graduation to a job or post-graduate study - even if their degree might seem less related to the immediate job marketplace - because they have a record of success in college.

But fourth, and most importantly, I object to Walker's proposal because it is derived from a fundamentally flawed understanding of the purpose of the liberal arts in higher education. We are not training students for a job. We are training students for a lifetime of jobs, for a career, for their best job, by providing them with an education that emphasizes the development of critical thinking about challenging and complex problems, creative problem solving, effective communication in speech and writing, ethical reasoning and compassion, the ability to work with diverse partners, use technology wisely, and participate fully in our American democracy.

Some experts predict that today's young people will change jobs more than a dozen times during the course of their working lives and that many of those job changes will be career changes.

We faculty are focused on teaching our students not facts that they can memorize and regurgitate (facts that may be outdated ten years from now), but skills they can use to analyze an ever-changing array of data, construct sound arguments on the basis of those data, and communicate those arguments effectively in

speech and writing to diverse audiences.

Walker is not alone in his views. Governor McRory (R-NC) is opposed to courses on gender studies and Swahili, Governor Scott (R-FL) is opposed to anthropology, and there are others who seek short-sighted solutions to complex problems to save money in the short term by destroying world class universities it will take decades to rebuild.

It is clear to me as an educator that my students go on to a broad range of jobs. Indeed, data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (staffed, most likely, by individuals with degrees in the liberal arts) paint a very clear picture with statistics and detailed studies.

People with college degrees are more likely to get a job, keep it even in a downturn, and earn more money than people without college degrees; they therefore pay more in taxes (supporting the national economy) than people without college degrees.

For all these reasons, I oppose Walker's plan and urge my friends in Wisconsin to reject this and similar plans.

And if your son or daughter comes home from college and tells you that he or she wants to major in philosophy, don't worry. Your child could be the next Matt Groening. He seems to have done okay. For a philosophy major.



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Despite Wayne La Laughable, gun households drop sharply

March finally brought some statistical clarity to the misconceptions about America's fascination with guns. In point of fact, gun households are shrinking remarkably.

While some research shows there are more guns owned in this country than there are people - some 300 million, a figure that the National Rifle Association has used to suggest that any effort to further limit or license guns is facing an enemy so large as to guarantee failure - factual research demonstrates that this ownership is far more about fewer avid believers stockpiling.

The number of American households that reflect gun ownership has actually fallen over four decades from nearly 50% of US households to about one-third. It is, even more startling, a reduction across regions despite the constant harping that western and rural America is different than urban life. It is across churchgoing households and non, homes with children and homes without.

The research is quite convincing. It stems from the core standard data profiling of GSS (General Social Survey) as well as the respected John Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research (funded with Bloomberg money to be sure but valued as a neutral fact assembler at John Hopkins University).

Beyond that the drop is not just in eastern households, where gun households remain unchanged at around 22%, but in states such as New Mexico, Wyoming and Montana typically treated as gun states. But households with guns have dropped to under 40%.

"There are all these claims that gun ownership is going through the roof," noted Daniel Webster in the New York Times. The director of the Hopkins research center cited many reasons for the reverse. The end of the draft after Vietnam cut into gun awareness. The demand for hunting has dropped. "The increase in gun sales has been limited mostly to current gun owners."

The NRA worked hard to prevent detailed data on gun ownership, thinking data is too scarce for certainty. But some states reported household gun ownership rates in the 1990s and in the early 2000s guns at home were part of a broad federal public health survey in all states.

The NRA lobbyist successfully blocked continuing that data but there remains enough, researchers say, to make these new figures compelling.

Fletcher keynotes state inequity forum

The Wisconsin Labor History Society's 32nd annual conference will address both income and racial inequality and how, until the recent horror of Madison goose-stepping to the right, the state's history is full of efforts to overcome both. That's why the April theme is "Fighting Inequality: A Wisconsin Tradition" - at least it once was when Wisconsin was truly a laboratory of good ideas.

Recent history tells us this is an annual labor conference dangerous for the media to overlook.

In 2012 it was where "As Goes Janesville," the working documentary, first showed clips of Gov. Scott Walker telling a billionaire supporter how getting rid of collective bargaining for state employed working people was only the opening salvo of his "divide and conquer" to first destroy public sector unions and then go after private unions to emasculate worker voting power in Wisconsin. It took the establishment media, local and national, weeks to wake up to what the workers were already buzzing about.

That moment last April became prelude to the current growing reality of what is truly behind Walker's schematics and why he is already in trouble with the voters. It wasn't just Obama and the state's clear statewide turn to the Democrats. It was the sort of Walker mendacity that this conference a year ago helped set in concrete.

This year's session could also make news and takes place right in the GOP wheelhouse of Waukesha. It will be held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Saturday, April 20, at Machinists Local 1377 Hall, 1726 S. West Ave., Waukesha.

Keynote speaker is a notable union organizing figure and author who has spoken here and around the nation - Bill Fletcher Jr., whose recent book, "They're Bankrupting Us and 20 Other Myths About Unions," has been favorably reviewed. He began as a rank and file member of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of America and later moved on to key staff positions in several



Noted author and labor leader Bill Fletcher Jr. will keynote the conference on "Fighting Inequality."

unions, including as onetime director of education for the AFL-CIO. He is known for his knowledge of Wisconsin history.

There are several other speakers and events. A leading figure from COWS, associate director Laura Dresser of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, will address the income gaps in the state. Sheila Cochran, chief operating officer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and a civil rights activist, will moderate a panel on "Inequality and Diversity in Labor's Struggles."

The conference will also honor high school, college and graduate students for research on labor issues.

The \$30 conference day has discounts to \$10 for students and the unemployed. Main organizer and sponsor, the Wisconsin Labor History Society, is dedicated to preserving and telling the stories of workers and their unions in Wisconsin.

The society is endorsed by the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society.

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