



## JS twisting MPS coverage

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

I've been complaining for years that education coverage by my old employer, the Journal Company, has been myopic and misguided, the classic case of the blind man feeling the elephant and thinking it's a snake.

All that became crystal clear to the public March 7 in a column by Alan Borsuk suggesting eliminating a health insurance choice could save the Milwaukee Public Schools \$47 million or what he figures would be 450 teaching jobs if that was how the schools used the money (which never happens).

These savings numbers aren't right either, but they sound good in a headline and reflect the statistical mind game the community has been subjected to in the newspaper. This time there was a moving personal touch.

Borsuk is a longtime colleague I often admired, particularly when he defied marching orders from city editors in previous decades, though not so much as obedient education reporter. He recently left Journal Sentinel (though hired to do columns) to work for Marquette University as a senior fellow.

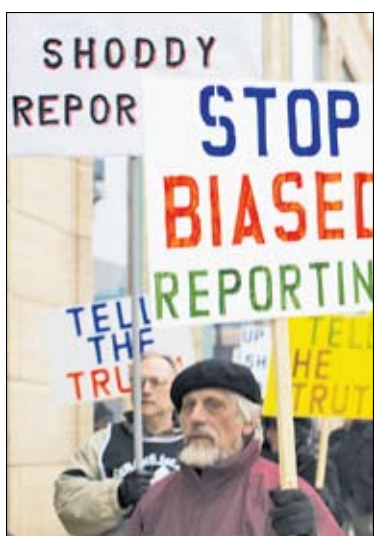
But let's not have any jokes about leaving one ivory tower for another. After all, I was also a voluntary departure from the Journal - in 1995. We shared the newsroom for decades when I was both columnist and a senior editor.

Borsuk was talking in his March 7 column about the MPS choice between a Preferred Provider plan (Aetna) with more doctors and mobility and an HMO limited to its own physicians and services at about \$7,000 less a year.

His married daughter is insured through her MPS husband's HMO. Faced with a rare illness, she got good health care at less cost to her family than if she had been in Aetna, the Borsuk column suggests.

For a decade after I left the Journal, my only family health plan included four children. It was through my wife who was a Milwaukee Teachers Education

## Comment



Protest circles 4th & State.

Association (union) member, but we took the Aetna option because one child had an illness even rarer than Borsuk's daughter -- Williams Syndrome, requiring an artificial valve in her heart. If we had taken the HMO we would have lost the cardiologist who supervised that operation and still monitors her monthly blood levels and life-long medication. Unlike Borsuk's son-in-law and family, we would have had to abandon trusted expertise in the HMO.

My old colleague Alan seems to abstracts from his personal experience (something we see a lot of in education coverage) that the lower-cost HMO is where the Aetna MPS members

**Bias continued Page 4**

## Labor weighs in on community issues

The Milwaukee Area Labor Council is always an active player on community fronts, but that involvement will pick up in this busy legislative and election year -- and it notably already has over the past month.

Sheila Cochran, the council's chief operating officer and secretary-treasurer, was invited by the Fourth Street Forum to be one of the expert panelists in prime time educational TV to explore the reasons and ways out for a middle class crushed by economic stagnation. One of Cochran's points was that this may seem new to some other sectors of the economy but has been a devastating reality for years in the labor community. She joined academics, consumer

# The trains of Spain

## Fall mainly to our city's job resurgence

Beyond its promise to build in the first state that bought its trains, why did the Spanish manufacturer Talgo specifically pick the decaying Tower Automotive (A.O.Smith) site for its first major US assembly and maintenance center?

There is evocative history of renewal in the choice since thousands of Milwaukeeans can trace a family supporting paycheck and secure lifestyle to this 30th St. Corridor, as it was known. But the area has been in desperate disrepair and businesses don't make such choices out of nostalgia. So what gives?

In careful all-business English, Talgo President and CEO Antonio Perez ticked off the reasons at a March 2 press conference at the nearby massive Department of Public Works facility that anchors the efforts to revitalize the corridor.

Perez's first sets of reasons were all about transportation -- Milwaukee as a hub even before it assembles new trains, begins using the \$810 million federal stimulus to build a high speed Milwaukee to Madison line, and fully frees funds for the KRM to Chicago.



As Rep. Gwen Moore listens, CEO Antonio Perez explains his vision for building Talgo trains in Milwaukee.

He noted the covered working railroad spur next to the central building the city will help refurbish at 28th and Townsend. Milwaukee has an underused shipping port, a thriving new Amtrak station, a growing airport, a modernized Marquette Interchange and a proven ability to keep the streets open and operating in all sorts of weather.

It also has a track record of willing and skilled workers - and given unemployment a populous hungry to get back to work. Talgo will help return

Milwaukee to being thought of as the machine shop of the nation, noted another speaker, Rep. Gwen Moore, who grew up in a city that thrived on its industrial crafts.

From June to September, Talgo will be making the final choice in the 125 jobs (split between assembly and maintenance) it is already recruiting for its city plant. Another 450 jobs for Midwest companies providing equipment, supplies and services are also assured.

But interestingly, as he ran down the analytic reasons for choosing Tower, Perez emphasized future expansion into the American market. "We believe that the Tower site will allow us not only to deliver the train sets on time and with our high standards of quality, but it will also allow for future growth," he said.

Gov. Doyle, another speaker, noted that growth is already beyond expectations. The ball started rolling when the state committed \$47 million for two 14-car Talgo train sets for the Milwaukee to Chicago Hiawatha line. The \$810 million for Milwaukee to Madison, with speeds climbing to 113 mph and key consumer and plant stops along the way, will likely bring two more 14-car sets.

Then the state of Oregon, which already uses and likes Talgo trains, stepped in, announcing the Milwaukee plant will assemble two passenger train sets of 13-cars each it will purchase from Talgo for \$36.6 million. By pooling costs with a Milwaukee facility, Oregon will

experts and a manufacturing CEO on the panel.

On March 1, in a major kickoff of the 2010 Census project at the Italian Community Center, Cochran was invited as one of the community leaders to speak to the importance of every member of the community filling out the census form that arrives in the mail and follow up if needed in the official phone calls and personal visits.

Mayor Tom Barrett and

other speakers reminded the community that low urban response in 2000 resulted in less representation in Congress and less funds for basic services and projects supported here by the federal government. Every missed resident translates into \$12,000 lost over 10 years, "and each of us is worth at least that," Rep. Gwen Moore teased the crowd. Speakers for minority

**MALC continued Page 2**



Sheila Cochran shares a 4th St. Forum with former JS business columnist Avrum Lank and GenMet CEO Eric Isbister (center).

**Trains continued Page 4**

# MALC

From Page 1

communities, business and Cochran reminded Milwaukee to not get cheated this time around and recognize that information gathered is protected across the board on privacy issues - it can't be used by apartment owners, immigration, law enforcement or even the president of the United States.

Throughout April and May, the MALC will be leading the community in reflecting on its real needs as well as hitting the bricks in support of progress. A round of protests organized by the AFL-CIO and experts in green technology will be providing flyers on such fronts as better behavior by the nation's financial institutes and putting new effort and new sus-



Cochran with speakers Rep. Gwen Moore, Mayor Tom Barrett and Common Council President Willie Hines at the census event.

tainable employment behind green technology.

On April 17 representatives of labor and constituency groups will be among those explaining community projects and focus within Milwaukee. Those continuing efforts are a centerpiece of the eighth annual African American Labor & Community Summit held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. that Saturday (including lunch and breakfast) at Laborers Local 113 Union Hall, 6310 W. Appleton Ave.

Sponsored by MALC, the summit is called "I Shall Not Be Moved (And I Will Achieve a Better Life and Job)" - and this year encourages all unions to join the presentations and celebration. A vital labor movement and economic justice are imperative for an improved society.

Special sponsorships are possible through Labor Community@Work, the tax-exempt nonprofit arm of the council, and registration can be made through Jay Reinke, (414) 771-9828 or jayafclio@sbcglobal.net. Fees for the full event are \$15 regular, \$10 for students.

The MALC is also a sponsor of a special dinner and APRI fund-raiser, "Keeping Our Dream Alive," with food, music, cards and raffle to benefit the Milwaukee chapter of the A. Phillip Randolph Institute.

This special Friday Fish Fry (\$15 dine-in includes dinner and two beverage tickets, with carry-out also available at \$10) will be held from 5:30 to 11 p.m. April 30 at the Laborers Hall. For info, call (414) 397-9464.

## Our new face

The new activist around the Milwaukee Area Labor Council offices is Jenisee Volpintesta, the service area organizer for the Milwaukee Area. The unanimous choice of the MALC executive board, she will be paid by the state AFL-CIO and under the charge of Sheila Cochran in supporting labor concerns and campaigns.

Volpintesta took over the duties February 9 and will have an office at the labor council headquarters at 633 S. Hawley Rd. She immediately plunged into campaigns for more jobs and community action. She is available for consulting by email and phone, jvolpintesta@wisafclio.org and (262) 364-6751.

She will also help run the Milwaukee leg of a major training effort in organizing open to all union officers, stewards and activists in a meeting room next to the council's office.

Jenisee Volpintesta at March delegate meeting



The political training workshop will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, April 16, sponsored by the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO. All materials (including the 2010 AFL-CIO Political Activist Guide), lunch and refreshments are free of charge, but make sure of seating in advance with Volpintesta or the state AFL-CIO, (414) 771-0700.

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## Choices April 6 election

AFCME's PEOPLE and the Milwaukee Area Labor Council's ACOPE (political evaluation systems) have combined recommendations in the April 6 election for voters in Cudahy and Greendale, who are already receiving mailers.

In Cudahy, the labor groups are backing the re-election of **Ryan McCue** who has served as mayor for three years. McCue is actually well known through the county since he earlier served as a Milwaukee County supervisor. As Cudahy incumbent he proved a willingness to hear out all constituents in making decisions.



Ryan McCue

For Greendale village trustee, labor is throwing its weight behind **Noelle Joers-Yanisch**, who brings special tools to the race, including having gone through the candidate preparation and political training efforts of Emerge Wisconsin -- www.emergewi.org. Joers-Yanisch has worked for decades in business and nonprofit management and development and recently earned an MBA from Alverno College.

All union members are encouraged to fulfill their obligations and citizens and vote in their local races April 6.

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# AirTran pilots plan union welcome

A meeting with labor council officers and community service staff was one of the early steps of the AirTran crews organizing the first Milwaukee based locals for the airline --- some 60 pilots and 30 flight attendants already moving into the region to be domiciled and work out of Mitchell Field as their airline establishes a stronger anchorage in the region.

These are the initial numbers of an airline with 1,700 pilots, previously best known for its Atlanta base but anxious to increase its local identity and presence at Mitchell. To that end, the pilots, including unit organizers Anthony Chilla and Daren T. Black, are laying the groundwork for an April 7 welcome party for the pilots and flight attendants and any family members setting up here. Detailed plans are unfolding.

The AFL-CIO liaisons attached to the MALC staff agreed to actively introduces AirTran crews around the labor community. The pilots are setting up a union office in one of the concourses at Mitchell. In terms of passenger activity the airport is enjoying its busiest quarter in years.

There's certainly more competition for the air fares. Southwest has moved in. AirTran has stepped up as has the Delta-US Airways combine, which brings enormous size.

Meanwhile, Republic is dropping its Midwest brand and exploring doing the same with Frontier by seeking a universal label. The new name would reflect the elimination of its headquarters here. The job growth Republic promised months ago has not yet materialized and Republic has only put together half of the 800 jobs it envisioned by mainly moving workers here as a counter to the 2,000 or so Midwest positions lost over the last few years.

But even here Republic is being sued, such as by Teamsters mechanics being moved to Milwaukee where they would be categorized as non-union employees, which has prompted their union to turn to the courts.

Without such headline sticker shock, AirTran has seen increased growth -- one reason the pilots welcome the idea of a Milwaukee base. AirTran will also hold its annual meeting in Milwaukee in May. The push for local growth and presence



Representing AirTran's pilot union, Daren Black and Anthony Chilla plan an April 7 welcome with MALC's Sheila Cochran.

matches a push by the crews for AirTran management to work toward better union relations and recognition. That's a big selling point in Milwaukee. A unionized status pitched in its ads helped Southwest when it entered the field and would counter AirTran's PR issues after a prolonged fight with the old Midwest. In the current economy a company that emphasizes people living in the community with good rights and treatment of its employees will be applauded.

Both the AirTran pilots and flight attendants represent unions familiar to the MALC, which once had them as active affiliates. In fact, the MALC was supportive of the earliest campaigns of the Midwest pilots and flight attendants. The AirTran pilots are also members of ALPA (The Air Line Pilots Association) and the flight attendants are AFA-CWA. The current Midwest, with only the name painted on the side of planes as its main connection to the old Midwest, has taken in a handful of the former pilots and flight attendants, who would now be Teamsters. But those original Midwest units are still fighting for coordinated seniority lists that reflect their seniority and lost rights, and there is effort to get Republic to re-affiliate.

The AirTran Milwaukee units are only one part of fresh union activity surrounding Mitchell Field. Regulatory changes are underway that look to make union activity easier nationwide, and could effect the barriers to union status and effectiveness. Mitchell will see considerable activity as the American Federation of Government Employees continues an effective national campaign to orga-

nize the 10,000 Transportation Security Officers (TSOs) working for the Transportation Security Administration. Many of those workers have signed up with AFGE despite rules imposed by the Bush administration that prevent active collective bargaining. Despite some hold-outs in Congress who have blocked administration appointments, there is confidence that this logjam will soon be broken.

So look for signs of that AFGE campaign taking root in Milwaukee along with the AirTran union awareness effort.

## SAVE THE DATE

Saturday Evening

June 5, 2010

Milwaukee Area Labor Council's

1<sup>st</sup> Annual Fund Raiser Dinner & Dance

Hilton Milwaukee City Center

509 W. Wisconsin Avenue

Keynote Speaker is U.S. Representative Gwendolyn Moore

Master of Ceremony Eric Von

For more information please call or e-mail Lynnda Guyton at the MALC office, 414-771-7070 or [lynnda@milwaukeeelabor.org](mailto:lynnda@milwaukeeelabor.org)

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# Bias

From Page 1

should move (though you may recall that the choice of health care was something that private and public companies once bargained for fiercely and is still mandated in many contracts).

I would never extrapolate from my own story that every MPS employee should move into Aetna. I'm happy things worked out for the Borsuk family, I'm glad the HMO choice works for many, but I know families and health needs differ and options are what workers look for, and without Aetna many MPS families would suffer.

It's right that every worker

should think carefully about this, but it is wrong to suggest a Fascist universe where some bean-counter forces you to pick the door on the right or the door on the left.

That's true not just in health care but in public education. This is why talking about education reform requires recognizing diversity of families, income, children's needs and how to adjust. The issue is complex, admonishing real thought, not the absurd tendency of newspapers and politicians to suggest one size fits all.

Borsuk's column didn't embrace diversity and complexity. It did seem to be beating up on unions. For instance, he pooh-

poohed the argument of MTEA President Mike Langyel that moving everyone in Aetna to the HMO would be a "fantasy" savings.

But Langyel probably wasn't denying any initial savings - he was debunking the exaggeration. Adding more members and making the HMO absorb the sicker workers and special needs that flock to Aetna (because HMOs tend to attract the healthier or less immediately threatened) will dilute if not evaporate the savings envisioned by the MPS and Borsuk.

What's really going on here may be hidden. MPS would like, as I suspect Borsuk knows, for MTEA members to pay the cost difference in taking Aetna over an HMO, but MPS won't bargain to bring up the wages the union lost to have the option. Meanwhile, health reform trudges on in Congress without imposing universal caps on private health insurance premiums, which further validates Langyel's caution.

A cozy timely complement to Borsuk's vision occurred in a press conference by the other Marquette fellow media escapee from the Journal Company, Mike Gousha, once of WTMJ. His guest, Mayor Tom Barrett, told a story Borsuk knew about - another personal spin that attacked MPS health costs.

Barrett's wife is an MPS teacher and when the family compared the city and MPS HMOs and found them good and about the same, the Barretts opted for the city version - and the \$500 the MPS gives any employee who doesn't take its health coverage.

The smart move gained \$500 for the mayor's family, but

it says little about MPS health care, except how similar it is to the city. The story accidentally emphasizes that most residents don't have the Barrett option - shifting from a taxpayer paid school health plan to a taxpayer paid city health plan.

The mayor and Borsuk both conveniently neglected to mention how the MTEA has offered health cost savings over the years - maybe not as much as they'd like but far more than publicized. Sure, the union won't give cash for dropping Aetna to take the HMO and would probably fight paying the difference between the two plans without contractual give-backs.

But MTEA members who refuse the health wellness test pushed by the union are penalized \$200 a year out of their own wages. And the MTEA contract provides a \$250 incentive to union members who complete the wellness program.

And while the MPS complains that the unions don't give enough in health care costs, back in 2004-2006 the MTEA offered a sweet deal that looks sweeter today - members would pay more for health care according to their wages, higher paid workers more and lower paid workers less, plus all MTEA members would pay in whether they used health coverage or not.

An arbitrator conceded that the MTEA plan would save more money at the start but chose the school administration's version because it promised more savings down the road, through such things as bargaining power for lower premiums.

Well, six years later we've seen how that turned out.

You can go through the issues of the public schools and find such



gaps in logic throughout the newspaper coverage.

Accountability tests are good, but why do they ignore actual improvements created by teachers in a difficult school?

Charter schools work, but particularly and provable when taught and operated by union professionals, not by fly-by-night pitchmen who buy Mercedes or vacation in Cancun.

Voucher schools cost property owners more than public schools, flat out. They aren't better than public schools for low income families on the whole. They are better in public relations, keep the costlier special needs kids in the public schools and away from their children and they are better in rescuing from bankruptcy traditional religious schools that had established systems and can now pack in students of different faiths to gain taxpayer money.

One-sided news coverage tends to inflame simplicities across the board, so all these issues are indeed more nuanced than I'm indicating in shorthand. But so, frankly, was the choice of new MPS superintendent Gregory Thornton who actually fits like a glove with the concepts of Barrett, Gov. Doyle, US Education Secretary Arne Duncan and even Journal editorials, but is still demeaned because those guys didn't get to pick him and the school board did.

Local control is also more nuanced than mayoral takeover. Race to the Top funds center instead on cooperation and coordination.

And the governor needs to pay the state's fair share of education rather than throw a hissy fit when his schemes are thwarted.

You wouldn't sense much of this reading the newspaper, but it will always have some nonsense about an easy "big step toward a solution right in front of us" - as Borsuk's column proclaimed.

Rather, education is tough, complicated work, personal family stories are seldom universal, newspapers shouldn't duck the real nuances --- and even a broken alarm clock can be right twice a day.

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# Calendar

For updated master list of events,  
visit [www.milwaukeeelabor.org](http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org)

## Wednesday, March 31

**MALC Executive Council**  
2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

## Wednesday, April 7

**Monthly Delegate Meeting**  
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

## Saturday, April 17

**African American Labor & Community Summit**  
"I Shall Not Be Moved (And Achieve a Better Life and Job)"  
9 a.m. - 1 pm.

Laborers Local 113 Union Hall, 6310 W. Appleton Ave.  
Fees \$15 regular, \$10 for students.

## Saturday, April 17

**Labor History Conference**  
"Linking Students to Labor's History,"  
Wisconsin's historic new law.

Panels involving labor leaders and historians, plus  
award ceremonies, luncheon.

Wisconsin Labor History Society annual  
conference fee \$25, \$10 for students or unemployed.  
8:45 a.m. to 3 p.m., IBEW Joint Apprenticeship Training  
Center in Wauwatosa.

## Wednesday, April 28

**Workers Memorial Day Ceremonies**  
5 p.m. Zeidler Union Square Park

## Friday, April 30

**Fish Fry Benefit for APRI**  
5:30 p.m., Laborers Local 113 Union Hall  
\$15 dine-in, \$10 carryout

## Sunday, May 2

**Bay View Tragedy**  
3 pm., speaker David Newby of state AFL-CIO  
E. Russell Ave. and Superior St.

## Take time to reflect

Memorial ribbons (which can be purchased in bulk by locals and unions) are now available at the MALC (25 cents each) to help honor workers and military who died on the job in 2009.

This moving annual Workers Memorial Day on Wednesday, April 28 (including a reading of names and a near-by dinner afterward) will start at 5 p.m. at organized labor's own Downtown park, Zeidler Union Square Park between 3rd and 4th Streets at Michigan. To arrange purchase of ribbons, contact the MALC at (414) 771-7070 during office hours.

Another annual tribute provides a reminder of when Wisconsin workers had to fight for such basics as an eight-hour day. They paid in blood, and the people get to remember at the state marker set up at E. Russell Ave. and Superior St. at 3 p.m. Sunday, May 2.

State AFL-CIO President David Newby will offer reflections and veteran folk singer Larry Penn will again perform. This is the 124th anniversary commemoration of the Bay View Tragedy, as it is known, when thousands of workers marched peacefully for an eight hour day and seven were shot and killed by state militia. Main sponsor is the Wisconsin Labor History Society.

## Bowling

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8 BALLS	87	74
SLAMMERS	83	78
GUTTER RATS	78	83
PIN PALS	73	88
CRAZY 8'S	71	90

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 475

DAN LAACK	564
GREG MARTIN	542
DON WIEDMANN	521
GENE HERRICK	515
DAN KNIPPEL	512

DEL GROSS	510
GARY GUENTHER	497
<b>IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175</b>	
DAN LAACK	238
DAN KNIPPEL	230
GREG MARTIN	222
DEL GROSS	203
DON WIEDMANN	191
GENE HERRICK	183

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400

RAE MATOWSKI	496
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	476
EILEEN WESTERFIELD	463
MARLENE CORTEZ	408

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 140

RAE MATOWSKI	183
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# Meet anti-US wimps blocking train tracks

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

## Comment

Politicians who harken back to the good old days must mean when dinosaurs ruled the earth. How else can you interpret the anti-American doubt and cowardice that stalk Wisconsin's once honorable conservative tradition?

The pale imitations of progressive pioneers are Mark Neumann and Scott Walker, GOP candidates for governor, Tweedledum and Tweedledeaf, whose campaign motto seems to be "If it's broke, don't fix it."

Both can't completely oppose high-speed trains between Milwaukee and Madison (how could they not give lip service to a central GOP platform of Washington insider Tommy Thompson?).

But they are definitely against it . . . if it's paid for.

An \$810 million guarantee to build Wisconsin's job future is more than they can stomach unless there's a guarantee the taxpayers won't pay a cent more in operating costs.

Unlike these two lemmings, most thoughtful business leaders -- despite an ingrained DNA that usually spells GOP -- astutely back mass transit initiatives. They may wish their traditional party held the reins once more, but they do understand free enterprise has always combined public and private initiative to generate wealth in transit policy.

Such capitalism always has a calculated risk, because partnerships between government and business rely on that multiplier effect where faster travel creates more retail, more housing, more quality services and obviously more employment.

Only the Tweedle twins and a few radio talk show hosts demand fixed dice. In fact, most economic analysts note the rewards in jobs and economic growth far outweigh the triggering investment in infrastructure, since connection is the first step in growth.

Community leaders - hardly all Democrats -- don't expect to

restore in a few months the eight million jobs the US has lost in the last decade. We're already gaining back a million jobs a year and more in new developments, efficient energy, restored infrastructure and manufacturing. Yet the Tweedles believe Americans will never grow up, grow more efficient or shift up in gear, just as politicians once said America would never give up horses for those newfangled gasoline contraptions.

The buggy boys prefer sticking with failures, limited vision, bad management and misguided strategies that creamed us all.

Our country was not built on inept thinking. Enterprise has been accompanied by thoughtful people looking for better ways, taking a chance, believing that smart thinking and good work can do wonders.

Today that spirit tends to be buried in talk radio blather, in fear of the future and suspicion of the present -- viewpoints that demean centuries when public works combined with private enterprise to build the success of representative democracy.

Imbeciles label such cooperation socialism -- even though it spurred American enterprise before socialism even existed as a movement.

Where would America be if both the left and the right hadn't joined in cooperation, if the current naysayers had been in charge in the 19th century?

Western land would lie barren because the government didn't push the path for families and private companies -- and no cost analysis could never justify or envision the homes, cities, agriculture and jobs created out of daunting mountains, plains, deserts and the unflagging determination of immigrants.

You would never finance a transcontinental railroad. Eisenhower could never have justified an interstate highway system. We should have sat out World War II because the odds, cost analysis and a better military machine were against us.

The deformed Tweedles kin are part of the Republican game opposing any federal investment by President Obama. (Walker in particular has been a backwards somersault trickster in rejecting such stimulus while using it to bail out his county budget.)

But in this case their oppositions defy history and then fall into the ridiculous. Sure, no one can prove the public won't pay some operating costs, but when haven't they? And when did they have such an enormous cushion to cover the initial investments? Ike sure didn't.

Trains between Milwaukee and Madison, the Tweedle ilk suggests, would only be perks for well-heeled public servants to travel back and forth. Yet economists and corporations are salivating to connect the state's largest centers of biotech, finance, education, modernized manufac-



Talgo's vision of a Milwaukee built train.

turing and skill needs. A lot of people needing jobs are salivating, too, and let's not even point out the need for faster job links from Milwaukee to Chicago and points in between.

The trains will never supplant America's love of automobiles and highways, they say - but they must live on another planet or in another country where fumes don't choke out the sun. Automakers are not fearful of competition and have co-existed with mass transit East and West. You can work in many cities without driving a car to work or paying for more highway sprawl.

If getting to a job in Racine or Oconomowoc becomes possible and saves time and money, most families would be happy to keep the cars to take the kids to soccer or the mall. Price, speed, comfort, energy efficiency and opportunity form the basis of genuine competition. What the Tweedles should be focusing on is making that work. Which requires recognizing the need for efficient energy and sensible tax policies.

But we've entered a disturbing time in American politics when proclaiming a lack of backbone, a lack of belief in the American workers, is perceived as the way to win votes.

In Neumann and Walker, the brain is clearly not the only part of the anatomy that has shriveled and shrunk.

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## Trains

From Page 1

save \$6 million.

Doyle envisions Milwaukee as a key component and beneficiary of a growing network of high speed rail in the US.

So does Talgo, which has a leg up on the business. A subsidiary of Patentes Talgo in Madrid, the company also has a plant in the Basque region of Alava. Those plants will manufacture the components assembled in Milwaukee, but while assembly and maintenance are huge parts of the train market, growth in the US may also impact manufacturing decisions down the road.

US workers may quietly and painfully note that things like high efficient machines and trains had up to now left these shores, but the Milwaukee initiatives may be key to reversing that trend, bringing such work and wages back home.

Mayor Tom Barrett also noted that Talgo is an anchor of "Century City," a massive effort to create a business park and surrounding retail and residential environment out of the old Tower/A.O. Smith region, which is roughly 27th St. west to the railroad tracks and between W. Capitol Drive on the north and W. Townsend St. on the south.

The 84-acre Tower site was purchased for \$3.5 million by the city's RACM (Redevelopment Authority). That included a 300,000-square-foot building of historic importance but in poor shape. Rocky Marcoux, the city development commissioner who was beaming with happiness as he circulated the March 2 press conference, noted that the city will refurbish



Listening to Perez with Moore were business leader Tim Sheehy (left) and Ald. Willie Wade. Other speakers included outgoing Gov. Doyle (top right) and potential incoming governor Tom Barrett.

the building and lease about 133,000 square feet to Talgo.

The \$35 million committed to developing Century City includes demolition, environmental cleanup, public improvements and new streets. About \$9 million comes from state and federal grants plus tax credits while the city's \$25.6 million will be paid back over an estimated 26 years by property tax including new development and sold parcels in the business park.

This is no small bet on the future being spurred by Tango's commitment. Barrett and other speakers estimated some 700 to 1,000 new jobs will be created via Century City - and Barrett also cited the key support in landing Talgo here by the Milwaukee 7 cooperative among counties in the region pledged to work together using the muscle of business and government for economic health. Standing on the podium during the conference to emphasize that business connection was MMAC's Tim Sheehy.

Ald. Willie Wade, a long advocate of this project, points

out that the city's recent MORE ordinance, pushed by organized labor and community groups, requires that all Century City jobs reflect good family supporting wages and community benefit standards.

In other words, this is a vision of growth that will last and there are teeth to ensure that the community gains from the growth.

Talgo trains will actually be part of two major mass transit efforts underway for the region. The Milwaukee-Madison rail is clearly one; the other is the regional transit authority legislation also pushed March 11 at a press conference at the Tower location and then in



Madison to spur committed funding for busses and the KRM (Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee) rail route.

Putting aside some weak-kneed political opposition *See Opposite Page*, both transit efforts are actually job bills, since better, speedier, more energy efficient mass transit will be needed to increase employment.

These are two of the three major bills centering on good new jobs and moving through the state and its legislature. The

third is a sustainable jobs bill that seeks to turn weatherization and energy efficiency into a vital area of private investment and public commitment.

Organized labor will devote April to a major campaign exploring the potential of green power and the vision behind the Blue-Green Alliance of business, unions and conservation groups.

Along the lines of new industry, Milwaukee is already making it happen with yet another Spanish company. In February, Ingeteam announced it will buy 8.1 acres in the city-developed Menomonee Valley Industrial Center for its new factory.

The wind-turbine manufacturer expects to finish the \$15 million facility with a 114,000-square-foot building by the end of 2010, employing 275 people there with an estimated \$19 million in annual wages

The Ingeteam development will be cheek to jowl with Taylor Dynamometer and the new Derse facility. Working with nonprofit Menomonee Valley Partners and starting with some 60 acres, RACM has filled all but 12 acres of the industrial park -- a remarkable sign of growth for this once barren unattractive trench along the downtown interstate.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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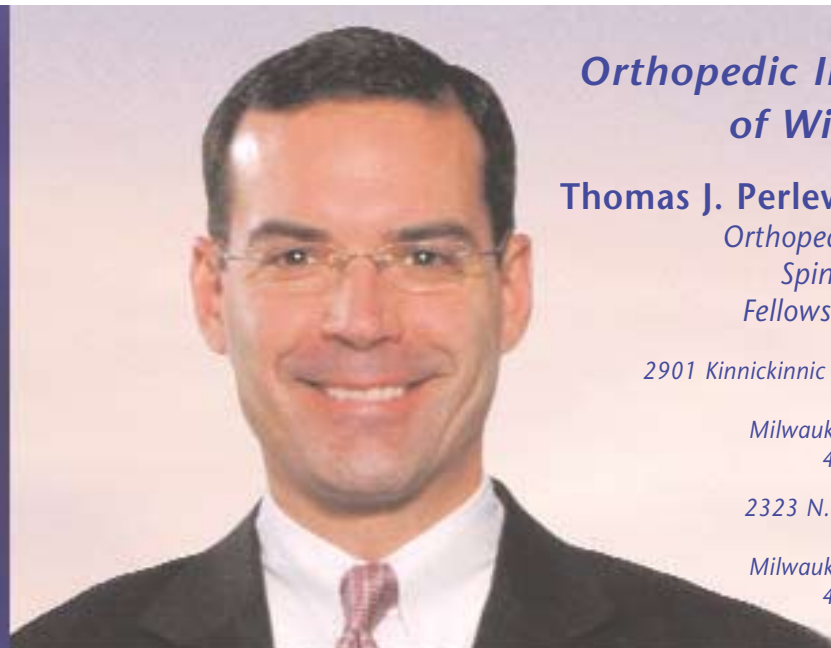
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# If headlines pursued the county's biggest crooks . . .

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

## Comment

Some things are obviously illegal and some activities are harmful and inhumane but still legal - and the public doesn't much care about such differentials unless it gets angry enough. Citizens have been slow to catch on to such shell games because of ideological camouflage, but as the generally Republican banker CEOs have learned, look out when they do.

Also, look out if you're a politician who pretends to save

taxpayer money when actually savaging the local economy by wasting money. Ideology won't protect you when the ceiling caves in. Lies and false promises may not bring prosecutors to the door but they can raise a tide of anger. You can skate on the edge with dictatorial decisions that insult good workers, you can refuse concessions offered by unions, and you can eliminate hundreds of jobs and squash the economic base without helping

matters -- but beware when the public catches on.

Take County Executive Scott Walker's claim about saving the taxpayers' money because he opposes quality of life taxes. To justify his latest round of 76 layoffs of real workers in real jobs, he pulled figures from somewhere (his rectum?) that he would save millions of dollars, while no analyst can find this money, as the public couldn't from earlier layoffs. It's another after-hours attempt to produce the balanced budget he's required to do but once again hasn't.

Now it isn't a crime to increase the cost of county operations while decreasing services, but it becomes obvious when the higher tax bills come in that this is all hoopla. There's no law requiring the public to understand hard numbers, but there is a point when it becomes too obvious to ignore, such as increasing the taxpayer portion of the pension plan despite election promises.

Walker believes he can even handle this to stoke his anti-tax image as he runs for governor, but ineptitude and excessive grabbing keeps creeping into the public consciousness.

Hundreds of taxpayers, county workers, were required by law to live in the county. When they were eliminated by Walker's



Scott Walker

devices, it was admittedly not because there wasn't work to be done. It just meant fewer employed people to own homes or rent apartments, helping the county pay for services. In their place are private employees at lower wages and few or no benefits, who can live anywhere. They put greater pressure on all government safety nets while their bosses get a cut of county taxpayer money.

How long before that reality sinks in? Not long, because some of these Walker games have cut close to the edge of legal consequence.

Forced by law as it would under Democrat or Republican administrations, the state has had to step in and rescue Walker's administration from bad and inadequate use of public money that violated regulations, meaning state and federal agencies are spending more taxpayer money in bailout and rescue.

Some remedies may be possible in the courts over Walker's violation of union bargaining rights, but residents have no such recourse as they pay more for parks, courts, busses, law enforcement, family programs and so forth.

Contrast the millions of dollars wasted for county taxpayers through such shenanigans with

the more recent headlines about political misbehavior.

Don't misunderstand. There is no justification, never will be, for Toni Clark. The resigned county supervisor committed a felony and will spend six months in jail for diverting \$6,450 in contributions to her election campaigns over seven years to feed her personal financial difficulties and support her gambling addiction.

That's not taxpayer money, and not a huge sum, less than \$1,000 a year. But it is an unforgivable violation of the public trust, a slap in the face of those who believed in her ideals and contributed to her campaign

It surely raises the specter of payoffs, though prosecutors found none and cited her personal issues, not her civic work. In church she might be forgiven as weak, desperate and sinful, but in the public arena, this is inexcusable. Particularly as those most offended were the lowest-income residents she had made a point of championing. Imagine how they must feel. Such a personal lapse can't be tolerated in public office even if slick Willies and bad management might cost taxpayers real millions.

So prosecutors are right to scrutinize the accounts of public officials as required by law, violations that can be quickly uncovered. But talk to those prosecutors and they wish there were reporting regulations up the white collar chain to examine more than the low-hanging fruit.

It's a good warning for any politician tempted to pose for holy cards about ethics, as Walker did in his statement on the Clark case, when the public knows there are other kinds of ethical missteps. Those don't make the courtrooms, but they do show up at the polls.



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