



## The war at home

As the names of the fallen were read, coffins representing Wisconsin's dead in Iraq were carried to Downtown's federal courthouse March 18. See photos on Page 12 for more on the passionate "Get Out Now" rally so many unions supported on the third anniversary of the US invasion.

## Fondest farewells

Rep. Gwen Moore (far right) joined the retirement best wishes for CWA veteran Mary Jo Avery. Story on Page 11.



AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE

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(USPS 350-360)

## May summit tackles our poverty pimps

**M**ilwaukee: The Hidden Katrina. The title is provocative. The May 6 event itself is likely to cause fireworks.

This will not be the customary look at poverty in Milwaukee, the sponsors promise. Along with the real stories and emerging help for those who live this poverty, the Saturday forum will take on the "poverty pimps" of the nation's 7th most impoverished city, the surprising assortment of individuals (and groups) who have turned the poor into their personal multi-million dollar profit center and industry. Yet somehow the community itself has benefited little from all this infusion of poverty programs and taxpayer money.

Milwaukee as a Katrina in waiting is likely to prove a headline-making topic, but this is not the first time the African American Labor & Community Summit has tackled difficult issues with candor.

This, the fourth annual gathering sponsored by the Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO, is still taking final shape but it already involves a broad range of participants, from rap artists to inner city workers to a panel of influential media people.

Past summits have combined emotional first-person accounts and valuable mentoring. They have drawn notable names and people who decided after the summit to run for public office -- and win.

Save the date and information: Saturday, May 6, 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. (continental breakfast at 8:30 a.m.). The Laborers Local 113 Union Hall, 6310 W. Appleton. Attendance \$15 (includes meals).

Contact Annie Wacker, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, at (414) 771-9830 (also annieafl-cio@sbcglobal.net) or Sheila Cochran, MCLC secretary-treasurer, at (414) 771-7070 (also afl-ciosc@execpc.com).



Angry at being labeled felons and aliens, Latino families gathered 500 strong at Mitchell Park on March 4 to support a series of massive Milwaukee protests. Related photos on Page 5.

## Heat is on early for elections

**T**he Milwaukee labor council's COPE committee met in February and March.

Its counterpart at the Wisconsin AFL-CIO consulted on and evaluated some statewide candidates even earlier.

And yet they were still weeks behind the first ads, excessive postures and political counter-charges flying around the fall elections.

What a strange slow-fast season in politics!

There is abysmally low interest in the spring election cycle, with only one contested Milwaukee County-wide contest, and that's for a judge. See Page 8 for the COPE endorsement.

The November ballot is not **Elections** continued Page 8

## AFL-CIO out front in immigration debate

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

**A**clarion, uncompromising outline of the principles that must underlie immigration reform was issued in March by the national AFL-CIO.

The resolution from the largest federation speaking for American workers took a tougher stance than many of the immigration-reform groups it works with.

It was a blunt and eloquent statement in an era when the AFL-CIO's executive council has sometimes tried to thread the concerns of scores of unions on difficult issues. But there was no reluctant support here for the lesser of legislative evils. The executive council offered unflinching, pinpoint clarity about the basic meaning of our "nation of immigrants."

It reminded Americans of the equality and human rights inher-

ent in our founding and insisted on a vision beyond the current climate of fear -- and also beyond any of the three conflicting bills now in the US Senate

Among the leading points the AFL-CIO is making:

- We are a nation of residents, not "guests."
- All workers in the US should have the same standards of protection for their safety and rights.

• For the undocumented and their families already here, who have worked hard and paid their taxes, any reform must provide a path to permanent residency.

• Any "guest worker program" modeled on the past is bad public policy and operates to the detriment of all workers, native-born as well as foreign.

• Any solution to the crisis must address why people are coming here in the first place --

and not force underground even those who intend to go back.

**I**n taking this stand, and then offering a framework to repair an immigration system that all sides agree is badly broken, the AFL-CIO will be pushing Congress to move past even the bill that many immigration groups find the most sensible, the McCain-Kennedy Secure America and Orderly Immigration Act.

But while that bill offers a partial path to legalization, it is married to the "outdated guest worker programs," said AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Linda

Chavez-Thompson, who has taken the lead in pushing the executive council's concern.

"To embrace the expansion of temporary guest-worker programs is to embrace the creation of an undemocratic, two-tiered society," said Chavez-Thompson.

"There is absolutely no good reason why any immigrant who comes to this country prepared to work, to pay taxes, and to abide by our laws and rules should be relegated to this repressive, second-class guest-worker status," she said.

"When there is a real need **Reform** continued Page 4

# TRCP hunts for major union support, and reels it in

So, just who are these worker-friendly folks who set up a "two tickets for the price of one" for anyone showing a union card March 14 at the busy Journal Sentinel Sports Show at State Fair Park?

They are the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP), a non-profit grassroots organization formed six years ago as an umbrella coalition (now with 1,400 affiliates) working for hunting, fishing and conservation issues.

Eighteen unions are already partners and sponsors, involving both international unions and locals. They range from AFSCME to the Steelworkers to IAMAW and to virtually every union in the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades division. In fact, the AFL-CIO leader of that unit, Ed Sullivan, sits on the TRCP board.

Unions already involved, with more joining, represent some 6 million workers, at least 4 million of whom hunt and/or fish. The unions through 2006 will have provided TRCP with more than \$1 million of sponsorship and organizational support.

Among the issues TRCP works on are open access, habitat and wildlife conservation, funding for state fish and wildlife management and general conservation. It also showcases quality hunting and fishing locations and techniques.



A special two-for-one day at the Journal Sentinel Sports Show lured a gaggle of union members. Among them: IBEW Local 494's Tim Hanson, director of business development, and his wife Vicky (at left), along with a boatload of grandchildren.

The unions are already a lead sponsor for "Life in the Open," the outdoor show featured on cable's Outdoor Living Network (OLN was added to Milwaukee's Time Warner channels back in 2003). In 2007, TRCP will add "Wildest Dreams" to the OLN lineup — that will be a "100%" union show featuring union members in the outdoors, reports Jim Klatt, National Grassroots

Coordinator for the TRCP.

The group also met last month with presidents of 13 international unions to discuss setting up a union-only outdoor club.

Unions formally affiliated with TRCP's mission in 2004 for considerable mutual advantage. First, union members are active hunters and fishers. They want to promote those interests without being dragged into side issues

involving guns or political image. The unions also partner with environmental groups and have shown concern over conservation, how best to preserve and protect the nation's fish and wildlife.

The unions and their 10,000 locals actively participating in TRCP have many ways — magazines, newsletters, websites — to get out information on best practices and where the hunting and fishing is good but also properly maintained.

For the TRCP this was a large and largely untapped "conservation constituency" without previous formal relationship with conservation organizations. TRCP is providing information and welcoming feedback from union members as it works on conservation initia-

tives, not only with Congress and the federal administration but with agency land managers.

You can learn more at [www.trcp.org](http://www.trcp.org). Unions and locals who want to get involved can call Klatt at his Minnesota office, (952) 933-5939.

## The best food (drive) in town

It is the nation's largest one-day food drive. In Milwaukee, Hunger Task Force relies on this union action to carry its food banks through the summer. And it's easy on the citizens because the volunteers come right to your front door to pick up donations.

On Saturday, May 13, the 14th such annual drive by the National Association of Letter Carriers will add mightily to the half billion pounds of food the drive has collected in 13 years. In Milwaukee, Branch 2 workers of the NALC will deliver the morning mail, look for bags of nonperishable goods the residents have set aside and return on their own time, with trucks and cars, to pick up the groceries, take them to central locations such as Hunger Task Force and start the separation and storage process.

The power of this drive, which will take place in 10,000 cities and towns across the US, cannot be overestimated, and the need has increased.

Once again, corporate sponsors and the Family Circus cartoons created by Bill Keane will be signaled in newspapers around the nation, along with special bags that are not required but are nice in which to place the items for the needy.

Think of this drive when you do your shopping and plan nonperishable items to give on May 13.

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# How to spark an energy bill across partisan divide

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

*Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.*

— Dick Cheney, 2001

That was one of our vice president's many foot-in-mouth moments. Fortunately, even in a GOP-dominated Wisconsin legislature, only one person shared such a pre-Darwin view of science and capitalism.

That 19<sup>th</sup> century throw-back, Milwaukee area Sen. Tom Reynolds, was the sole vote against an energy efficiency and renewable energy bill that Jim Doyle signed with flourishes and thanks March 17.

The bill grew out of not only the governor's bipartisan energy task force but also a national 10-point initiative called the Apollo Alliance, a coalition of labor, business and environmental and community groups.

It's the hard-work step-by-step approach to energy independence and economic common

## Why we remember

Willie D. Ellis revived a ritual for the delegate meetings when he became president of the Milwaukee County Labor Council last year. It is a moment of silence and reflection for all the labor friends and comrades who are ill or have recently passed away.

On March 1, in Ellis' absence, Vice President Annie Wacker took up the custom and pointed out that this ritual would have personal meaning for Ellis. A tragic mishap had cost his family a beloved relative familiar to the labor community: Ellis' brother-in-law, Edward L. Roundtree Jr., age 53, a union member for 25 years and the father of six children who gave him 12 grandchildren.

For 25 years Roundtree had been a city bus driver, part of ATU Local 998.

sense. And it sure emphasizes conservation (which Cheney might want to check in the dictionary — from the root "conservative": planned management of natural resources).

The few media stories about SB 459 have focused on solar panels and wind turbines, setting a modest goal of a 10% commitment to electricity generation through such methods by 2015.

But even more immediately it creates jobs while still saving money in energy use, potentially brings back to Wisconsin billions in energy cost drains and launches a streetlight by streetlight, building by building approach to how consumers and business can save money.

It's the small things that mount up — ending leaks and inefficiencies in air conditioning, inserting "green technology" in buildings to capture and recycle energy and water loss, stemming the waste in personal and business use of electricity and heating.

This is a far cry from Cheney's secret meetings with Enron bosses and oil tycoons, which excluded environmental advocates. It's a far cry from plotting how to drill in wildlife refuges, pushing nuclear plants and, reportedly, spreading maps of Iraqi oil fields on the table years before the invasion.

It is also a far-cry from the recent ethanol debate where neither party was in agreement on the actual value of gasoline mandates and energy savings in production.

SB 459, however, was based on undeniable science, hard statistics and pragmatic benefits. Reynolds' lone view that fossil fuels were the way to go was scoffed at by his own party, which has seen the escalating costs associated with our slavish reliance on imported fuels.

More businesses everyday have joined organized labor's commitment to the approach. It's not charismatic or headline-making, but the Wisconsin bill pushes rules, procedures and commitment to numerous efficiency pro-



Phil Neuenfeldt

grams and supports the training and use of manufacturing workers to reduce industrial energy costs and develop new technologies.

The bill creates jobs quickly in the building trades. It also guarantees that money set aside for such purposes cannot be borrowed — or stolen — by the legislature to cover overruns in other programs.

Two of the labor leaders who helped push the bill have also pointed out that this is one area where jobs will actually be created and still reduce the cost of energy use for business and consumers.

Phil Neuenfeldt, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin AFL-CIO, and Forrest Ceel, president of IBEW Local 2150, noted that such energy-efficiency commitments in 2004 added 1,000 jobs in Wisconsin. It's also high time, they told the

labor community in urging support for the bill, "we stop sending our energy dollars out of state and create economic opportunities for Wisconsin workers."

They cited government figures that \$6 billion is sent out of state and overseas every year to fuel Wisconsin's energy needs.

The Apollo Alliance, setting a national goal for energy efficiency and US fuel independence, has used its knowledge to help create and support this bill. They have also helped establish an efficiency program at UW-Madison.

While conjuring up the image of the ancient sun god, the Apollo Alliance is actually named for America's original space program — a symbol of what our nation can do if it makes a real commitment to the future.

And it, too, embraces conservation as a national policy. Apollo's 10-point plan calls for a lot more than investment in alternative energy sources and hybrid cars. It focuses heavily on the pragmatic benefits of more efficient factories and household appliances, high-performance energy-saving buildings, modernized electricity grids and transportation systems — and a sound protection of natural resources and ecological balance. (You can learn more at [www.apolloalliance.org](http://www.apolloalliance.org))

The Nation's veteran national affairs correspondent praised the plan and its strategy.

"As an organizing device the Apollo concept has worked brilliantly," wrote William Greider in January. "Some 21 labor unions and the AFL-CIO, 19 environmental organizations and 58 business leaders have signed on, along with civil rights and equal-justice groups that recognize that retrofitting buildings and other projects can bring good jobs back to inner cities."

Greider also took a hard look at the impact of global warming and "the constant pollution that has thus far accompanied our industrial society." He fears that America "has lost sight of its future" and that society must take "responsibility for what we make and consume."

If we do, Greider and other experts note, we can actually benefit our economy by producing millions of jobs. Harkening back to our foray into space exploration, Greider said, "Overcoming the ecological threat could become this generation's Apollo Project."

The Wisconsin bill is a real step up to the problem and toward a solution. It also seems a self-evident road to the future.

Except to a few old political fossils.

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# Reform

From Page 1

for foreign workers, we should embrace these workers not as 'guests' but as full members of society -- as permanent residents with full rights and full mobility that greedy employers may not exploit."

Politicians, too, have been busy exploiting the Fear of the Foreign.

To this point the bills that have gotten the most attention want to build an expensive fence, deport the 11.5 million workers here, turn civil violations into felonies and similarly punish these immigrants' children and their supporters.

The worst of this legislative lot, shamefully, is a Wisconsin lawmaker, James Sensenbrenner, chairman of the House judiciary committee. Last December, he pushed his House GOP majority to pass the Border Protection, Anti-Terrorism and Illegal Immigration Control Act. The Senate is seeking to amend it, rather than trashing it as it deserves.

It would criminalize undocumented workers and their children, and criminalize even those churches, lawyers and social agencies seeking to aid the undocumented.

It would make it harder, not easier, for long-term undocumented workers to become citizens, and it would penalize state and local governments that do not become immigration enforcers, currently the duty of federal agencies. It would eliminate a visa program for 50,000 people and it would spend more than \$2 billion to build 700 miles of new fence



along the 2,000-mile border with Mexico.

"I want to pray for all the representatives . . . and the president of the United States, because they have become atheists -- because if they were Christians they would not pass this kind of law," said a Catholic priest from Virginia, Father Jose Hoyos, at a March rally near the White House.

Indeed, the anger over such legislative attitudes has galvanized the immigrant community and their supporters throughout America as never before.

On March 4, on a muggy cold afternoon, drawn simply by hand-made fliers, Latino families some 500 strong crowded Milwaukee's Mitchell Park for a Voces de la Frontera rally protesting the legalistic maneuvers, including the Wisconsin ones that would take away driver licenses and deny food and emergency medical care to children.

A week later in Chicago, an unprecedented 100,000 protesters marched. Businesses closed their shops to let their Latino workers

join the protest. Illinois' governor, Chicago's mayor and key federal and state legislators spoke in support.

After Labor Press deadlines, more action got underway in Milwaukee. See box below and photos opposite page.

All these events are seeking to push facts and humanity against a reprehensible wave of fear and cultural distrust.

There have been waves of such immigration fears before in the American psyche. The people who voluntarily put roots down here have in the past turned against others seeking such roots. Over the centuries such attitudes have hit the English, Irish, Jewish, Eastern European emigration; then Chinese, Japanese, then Africa, South America and on and on.

The people comfortably here, it seems, are not as fervent believers in the American dream as the people trying to get here -- or the immigrants already here trying to climb out of the pit that global economic indifference has placed them in.

The ancestors of the established elite, if we care to remember, sneaked through the entry fence by any means necessary. And while African Americans were forced here as slaves, their organizations recognize that current immigrant hatred and fear aims mainly at workers of color, so they have embraced the immigration protest as a new civil rights concern.

Past tempests of immigration worries have typically been calmed by time, economic need and legislative action, including the bipartisan amnesty in the Reagan years.

But today's established citizens have responded to globalization, 9/11 and their own economic uncertainties not with thoughtful response or accurate memory but with panic, false patriotism and, yes, even prejudice that cripple their natural empathy and response.

As Chicago business owners pointed out at the March 11 rally, most undocumented workers are not just hard workers but also often the entrepreneurs who create new jobs in our society. The repressive laws working through Congress would not only cost us the billions in taxes the undocumented workers pay but will set back many of the emerging jobs

# Guest worker?

## Not with US track record as a host

There are elected officials who believe the notorious post-World War II "braceros" guest worker programs are a corruption from the past. The AFL-CIO's Linda Chavez-Thompson forcefully disagrees. Indisputable documented evidence of widespread abuse continues to mount up.

The US Labor Department, hardly a liberal bastion these days, has said that the poultry industry -- half immigrant and half African America -- is "100% out of compliance with federal wage and hour laws." Similar abuses exist in such fields as hospitality, agriculture, health care, construction and the garment industry. The threat of intimidation, arrest and deportation hangs over these workers and is used by employers to keep them in line. Meanwhile, the wages and rights of native-born workers are also dragged down by the situation.

"The legacy of exploitation and abuse continues to thrive in contemporary American society through modern guest worker program," said Chavez-Thompson.

"Our nation's leaders continue to push for the same old hollow policies that if enacted will only drive immigrants further into the shadows of American society while allowing employers to depress labor protections and standards for all workers within our borders."



Linda Chavez-Thompson

and businesses that rely on these workers.

No one is happy with the Mexican border situation -- certainly not the Mexicans, since thousands have died wandering the desert or boiled inside trucks.

Certainly not the AFL-CIO, whose resolution decries the system as "a blueprint for exploitation of workers, feeding a multi-million dollar criminal enterprise at the US-Mexican border."

Certainly not federal and state officials, who for decades have poured money and guards into an enterprise without much impact.

Focusing on border security, rather than addressing the global forces that drive desperate workers to our borders, rather than attacking the American drug users who help make illegal traffic so potent (that's the other "war," the war on drugs, we haven't won), hasn't worked.

In fact, says the Pew Hispanic Center, a highly respected research organization, the emphasis on security alone has made the problem worse and may have even pushed the US to its record 11.5 million illegal immigrants.

"The security has done more to keep people from going back to Mexico than it has to keep them from coming in," said Pew senior researcher Jeffrey Passel. The research estimated that 850,000 immigrants have entered the US illegally since President Bush took office in 2000, but that also means that more than 90% of the undocumented have been in this country for years.

That gives resonance to Republican Sen. John McCain's

scuffing at a rival Senate bill that wants to deport all the workers now in America.

"To say that they're going to come out of the shadows and say 'Send me back to Guatemala. I've been living in Phoenix for 50 years,' borders on fantasy," said McCain.

Conservative commentator David Brooks has been equally mocking of the security-only approach, criticizing the "beer-swilling good old boys" of the border Minuteman as not understanding that "we're not going to get this situation under control until we understand this paradox: The more we simply crack down, the more disorder we get."

But the AFL-CIO, looking deeper at history, disagrees with McCain and Brooks' belief in a guest-worker program built on the failed models of the past.

Just as the exclusive focus on border fences is an invitation to billions of dollars more in government failure, so is any program that provides a steady stream of vulnerable, indentured workers subject to the whim of American companies that can pull the plug anytime they feel like it.

Says the AFL-CIO resolution: "What immigrant workers need is a real path to legalization and a method for addressing America's future needs for outside labor in a way that guarantees immigrant workers -- and thus all workers -- full rights and a real voice on the job."

"As a nation that prides itself on fair treatment and equality, we simply cannot settle for anything less."

# Rallying for real reform

An outpouring of immigration protest and discussions of how to address the bills in the US Congress were taking place after Labor Press deadlines. Among the events:

At 10 a.m. Thursday, March 23, Voces de la Frontera organized a march against discrimination, routed from its headquarters at 1027 S. 5th St. across the 6th St. bridge to Downtown.

Milwaukeeans with good memory should recognize the march as an intentional direct reversal of the 1960s Groppi marches to push open housing when the near South Side was overwhelmingly white, not Latino. Voces de la Frontera leader Christine Neumann-Ortiz calls it a fitting symbol for "the greatest civil rights movement since that time."

The title of the march, "A Day Without Latinos," did more than remind residents how much they rely on immigrant workers. More than 150 companies pledged to close their doors or operate with skeleton staffs to allow participation in the march.

That event will be followed by two gatherings involving major public officials plus labor, immigration and legal groups. The Milwaukee County Labor Council is one of sponsors of these intense double-headers.

An open free community forum on immigration rights will unfold from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, March 28, at San Adalberto Catholic Church, 1923 W. Becher St. The entire community is welcome.

On Wednesday, March 29, from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., experts will gather to explore legislation and tactics to create better understanding of the character of undocumented workers, who now represent 1 in 20 of the US workforce.

Called the Great Lakes Immigrant Workers Strategy Session, it will be held at the Regional Council of Carpenters headquarters in Pewaukee (N25-W23055 Paul Rd.). The fees for the session range from \$5 for low-wage workers to \$25 for nonprofits and union participants.



### Official Notice

**A**roving ballot box at Joy Global (formerly Harnischfeger) will be the central mechanism for election of officers and grievance committee members by United Steel Workers of America Local 1114 on Tuesday, April 25.

The USW local's office at 4621 W. National Ave., West Allis, will also be open from 5 a.m. to 5 p.m. to accommodate union members not able to vote in the shop.

Geno DaRonco  
President

**N**ominations for various offices of IBEW Local 715 (Wisconsin Broadcast Engineers, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) will be made at a two-part Thursday, May 4, meeting (1 p.m. or 6:30 p.m.), held at 633 S. Hawley Road, Yatchak Hall-West.

The elections themselves will be held during a similar two-part meeting Thursday, June 1, with polls open 1-2 p.m. and again 7-8 p.m.

Except for executive board seats, a majority of votes cast is needed to win. If a runoff is needed it will be held June 22, also a Thursday. Check the Local 715 newsletter for absentee ballot provisions.

Candidates will be nominated for the following offices:  
President, Business Manager and Financial Secretary and Delegate to the International Convention.  
Vice President & Executive Board member.  
Recording Secretary & Executive Board member.  
Treasurer.  
Alternate Delegate to the International Convention (1 seat).  
Executive Board (5 positions to be filled).

Christopher J. Albrecht  
President, Business Manager  
& Financial Secretary



### Citizen outrage

**E**very TV news light in the city focused on the labor, business, public and religious leaders who sped to the City Hall rotunda March 20 in response to calls from Sheila Cochran and the Latino community.

With Cochran as emcee and final speaker, the leaders pressed attention to the "Day Without Latinos" march and the "new slavery" forced as a centerpiece of congressional debate by House passage of the Sensenbrenner Bill.

**ABOVE LEFT:** As Supervisor Peggy West listened, MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Cochran spelled out for the media the daily oppression already faced by Latino workers who have no legal recourse. Mayor Tom Barrett spoke in support of the



march. Supervisor James White was quickly seconded by West and MPS board member Jennifer Morales when he warned that defiance would meet any law that made felons of children or groups that helped the undocumented.

**ABOVE:** The main force behind the march, Christine Neumann-Ortiz of Voces de la Frontera, was supported by such fellow speakers as Father Bill Brennan of MICAH and Maria Monreal-Cameron, CEO of Milwaukee's Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.



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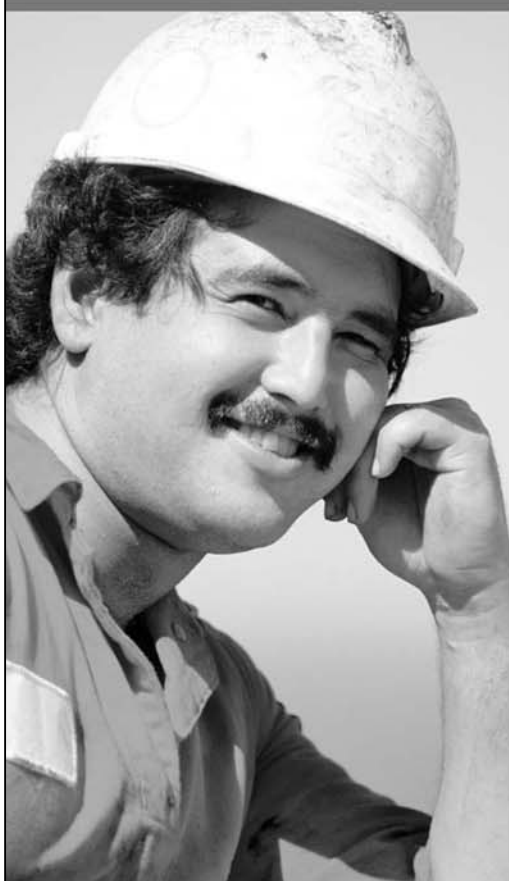


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# Nurses of many unions unite for organizing power

By Candice Owley  
Special to Labor Press

Eight AFL-CIO unions, often seen as competitors, representing 200,000 registered nurses, will work together on bargaining, organizing, policy and communications. The new alliance of RN unions is calling itself **RNs Working Together**.

The nurse unionists are banding to coordinate their organizing and bargaining activities in an effort to improve patient care nationally and give nurses a strong voice in fixing a health care system that is dangerously broken. The Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals will be an active participant in the coalition and as president I will serve on the leadership committee.

The **RNs Working Together** coalition will help our members be more effective in our fight for quality care and quality working conditions. It is about time that the nurses of the AFL-CIO band together in soli-



Owley is president of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals, chair of AFT Healthcare and a vice president of the American Federation of Teachers. She also serves on the executive board of the Milwaukee County Labor Council, publisher of the Labor Press

arity for the good of all nurses.

For years nurses from all over the country have pursued similar agendas both at the bargaining table and in the legislature, yet because they were in a dozen different unions they had no way to coordinate their activi-

ty. The new coalition will provide that vehicle.

Cheryl L. Johnson, President of the United American Nurses, an affiliate of both the AFL-CIO and the American Nurses Association, explained one reason why the RNs are joining across unions to take collective action: "We can't count on hospitals to do the right thing, but we can count on each other."

**RNs Working Together** is being formed to deal with nurses' workplace problems, like understaffing and issues of patient care quality, but also to prepare for a possible decision by the National Labor Relations Board that could cripple nurses' union rights.

The NLRB is considering whether nurses who occasionally oversee others or are in charge of their nursing units are technically supervisors. Such as ruling could lead to employer challenges of whether such nurses should be included in the union and covered by the contract.

That would threaten current bargaining units and severely interfere with new organizing. Concern about the pending ruling was significantly increased after President Bush used his authority to appoint blatantly anti-worker members to the NLRB.

We will not tolerate a ruling by the NLRB that would strip us of rights that have protected patients, as well as nurses, for over 30 years.

Now 200,000 nurses will be sending the message loud and clear that we are the voice of nurses, we are the advocates for patients, and we will not allow anyone to silence us.

The new coalition was accepted as the first AFL-CIO Industry Coordinating

Committee (ICC) to be formed since the concept was approved by AFL-CIO delegates last summer at the federation convention. The creation of ICCs was seen as a way to bring unions together in an industry, occupation or region to develop common strategies and practices.

ICC's that are formed according to a plan set out by the AFL-CIO will receive organizing protections as well as assistance from the federation. AFL-CIO unions outside the ICC would be prohibited from organizing within the jurisdiction of the ICC -- in this case, RNs.

Two other ICCs are in the works and close to launch. One will coordinate unions in Arts, Entertainment and Media. The other will do the same for State and Local Government.

## Union coffee percolates local's charity



They sold a lot of coffee -- and still are.

**LEFT:** In a quiet ceremony at UAW headquarters in Oak Creek on March 16, the union committee presented an oversized check (accompanied by a real check) for \$1,000 to Sojourner's community educator, Debra Fields (center). Pictured with her are (from left) Local 438 workers (and apparently super salespeople) Gladys Morgan, Mary Land (committee chair), Hazel Frazier and Pat Moreland.

Sojourner Truth House will also be a beneficiary as all the Milwaukee unions get together starting now for the annual AFL-CIO Health and Hygiene Drive, concluding in early June.

It's not unusual but it's still notable. Without publicity or fanfare, union workers respond to a cause and get together to raise money for people in trouble.

Consider the women's committee of Local 438. They might seem to have enough on their minds, given the anxiety United Auto Workers is going through with Delphi's bankruptcy and take-away threats. Nevertheless they found a way to get fellow members to buy a

union-made product and help out Sojourner Truth House in its efforts to serve as a haven and healer for homeless and battered women and their children.

The product was union coffee (www.shopusacoffee.com), purchased by the committee in personalized gold-bag bunches and sold for \$2 an individual packet and \$6 for an 8-ounce bag. Anywhere from 75 cents to \$1.25 of each sale was set aside for charity.

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## Carroll endorsed for April 4

The April 4 ballot suggests electing a judge is serious long-term business. Of all the Milwaukee Circuit Court branches, none of the incumbents face opposition. Only an open seat where an incumbent is not running, Branch 39, offers a choice on the ballot.

Meeting in February, the COPE members of the Milwaukee County Labor Council found the endorsement decision quite easy. Only one candidate interviewed, Jane Carroll, showed the chops, the credentials and carried a proven reputation for balance, toughness and intimate knowledge of the courtroom process.

She is a UW law graduate, married to an Episcopalian priest, Kevin Carroll of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, mother of two. For more than 18 years she has served as an assistant district attorney in Milwaukee, handling thousands of cases (juvenile, drug, felony, appellate) and now is a specialist in the sensitive crime unit, concentrating on child abuse and sexual assault. In that job, she is credited with combining a passion for justice with a concern for healing broken families. Last May, the Wisconsin District Attorney's Association named her Prosecutor of the Year.

She has the support of her recent boss, retiring DA Michael McCann, of Rep. Gwen Moore and of virtually every accomplished judge in the county. Now she has organized labor's vote, too. COPE's endorsement was approved roundly by the MCLC March 1, after which Carroll entered the meeting room at Serb Hall to thank the delegates.

On ability she should be a shoo-in, but the lack of competition in other races could have a damaging impact on voter turnout April 4. Carroll says she needs to galvanize her voters and urged the labor community to get their members to the polls.



Jane Carroll

## Elections

From Page 1

finalized, since not all candidates have even been announced and the primary runoffs are shaping into fierce battles all their own.

But November could bring watershed change in national as well as state offices. So both sides are vaulting right past the April 4 ballot, flailing around with largely trivial wedge issues that are meant to deflect the electorate from genuine issues, caring principles and actual competence.

Every poll suggests that the electorate is uneasy about the nation's current direction. The uncertainty might seem like an advantage for wedge issue cynics. The simple theory is that the public is so flummoxed about how to march to a better future that it can be diverted from clear thinking by triviality, sideshows and in some cases out and out falsehoods.

The ads clearly don't believe in a public that thinks, that researches, that asks questions. They want a society stamped by sound-bites.

More civic groups, such as the labor community, prefer a rational approach that reflects the concepts of democracy -- talking to members, then asking candi-

dates for answers, then bringing candidates in for open discussion, and then deciding who best reflects your principles and has the ability to carry us into a better future. This process leads not just to endorsement but to money, volunteers, foot power and determination at the polls.

The labor community has long been good at all that, but behind the scenes for months it has actually been doing more than that.

On its own through COPE (Committee on Political Education) and in partnership with a range of community groups, it's been talking to voters and actually seeking out individuals who will make good public servants, challenging all political parties to think about the key issues and the detailed legislation that will better the lives of working families and communities. Immigration policy, education, fiscal legislation, poverty, privatization, retirees, worker laws -- all are in the mix.

More candidate endorsements and events will unfold from the MCLC over the next few months. The state AFL-CIO handles statewide offices but listens hard to what its regional

councils say about their legislative and executive elections. The state's COPE has already made recommendations in some key races and it, too, will be heeding the results of interviews and recommendations from the MCLC.

The AFL-CIO has also announced that this is so crucial a year in righting the ship of state that it will devote \$40 million nationally to this year's elections.

Wisconsin's share of that will support the Labor 2006 campaign starting this summer. Participants and volunteers affiliated with the Milwaukee County Labor Council and/or the state AFL-CIO will support labor's unified choices and key issues through emails, phone calls and personal visits to union members and their families.

No individual voter can change the world overnight. But voters together can change a neighborhood, a community. They can bring improvement step by step, door by door.

That's Labor 2006 - and those who want to take part can call the MCLC at 414-771-7070 or the state AFL-CIO field mobilizer, Sue Ledbetter, (414) 476-2896. --

*Dominique Paul Noth*

## Bowling

### MCLC MIXED SENIOR BOWLING

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8 BALLS	95	80
GUTTER RATS	93	82
LABORER'S 113	92	83
SLAMMERS	81	94
CRAZY 8's	67	108

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 510	
SAM SAMUELSON	631
BOB WAGNER	620
DAN LAACK	611
WAYNE FRANZEN	603
DON WIEDMANN	584
DEL GROSS	570
GEORGE BARAK	550

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 510	
ELMER HELM	540
WALLY GEISE	511

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 200	
SAM SAMUELSON	256
DEL GROSS	244
BOB WAGNER	237
DON WIEDMANN	223
DAN LAACK	222
WAYNE FRANZEN	221
ELMER HELM	220
GEORGE BARAK	209

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400	
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	499
LAVERNE WERNER	410

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175	
LAVERNE WERNER	181
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	176

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# UWM grad teachers learn to make a deal – and wait

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That, in terms of wages, is the situation facing the master and doctoral candidates who are core teachers relied upon in the University of Wisconsin system.

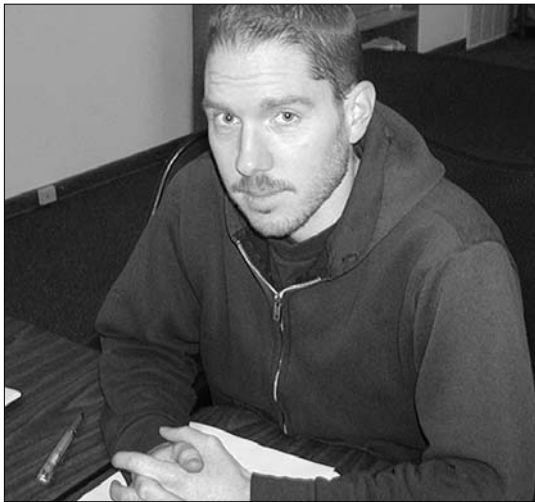
In Milwaukee, some 800 graduate assistants negotiated their first good contract of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Credit unprecedented action and involvement across the spectrum of UWM graduate assistants, who for the last three months have focused hard on a better contract.

Now, for them and their counterparts at UW-Madison, the agreement doesn't happen until the legislators vote on it. Gov. Jim Doyle is apparently on board but the other hurdles are the legislative Joint Committee on State Employee Relations and then a full vote by the Assembly and Senate.

So the deal is on hold waiting to see whether the Madison legislators will stay in session to act on it, rather than take a spring break.

As master or doctoral candidates, the TAs (teaching assistants) are frequently the nation's future full time professors. They teach up to six courses a semester. They can serve as crucial aides, researchers, seminar runners and graders for professors – while seeking to complete their own higher education.

There is a wage formula based on whether the graduate assistant is pursuing a master's, a doctorate or is just a dissertation shy of a doctorate. Pay goes up by level of educational pursuit and by teaching load. But in the university system, the busiest among



Brian Rothgery led a very involved bargaining team

the teaching assistants are still regarded as 50-percenters at best in terms of pay.

Their union, Local 2169, American Federation of Teachers, has negotiated a tuition waiver and family health care benefit for them, but actual money to live on while teaching has been a wrangle for more than a decade.

One concern is raising the base level of pay at which a 33% or 50% rate is figured.

This time out, negotiations at the UWM campus were not the customary long hard slog of the past. Bargaining was "conducted in a very positive, productive atmosphere, taking only two days," said Brian Rothgery, the local's vice president for bargaining.

The result is a far better level of subsistence, with the pay figures from which the wages are figured rising \$1,500 to \$2,000 over the two-year contract. Translating that into actual increases, the pay would now range from

\$7,322 a year for the lowest-tier members to \$15,290 for the highest tier with the heaviest teaching load.

The new contract would give the graduate assistants a 2% raise retroactive to September of 2005 and then an actual 5% increase of pay in July. The union members conceded to a premium increase in health care cost (that translates into roughly \$2 to \$5 more a month depending on situation and category, the union says).

There will also be either a 1% or 2% wage increase in April of 2007, depending on state action. (The AFT local has a "me-too" clause that means some future contract terms are affected by how the state negotiates with its AFSCME employees.)

"One major improvement we won is a step increase and a new pay class for master's students with one year of teaching experience," said Rothgery.

"Since master's students make up a large portion of our membership (roughly two-thirds) this is a significant improvement."

In an overwhelmingly favorable ratification vote, members of Local 2169 approved what had been bargained in late February with the university.

The actual money amounts may not sound like much to outsiders.

But for most TAs it means giving up or cutting back on secondary jobs, many minimum

wage, they currently need to survive. Or having some money for child care or to pay for parking near the UWM campus. The basics of life are indeed that hard given the existing pay level.

Still, any improvement in their lives is at the mercy of state elected officials. Both the Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO and the state AFL-CIO have pledged to put pressure on the state legislature to do its job. The graduate students are clearly doing theirs.

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# Longevity at Ladish

## 6-year contract a quiet signal of global respect for US union skills

A six-year contract with a 17% increase in wages over its life is fairly rare in manufacturing and certainly unprecedented at Ladish Co.

It's also pretty good. In an overwhelming 85% ratification vote, the largest union at the Cudahy-based company approved the deal February 26, replacing a three-year contract.

Understandably, coverage of such contracts focuses on what the workers get. Perhaps it should focus on what the company is getting. Like the Ladish deal, several recent union contracts by manufacturers based in Milwaukee have been long term, particularly for those companies with an international clientele.

It's been true at Joy Global, recording record profits for its massive mining machinery, a company that has also made a long-term commitment to its steelworkers (USW Local 1444).

Union workers have quietly become a major selling point, a testament to the stability as well as the quality and productivity linked to the products. More and more, ensuring the long-term presence of its US workers and plants has proved a global marketing come-on, though not one typically

reflected in company press releases.

But for the 232 machinists of Local 1862 (IAMAW), the deal certainly reflected Ladish's reliance on and commitment to its skilled Milwaukee workforce, at a company that does half its business overseas.

The contract also included some unusual commitments to refreshing that workforce.

"In the past, I felt the company was dragging its feet on apprentice programs," said Robert Hoeft, chairman of the local's bargaining committee. "But not this time."

The union, dominated by veteran machinists, has been eager to see a company commitment to attracting new blood without playing the low-wage game of tiered salaries (which discourage young workers from ever reaching the family-supporting pay levels of longtime workers).

But this contract includes just such incentives. There is an agreement that reimburses apprentices that complete the program and stick with Ladish. For instance, in a four-year apprentice program, the company will kick in an extra \$4,800 for each year upon suc-

cessful conclusion.

Hoeft says the union negotiators were quite cautious about the idea of a long six-year contract when talks began in December. "We told the company the numbers had to be there at the start, that we weren't getting into the game of exchanging (contract offer) language," he said.

"Sure enough, we went right to the meat and potatoes."

The 17% increase in wages over the life of the contract is well ahead of the recent pace of inflation. It also gives the workers a chance to plan out their lives, from home improvements to children's education.

It also took the local out of the three-year seesaw game common over the last decade in manufacturing and industry. "In the past if we negotiated a three-year contract with 3% yearly raises, you knew a company would come back the next time with 1%, 2% raises," said Hoeft.

Before the contract went into effect, Ladish machinists averaged \$20 an hour, Hoeft said. He also pointed to the stabilization of health costs for employees: For the six-year life of the contract, work-er contributions cap at 18% a year, an incentive for both the company

and the employees to cooperate in keeping health costs down.

The company will also kick in more money for the pension plan and make more flexible a 5% wage dividend program.

The company has five other union negotiations on the table for 2006 - including the die-sinkers unit of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (Lodge DS-140), 120 boilermakers, electricians, office workers (OPEIU) and engineers. In all there are seven unionized workforces at the Wisconsin facilities.

Ladish Co. was founded in 1905 and remains headquartered in Cudahy while it also has presence in Oregon and Connecticut, as well as in Europe (Poland). It is a specialist producer of highly engineered, technically advanced components for the aerospace and

general industrial markets and recently signed long-term agreements with major customers such as Rolls-Royce and General Electric for jet engine forgings.

It reported \$266.8 million of sales in 2005 with a net profit of \$13.7 million, a 265% gain over the previous year. In February, the company reported contract backlogs of more than \$450 million.

A week after reaching a new contract with the machinists, Ladish also announced it was purchasing and installing in Cudahy a third gigantic isothermal forging press, used in making components for jet engines.

The third such forging press would allow the company to "take full advantage of the . . . expertise of our Wisconsin work force," said Kerry Woody, Ladish's CEO and president.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

### Calendar

#### Wednesday, March 29

Executive Board Meeting  
Milwaukee County Labor Council  
3 p.m., MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Rd.

#### Tuesday, April 4

Spring General Election -- BE SURE TO VOTE!

#### Wednesday, April 5

Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO Delegates  
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

#### Friday, April 28

WORKERS DAY MEMORIAL  
5 p.m., Zeidler Union Square Park  
Downtown, 4th and Michigan

#### Wednesday, April 26

Executive Board Meeting  
Milwaukee County Labor Council  
3 p.m., MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Rd.



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# Can't let go of Mary Jo

Along with a list of leadership roles and honors that could fill this newspaper, Mary Jo Avery is often called "the voice of Milwaukee labor" — and her friends are only partly jesting.

On the streets and in the halls, Avery's voice has been a distinctive and always upbeat rallying cry, setting the cadence for group chants and keeping the spirits up for thousands of workers at hundreds of events over the last several decades.

It's not just the voice but the heart and good humor. Her energy and clarity of purpose have inspired not just her own union, the Communications Workers of America, but civil rights, political and combined union events.

It's reached the point that, if a rally seems to sag in electricity, participants turn around and ask, "Where's Mary Jo?"

Still, don't be misled. Avery always seems to have a smile and a hug for people, but when she hears about abuse of a worker, or a struggle to finalize a contract, or a case of bias in a community, there's suddenly a stubborn glint in her eye and the smile lines in her face narrow to grim determination. Her reputation to speak up, to fight, is as known as the vocal energy she lends to causes.

That unflagging commitment

was one reason why even at her retirement party — accompanied by Mayor Tom Barrett's proclamation that March 3 was "Mary Jo Avery Day" — her colleagues made it clear that Avery's conscience and voice were hardly departing the Milwaukee community.

"Everyone still wants a piece of Mary Jo," laughs her admiring colleague, CWA organizer Joy Roberts.

"She's not going anywhere," adds longtime friend and colleague Sheila D. Cochran, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO, where Avery continues to serve on the executive board.

Cochran is not the only community leader who already has plans for how Mary Jo can keep her distinctive presence felt. Oh, they'll give her time to put her feet up and enjoy her four grown children, all in the Milwaukee area, plus grandchildren and even great-grandchildren.

But Avery has made it clear that her formal retirement from work-life and local office has hardly diminished her enthusiasm for the causes of workers and civil rights. She is also deeply involved in mentoring children and intends to speak out on minority issues and political campaigns for quite some time.



Dancing the retirement party away are (from left) Rep. Barbara Toles, Sheila Cochran, retiree Mary Jo Avery, Carole Simmons, Stanthia Grier, DiAnn Wagner and Anita Johnson. — Photos by Don Roberts

She also has served since 1995 as the president of the A. Philip Randolph Institute (APRI) Milwaukee chapter

In an outpouring of tributes at the Comfort Zone, 5526 W. Fond du Lac Ave., her union colleagues, friends and public officials reminded the packed house that it was far more than bubbly personality and spontaneous humor that draw people to Avery. The most frequent word applied was the "respect" she engendered, her ability to quiet a room with her deep feelings and common sense.

Her colleagues also spoke of her natural ability as a teacher, person by person, on union issues and solidarity. Privately they also spoke of her toughness as an organizer and negotiator, of her ability to shame businesses and colleagues into doing the right thing, of how she cheerfully gave up the spotlight due her if it better served her CWA members.

Avery was president of CWA Local 4600 and led the difficult process of merging with Local 4603 in 2000, taking the role of vice president in the new unified unit. She continued to be asked to take the lead on many political and legislative issues, noted George Walls, president of Local 4603. "She is truly a union builder and an inspiration," said Walls.

Along with various leadership roles in the CWA she was a loaned executive for the United Way campaign, a from-the-get-go member of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists and an activist for the Wisconsin Women's Network, the NAACP and other civic groups.

Avery's family was deeply involved in organizing her retirement celebration — though any hope of making it a surprise quickly dissipated. "You can't sneak anything by Mary Jo," said a relative.

Public officials needed little

prompting to join the party. She has been a key part of local, state and national campaigns as far back as Jimmy Carter and as far forward as Tom Barrett and Rep. Gwen Moore. Avery has also represented labor at last year's meetings of the Black Congressional Caucus in D.C.

— Dominique Paul Noth

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Longtime CWA colleagues Joy Roberts and Mary Jo Avery at the retirement party.

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# Human cost, human cries against war

**LEFT:** Labor unions marched from SEIU Local 1 headquarters blocks away to join the March 18 Downtown lakefront rally against the war. Along with the strong labor contingent and signs, some 400 other Americans gathered on the unhappy third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

**BELOW:** A soldier who had been there, Wisconsin's Jason Moon, vividly brought home the avoidable deaths of children and civilians, asking the listeners if they would forgive such acts against their own children. His images

touched the crowd and also the other speakers clustered at right: State AFL-CIO President David Newby (blue jacket), US Rep. Gwen Moore and, next to her, peace activist George Martin, who had undergone open-heart surgery just days before.

**BELOW LEFT:** Flowers representing fallen US soldiers were laid on the steps of the federal courthouse by families and children as a concluding memory. The universal sentiment of all there was **DON'T LET THERE BE A FOURTH ANNIVERSARY.**



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# Dying on the job -- at home, too

To understand the importance of Friday, April 28, you need only recall recent headlines. Just the domestic ones.

Local teen crushed on the job.

Wisconsin highway workers killed by careening vehicle.

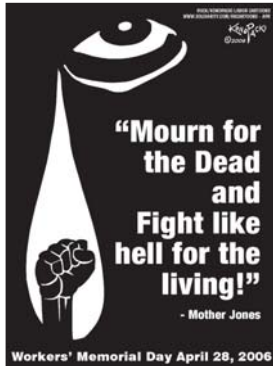
74 coal miners die in North American tragedies.

Collapsing dirt wall suffocates worker.

It does seem there have been more news stories like this of late.

Yet so many injuries and fatalities on the job could be avoided with better safety training, more concern from employers and serious inspection and anticipation.

That's why the annual Workers Memorial Day carries growing significance, and the sponsors this year are planning some surprises.



One thing every union can do is arrange a big turnout, not just for the April 28 ceremony but in making sure members sport the memorial ribbon.

The embossed black ribbons (23 cents each) along with stickers urging safe jobs are available right now for locals and individuals through the Milwaukee

County Labor Council, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, (414) 771-7070.

As in the past, workers and public officials will gather at 5 p.m. that Friday in the union's own Downtown park, Zeidler Union Square at 4th and Michigan. The established memorial activities include a reading by several workers of all the names of Wisconsin workers killed on the job in 2005.

A Mexican-themed dinner with special guests follows at the nearby American Postal Workers Hall, 417 N. 3rd St.

WisCOSH, the state's non-profit volunteer organization for worker safety and information, is the main sponsor along with the AFL-CIO (which supports remembrances around the nation) and the MCLC.

Help cut down the headlines by making sure you "Mourn for the Dead, Fight for the Living."

**Special Event Union Community Activist Network**

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