



Comment

**Kohl decision
rescrambles
state politics**By **Dominique Paul Noth**
Editor, Labor Press

The grace note was provided early May 13 by President Obama, who thanked Herb Kohl for 23 years of service in the Senate, particularly his business acumen and mainly for improving the lives of seniors and children.

For the media and many politicians, there were no grace notes - just unseemly haste to turn the departure of "Nobody's Senator but Yours" into "Anyone's Senator We Can Sell the Public."

Kohl, while admired for avoiding the inflamed zealotry of today's politics, has been criticized as too cautious even by liberals in his ideology and unlikely to wade loudly into the most controversial battles -- perhaps because his longtime Senate sidekick was maverick Russ Feingold, willing to take the heat and limelight. With a polar opposite in business philosophy now his senate colleague, Kohl has been under pressure to take on the toxic and tough battles. Definitely not his effective style -- no wonder at 76 he decided to step down.

But despite what Republicans say now, few thought he would be seriously challenged given his wealth and his skill at nonpartisanship.

Now both camps have started calculating feverishly, as have pundits.

Wisconsin has become key to Democrats to make a statement and change the nation. A

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Herb Kohl in 2010

**WALKER TO WISCONSIN: DROP DEAD**

THE GOVERNOR NEVER SAID THAT, no more than **"Ford to City: Drop Dead"** was intended as an exact quote from a US president. But that famous Daily News headline encapsulated the callousness surrounding Gerald Ford's rejection of any help for fiscally desperate New York City in 1975, a slap-down so definitively captured that Ford himself later said the headline cost him the election because it so resonated with voters.

A RELATED EMOTIONAL MEMORY swept over the crowd in Bay View May 1 as volunteer actors in historic costumes helped the Milwaukee Public Theater re-enact the bloodiest moment in Wisconsin labor history 125 years ago -- when the cold attitudes of a Wisconsin governor so inflamed his own militia that they opened fire on thousands of workers and families marching toward Rolling Mills iron factory to demand an eight-hour workday. The actors in slow-motion fall caught the moment when seven men and children were killed and others injured by gunfire.

THE GOVERNOR OF THE TIME, Jeremiah Rusk, whose portrait ironically still hangs in the Madison Capitol, actually defended his soldiers' violent response. Gov. Walker just tried to close the Capitol. But both governors more than a century apart did say workers did not have the right to challenge or negotiate with their masters, that it should be those with money, power and elected position that should rule in a democracy.

RUSK, GIVEN THE COLORFUL RHETORIC of the era, was more direct. The re-enactment used his own words to describe how he demeaned the marchers as imported foreigners and agitators not worthy of America, even anarchists determined to bring down the values of good people like their elected leaders and property owners. Are such



inflammatory attitudes a relic of the past? Replay in your mind those sly sound-bites of GOP leaders implying that the thousands protesting around the state must be outsiders and imported agitators unworthy of the label 'real Americans.'

BUT MAY 1 WAS MORE THAN THEATRICALS. A record 500 watchers (photo above) showed up at the Bay View remembrance while at the same time in downtown Milwaukee upwards of 50,000 citizens (some estimate 100,000) marched for immigrant rights. Sandwiched between organizer Christine Neumann-Ortiz and state AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt, national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka took his place among the leading marchers and then spoke out at Veterans Park.

— Dominique Paul Noth

**Unions don't like Walker but are wrongly blamed for boycotts**

Responding to a series of media inquiries, leaders of the state AFL-CIO and the Milwaukee Area Labor

Council flatly scorned the idea that the AFL-CIO has concocted any boycott in Wisconsin aimed at the policies of Gov. Scott Walker.

"If we had a boycott," noted an amused Sheila Cochran, the COO of the Milwaukee council, "trust me, we would be shouting it from the rooftops."

The requirements and rules are stricter on unions than on

corporations - not just on boycotts but on every action, from how they support candidates, how they report money spent, how they organize and protest, when they set up picket lines. If anything the requirements escalate in a boycott since procedures and approval were established by the trades department of the national AFL-CIO and now can only be imposed when endorsed

**Exposing pain
for children
in budget**

A bad rash on your proboscis? A good doctor would suggest vitamins and antibiotics, a careful diet and greater care in how you exercise and eat. A bad physician would cut off your nose and remove an eye socket into the bargain.

Welcome to the state of Wisconsin's education budget, where the assorted cranks and quacks of Dr. Walker have provided exactly this sort of devastating "fix," all because of built-in resistance to an infusion of (revenue) vitamins and a dread of actually talking to and working with the patient.

This misguided approach to a budget deficit lower than in the past and smaller than many states ride through was exposed May 10 with the news of a projected unanticipated (by Walker for sure) \$636 million growth in state revenue. One legislator humorously described it as "a gift from the previous Democratic majority" since it is a direct outgrowth of Gov. Doyle's budget approach.

Has the steady disappearance of the myth that "Wisconsin is broke" deterred Walker? If anything it seems to have spurred his refusal to use extra revenue as a reason to stop and think about the legislative hackery of local governments, of chopping off the worker rights on one side of the bargaining table - which says a great deal about the governor's view of the ineffectuality of public administrators on the other side of the table - or pausing in his attack on the classroom needs of children.

His tune remains cutting about \$887 million a year from education in reduced state aid and limits on local governmental opportunities to raise money. There is a jingle accompanying this \$1.7 billion cut over two years - a thematic chorus that

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by the AFL-CIO Executive Council. (we told you it was tough.). Only then will members be urged to boycott a business or don't buy..

Currently there are many hotels around the nation on the official "Don't Buy" list, including some in Chicago, but only one company that does business in Wisconsin: Sinclair

Boycotts continued Page 5

John Gilman, decorated warrior for peace

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

John Gilman's widow of five days appeared out of the crowd May 1 at the Bay View Massacre remembrance and kissed me. Helen told me that the next day in a private ceremony her late husband would receive the full dress military funeral and gun salute he

In Memorium

deserved at the Union Grove cemetery.

John Gilman, 90 at his death, seldom missed these Bay View remembrances. He would especially have cherished this one on a sunny Wisconsin afternoon -- giant puppets, historical costumes, oratorical flourishes and gifted actors remembering worker marches, state militia over-reaction, confrontation and tragic deaths 125 years ago. This

re-enactment of a protest in defiance of repressive establishment attitudes (in this case resistance to an 8-hour workday) was just the sort of civic action that John Gilman's life embodied.

He was that distinctive American who combined care for others with self-reliance and individual leadership. It emerged in his Pennsylvania youth in the 1930s when he sold a Communist newspaper to earn money and led high school protests for a bigger school building to end overcrowding. Determined to stop Hitler, he fought off concerns that he was too radical for the military. A handsome natural leader by all accounts, he cut a ladies' man path through Europe in World War II while, with exceptional heroism on battlefields, he became one of America's most decorated infantrymen.

Years ago, one of my children had read chapters of the memoirs he recently self-promoted and published through Amazon and in bookstore readings. In "Footsoldier for Peace and Justice" - a memoir that raised money for peace causes and for People's World where he published articles - he discussed how he almost turned down the



Gilman at a 2010 book reading

Distinguished Service Cross (he was also nominated for the Medal of Honor) because he felt badly that he had to blow up enemy soldiers to save his own comrades. "I wondered if we should get medals for killing people," he said.

Years later he came to appreciate those medals, particularly when he was attacked as an unpatriotic leftist again and again by the House Un-American Activities Committee and threatened with prison for refusing to name names. When he showed up to testify displaying the combat decorations, the embarrassed members of Congress refused to deal with him in any way or even answer his criticism that their attack on him was itself un-American and anti-Semitic to boot.

That autobiography also recounts his atypical romance with Helen, a lifelong of wrangling but mutually devoted feistiness. It was a curious courtship - casual, sudden and enduring all at once - and it led to a remarkable domestic and political partnership.

It may surprise the jingoist among us that a decorated war hero asks to be remembered by donations to Pastors for Peace, an organization he helped lead during his effort to open up rela-

tions with Cuba. But John Gilman was a warrior for peace in all his causes.

He marched for unions, for open housing, for civil rights, for pastors James Groppi, Dismas Becker and Lucius Walker. He fed and bailed out Vietnam era protesters. He headed the state's civil rights congress.

His flooring business was fire-bombed by the Ku Klux Klan and then vandalized for his activism. He was a troublemaker in his stubbornness. Rather than face his arguments in court, exasperated authorities waved him on his way or accepted his efforts to free civil agitators, be they Marquette students or Catholic priests. If Wisconsinites ever needed an example of standing your ground for your beliefs, of courage whatever the battlefield, they had it in Gilman -- obstinate with a righteous good nature and ready arguments about democracy. Few could resist him. None could thwart him.

At one of his book readings last summer, I noticed how he turned off his hearing aid so no one could interrupt his anecdotes or observations, making sure yet again he told his personal history in his own way. But even as his stamina and heart failed, friends and family knew better than to be too obvious in how they watched over this long sturdy warrior for peace, so palpable was his sense of independence and his desire to always carry his own weight in the community.

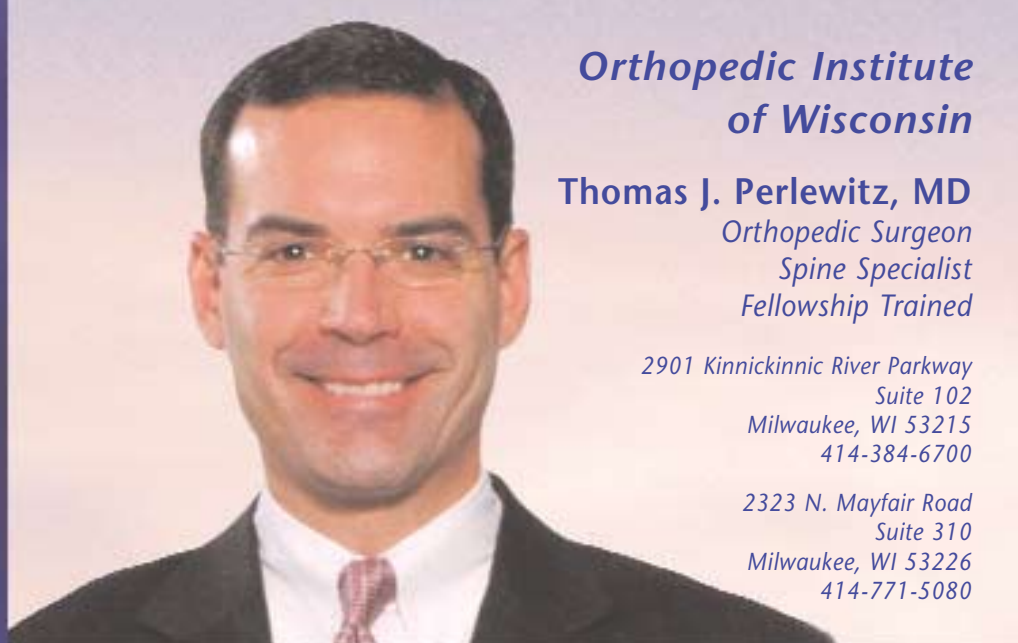
Smiling, Helen told me at the Bay View event, "He died so peacefully, looking out at the lake and the trees he loved." You could see how in her memory, and in the memory of all touched by his personality, John Gilman's pride and resilience live on.



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Women absorb budget's targeting of families

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

The packed information forum May 12 at Kingo Lutheran Church in Shorewood observed that 40% of the cuts in the two-year state budget moving hastily through Madison targeted programs primarily serving women and girls.

So the question before the panel of working mothers was how does Gov. Walker's budget "look through the eyes of women," asked moderator Barbara Lawton.

Frightening and bleak was the conclusion throughout the crowded basement meeting room. But while a series of detailed losses bothered the assembled, particularly shocking was the \$1.7 billion removed from state aid involving public education.

"I came here from a business development conference where people on all political sides were bothered by this budget," noted one panelist, Rep. Sandra Pasch, "and they pretty much agreed, these business types, that you can't cut your way to more jobs, and particularly you can't cut education and grow jobs." But if they can see that, why can't so many of her colleagues, she plaintively asked.

Members of the audience drawn partly from affluent suburbs entered thinking they were only getting a haircut in this budget -- that Walker had reserved full flaying for the city of Milwaukee public schools, already crushed by the voucher program, entrenched poverty and unemployment.

But as the forum worked through the details, it dawned on the assembled that the blows to education were statewide and the agony compounded because of rules limiting how every community could respond even to cuts in basic services, how even reducing public workers' bargaining rights to just pay was a minor factor despite Walker's claims to the contrary, and that the budget also attacked environmental controls, rules for clean water, recycling, and public safety.

The budget so stripped local governments of some \$96 mil-



Moderator Lawton (left) fielded questions to such panelists as Rep. Sandra Pasch.

lion it will force communities throughout the state to sacrifice both classrooms and services.

In hallway discussions, attendees asked why so many bills were designed to slash existing protections -- could ALL such laws in the past really be anti-business over-reach rather than citizen protection? And why is every regulation that seeks to control corporate excess now regarded as an impediment to runaway profit? Some asked if "we aren't forcing a low-wage existence on every corner of the state?"

But panelists tried to keep the discussion focused on why the budget hurts women, though inevitably it all seemed to thread together. "We don't need just for any old job but quality jobs and rules of employment that raise families up," as 9t5's Torrie Moffett put it.

Details came thick and fast at the forum - the freeze in enrollment in Family Care, \$500 million cut in medical care affecting low-income families but radiating out to other families, the removal of birth control coverage in health insurance, the blows to technical colleges and higher education tuition, the 10% cut in Head Start.

As the parade continued and with the speakers trying to play fair to the complicated issues, the listeners also realized most of this runaway truck was going to hit them personally with bills passed by the end of June by an

unmovable GOP majority, with only a few changes made -- and those tweaks mainly out of fear that voters would take revenge in the imminent recall elections. It clearly will take Wisconsin months if not years to reverse items in this budget for the better.

Lawton, the state's two term lieutenant governor, while a passionate progressive, did a straightforward job setting the realities, with a cogent explanation of how every state budget regardless of political party combines a pragmatic outline of a governor's policies as well as his ("so far it's always been a him not a her," she noted with amusement) vision for the future.

But having just returned from Madison, she couldn't hide her distress with this administration's priorities. As leader of the state arts board, though armed with incontrovertible proof for the legislature that cultural programs create thousands of jobs and cultural education in schools produce rounded creative individuals for a better state future, she watched them cut such funding by two-thirds, including all minority grants, and then subsume the arts board into the tourism agency.

But refusing to give in to the short-sighted, she reminded the audience that everyone still had to work to reach past the "confused thinking" caused in the body politic by economic dis-

stress and to "maintain focus on all that is happening."

Political realities are also affecting the process, something everyone at this forum in the volatile Senate District 8 understood.

Much of the haste in Madison is directly because the GOP majority wants to move as many pieces as it can before elections affect the makeup of the legislature, so right now the bills are not getting the thoughtful back-and-forth such complications deserve.

That alone is an invitation to court challenges and further confusion. Even as the forum was held, the legislature was rushing through eliminating the simplified consumer information that insurance companies had been required to give and giving GOP friendly banks more ways to take over credit unions.

Fighting back to their central concern, the panelists dealt with what the budget would do to children, families and basic health. Without attacking as she well could the toxic partisan atmospherics around Planned Parenthood, the organization's Molly Swank lamented how the budget had eliminated funding for family planning, healthy babies and the vast range of her group's activities that help women long past child-bearing age with cancer screenings.

(Her litany did prompt Lawton to remind the audience how both political parties, when faced with the need for budget cuts, "seem to make women's reproductive health the first item on the chopping block.")

The practical hardships facing young mothers in teaching their children while trying to maintain jobs, given cuts to W-2 and rules about how little they must earn to get government help, was much on the mind the articulate Moffett.

Sarah Demonte Vega of I Love My Public Schools offered blow by blows of what basic

programs her school would have to lose, drawing gasps of shocks with such simple details. Vega returned from abroad with her family in fond remembrance of what public schooling in Wisconsin had been like. Now, she admits, she can only shake her head at how different it seems from 20 years ago "when this was the state that led in public education."

Sponsors 9to5 had invited both candidates in the impending recall election to be on the panel. Only Democrat challenger, Pasch answered the call. The co-chair of the Joint Finance Committee steering Walker's budget along, incumbent GOP Sen. Alberta Darling, did not respond to the invitation, though several present were eager for an inside view and defense.

Pasch didn't duck tougher even hostile questions and dealt with some budget complexities, but she also drew sympathetic chuckles when she described her white male colleagues in Madison's tendency to see no difference in their own minor discomfort from what the poor, elderly and disabled will suffer dealing with the budget and the voter ID bill.

"When they don't realize that what [a double amputee riding a bus] has to go through is different than what a businessman having to fly back from California to vote will go through, they're suffering a lack of imagination," she said.

A longtime nurse and teacher, Pasch found it amazing that she had trouble making basic points to her colleagues while business leaders immediately grasped those points in conversations, "things like poverty and bad health go hand in hand and neither is good for the economy."

Pausing to gather her thoughts, Pasch quietly said, "There is meanness in this budget that diminishes our values as a society."

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Budget

From Page 1

economic growth comes not in jobs created today but in a strong education system for tomorrow that begins with starving the children of today.

You couldn't sell such a hypocritical theme were it not a time of economic distress and a concocted public fear of government deficits. But such snake oil confirms this budget approach is still more about politics than actual solution to educational needs and

educational spending. So it's time to cut through the statistical guff.

In that sense, Milwaukee Superintendent of Schools Gregory Thornton did a genuine public service with his step-by-step outline of the pain. He was trying to warn what it all means just for the Milwaukee public schools and the 83,000 children MPS expects next school year. You can't read the results without seeing the faces of the children who will suffer.

Now, Thornton's budget for next school year will be much

debated and argued by teachers, parents and the school board over the next weeks -- in fact, his elimination of K- grades transportation is already in dispute. But this approach cuts through the media fog of generalized statistical terms. His choices put flesh on what reducing classrooms budgets by more than \$54 million next school year truly means to Milwaukee.

- Some 468 teaching positions will be cut - including 101 high school teachers, 37 Phys Ed leaders and teachers, 98 math teachers, 28 art teachers, and 20 music teachers.

- Class sizes will continue to increase due to the loss of funding (known as P5) and SAGE money (affecting elementary class sizes at 27 schools). From mandated 18 to 1 ratios at 77 schools and 15-1 SAGE ratios at 27 schools, insiders now fully expect 30-1 or 34-1 ratios.

- Even then, there will be millions lost per student. The dollar amounts vary by grade level, with each high school student losing \$335, while the elementary level will see \$112.45 less per pupil. Thornton hopes to slightly mitigate the impact by reducing centralized guidance services, but that's questionable.

- MPS will lose \$1.5 million for school nurses -- a total loss of 21 medical professionals that has the district scratching to continue health care for students in poverty (the school nurse serving as their primary care). MPS estimates that 21,000 students will lose daily school nurse service.

- Mental health support will fall by the wayside, one big loss being MUTT (Mobile Urgent Treatment Team), run by the county to provide interventions



Gregory Thornton

within MPS. The county has been similarly devastated by the Walker budget, so the valuable program is gone -- saving MPS nearly half a million dollars while costing the community far more in long-range problems.

- At least 14 safety aides that provide security will be eliminated. Summer school programs will be reduced from \$8.1 million to \$3.5 million -- 65 elementary summer school programs reduced to 23, now combined with summer meal and recreational programs.

- The district will cut textbook purchases, with the exception of high school science and some 9-12 English courses, saving at least \$4.3 million next year. Some of this would have been on any chopping block but happening all at once means no room to maneuver, just to reduce quality when MPS desperately needs to grow quality.

MPS will increase breakfast and lunch prices by an average 25 cents for students. Its veteran teachers will be forced to look elsewhere. Its highly regarded young teachers, who have yet to demonstrate staying power, now have every incentive to run.

Since the district has the capacity to serve up to 113,000 students, that leaves a dozen vacant buildings and under-enrolled schools, a situation the community has endured because of the MPS' reputation as a good absentee landlord and nimble growth manager. With Walker's intended expansion of voucher schools -- despite proof they teach more poorly -- that growth factor has evaporated.

The voucher funding had already sorely reduced the money available for MPS students even before the Walker education quackery goes into effect. But those carefully maintained buildings are a plum for MPS rivals in voucher and charter funding who want to open their own schools at almost no building cost. A state law and Common Council support for giving away these buildings sped through the legislature, one reason why Thornton already has plans to close 10 schools and merge others before the start of the next school year. It's another reason he's deferring some \$6.5 million in repairs, a big impact on the city's contracted trades.

The current Madison approach keeps lowering our core values -- and may not save money. It apparently costs savings to the taxpayers. It prevents discussion and negotiating by penalizing communities that do and imposing limits on what can be raised in taxes and fees to help children.

Many school boards and workers believe that, left to their own devices and understanding, they could coordinate more sensible and money-saving solutions than the quacks have imposed.

What about the "tools" Walker promised to mitigate the budget disaster? Tom Nelson, Outagamie County's new county executive, rummaged that tool box "and all I could find was a screwdriver," he noted in a speech. Can't even find that screw in Milwaukee, where the teacher's union agreed last September, well before Walker's threats, to have teachers pay more in health costs. MPS already has untouchable contracts until 2013.

Moreover, nothing in Walker's budget will pick up the reputable programs that relied on federal stimulus -- Title I, Individuals With Disabilities. professional development for teachers and principals, "EduJobs" program, which in ending eliminates 144 teaching positions.

Mind you, this is just the Milwaukee public schools. But Walker is an equal opportunity quacker. Wait till the other 71 counties do the budget math Thornton did and realize how their children and schools are similarly gouged. Wait till they discover it is their elected majority in Madison who want to cut off their noses to treat a fading rash.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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Boycotts

From Page 1

Broadcasting, which owns stations here and has refused to deal with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the industry hallmark in tech broadcasting.

What's been happening in Wisconsin has gone far beyond the control or even initiation of organized labor, and one consequence is this constant talk of boycotts that unions never started and often spend hours knocking down.

Fury over Walker's proposals has long moved beyond curtailing the rights of public workers. It has spread beyond public and private, and now encompasses a lot of citizens who never thought twice about unions or politics.

If that weren't true, the Republican objects of recalls would not be so anxious and backpedaling on Walker proposals they long knew about - and the GOP wouldn't be rushing to pass Walker's bills before they lose control of the legislature. Ironically, this has heightened the right wing attack since they'd like to pretend it's only unions that are upset.

But actually, unions are about jobs and negotiations, which is why they can remain calm and focused in marches and rallies. Its leadership knows the difference between words and sticks and stones.

If you want to see this clearly, look at George Pacific. It is owned by the Koch brothers, notorious in hatred of unions and funding Tea Party and untraceable campaign finance networks. But the Kochs love making money so they need a good workforce, in this case the steelworkers they inherited. Unions will expose the Koch rhetoric and hypocrisy, but "in America, people are free to be stupid,"

chuckled Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the state AFL-CIO.

In late April, when the state AFL-CIO quite publicly pulled its money out of M&I bank, one journalist told me that, despite denials, "The court of public opinion sees this as nothing other than a boycott."

He'd better not say that out loud around the Journal Sentinel newsroom. It would destroy the operators of PolitiFacts, who spend much of their time digging out obscure charges few have heard of but probably accept as true ... especially when publicized by JS. Those journalists spend a great deal of time declaring such views "False" or "Barely True" - in other words, spitting on that "court of public opinion" they help create. So give us a few paragraphs to demonstrate the falsity of so-called "union boycotts."

Let's start with the busiest complaint on blogs by right-wing hacks. They didn't criticize corporations for pasting anti-union slogans on gas pumps, but they claim unions are behind the illegal campaign to plaster anti-Walker slogans on products in supermarkets. I can't find a place that happened; it apparently targeted a sausage company and cheese company whose owners had given heavily to Walker but it did suggest even toilet paper.

It was never a union idea - just more people upset by slash-and-burn emanating from Madison, or acting out a fantasy on the Internet. It sure kept unions busy telling overwrought members to stay away from stuff like this - and reminding them to still enjoy brats but keep looking for union-made ones.

Another warning to stay away - as any sort of union representative - involved those online boycott lists reflecting anger at Walker policies on Facebook and elsewhere. The

call was to boycott companies that gave money to Walker's camp. Lists were provided based on database culling.

Unions were kept quite busy warning journalists and their own members away from such ideas because such lists were scatterguns. Many companies actually give money to both parties. Several companies on those lists employ unions. Others actually support union causes, and while several companies do have disgustingly anti-union policies, it is always behavior, not opinion, that prompts boycotts.

Yet Neuenfeldt's reminder that these weren't union ideas brought criticism not just from the right but from some on the left who suggested unions should "attack" businesses that fed Walker.

There was one case where unions were understandably slow to speak up, because it started out looking quite sensible and there was considerable confusion for a few days before it became clear it was the work of "over-zealous members" as one AFSCME state official told me.



Bloomingdale

What happened in a part of the state was an AFSCME field representative used his letterhead to urge area companies to put up signs indicating support of "worker rights."

Not much wrong in that, just an expression of belief in bargaining - except the letter went further. It suggested that "neutral meant no," that not putting up a sign of support would be regarded as a sign of opposition.

And that was over the top even if understandable. A company could have a lot of reasons not to put up a sign and shouldn't be regarded as an enemy because of an empty window. When told what happened, the AFSCME council leadership stepped in, as did Neuenfeldt in a broader statement, and made it clear to journalists and to members that this was never proposed, encouraged or endorsed by any union.

Not so the M&I bank action. It was very specific, a union protest, and it came after individuals and other unions had also pulled their money out of the bank in a public manner as a blunt statement.

But no doors were barred, no employees who gave to a political party of their choice were targeted and no union member was told to switch banks.

This was specifically a clever and effective advertisement of disgust, not much different than what newspaper columnists do - or what newspaper advertisers

do when they pull ads in public disagreement with editorial policy.

Stephanie Bloomingdale, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO, spelled it out in a letter to M&I when she and a contingent of supporters yanked the federation's \$105,000 in funds from the bank.

Taxpayers had bailed out M&I with \$1.7 billion in TARP funds not fully reimbursed as promised. Now the company said it would pay back the funds but only after completing sale of the bank to a Montreal firm. Even first-year journalists can look at the record of what happens when ownership moves to another country -- local jobs diminish over time for obvious reasons.

And, as Bloomingdale pointed out, the TARP rules says executives shouldn't profit until they pay the taxpayers back, yet M&I is using foreign ownership to reward CEO Mark Furlong and top executives.

"While we sacrifice and work hard to rebuild our state's economy, you've set yourself up for a \$24 million personal payday after the bank's sale is completed. A \$24 million payday that you bent the rules to get," wrote Bloomingdale.

"M&I does not deserve the trust of Wisconsin's working families."

If a clear message equals a boycott, somebody had better tell Webster's.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Monday, May 30

Downtown Memorial Day Parade
Union veterans will march as a unit. Parade starts 2 p.m. from Zeidler Union Square Park.

Wednesday, June 1

Delegate Meeting/Town Hall
Meeting opens up to the entire community with special guests and forum
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Monday, June 6

Laborfest Planning Meeting
5 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Saturday, June 18

2nd Annual Awards Dinner
See Information on Page 3

Monday, June 20

Laborfest Planning Meeting
5 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, June 22

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

Sunday, June 26

Barbecue Dinner for Needy and Homeless
Serve the annual community picnic feast at St. Benedict the Moor, starting 4:30 p.m.

Council promotes disabled veterans fishing outing

The Disabled Veterans Fishing Outing is an annual community activity for injured who served in our Armed Forces. This will be the third year that the outing in Port Washington will be supported by participation from union veterans through the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. The idea is to give disabled veterans a touch of friendly hometown feeling and a day away from the hospital, according to council organizer Mike Balistriere, mikeaflcio@sbcglobal.net.

The event this year is Wednesday, June 15. All the boaters donate their time and the expense of running their boats to provide a morning of fishing. Afterward, the participants return to the American Legion Club for a fish boil and cookout with all the trimmings.

The sponsors are seeking donations to defray the expenses, sent to the outing's treasurer, Vicki Lee, 688 N. Wisconsin St., Port Washington, WI 53074, or the chairman, Mary Schuknecht, 406 E. Norport Dr., Port Washington, WI 53074.

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Candidates

From Page 1

piece at a time they can reverse what happened in November 2010, even if Republicans succeed in stalling tactics, expecting public anger to fade. They're already trying to hold off the scheduled July recall elections -- and actually hope Kohl's decision, opening up another race for them, will spur that fade.

For one thing, money is on the GOP side. It's not that their candidates are richer -- but their third-party campaign networks are deeper. To change the state before November 2012, the Democrats will have to spend big -- and even bigger if they add Gov. Walker as soon as they legally can. Success brings costly replacement elections.

But Democrats believe Kohl's announcement will deepen resolve -- and access to new resources to replenish spending. They concede what happens in the immediate races will determine what unfolds.

While Kohl's departure opens a window the GOP did not have, they are already running into confusion about how to proceed without knowing the opponent. Many of the lobbed names have failed track records even within the Republican Party, including former US representatives Mark Neumann and Mark Green. The chatrooms add former state senator Ted Kanavas and former candidate Tim Michels, but mainly the perennial hope that Tommy Thompson will be tempted back into politics. But will the Wisconsin voters ever forgive Thompson's Hamlet tendencies and weather-vane flips in the GOP wind? (For or against high speed trains? Stem cell research? Health care?) He's become a joke.

Some GOP insiders push for a law and order figure, easier to sell to conservatives. Which raises their interest in an obedient



Robert Zerban

political hack like Atty. Gen. J.B. Van Hollen, which would also take him out of the recall hurricane eye. Others are lashing about, suggesting Republicans unknown except as water boys to Walker's policies, such as the Fitzgeralds.

Curiously enough, the once most likely name is now damaged goods. US Rep. Paul Ryan was such a big deal in US House politics that fellow Republicans signed aboard his plan to replace Medicare with ineffectual coupons, and now are paying a devastating political price. That depresses both his internal reputation and the national coffers he could once draw on. So saddled is Ryan with the "Mr. Anti-Medicare" image that he is expected next week to decline the Kohl race, and he has his hands full in District 1, where articulate, well-heeled Kenosha supervisor Robert Zerban is champing to take him on.

Some Republicans are actually pushing Walker forward for the Kohl race in a crazy canny move to chill recall fever by forming an "exploratory committee" to allow him to tease and then opt out months later.

There are also Democrats weighing -- foolishly in my analysis -- delaying a Walker recall until November 2012 when they envision Obama for president and some Democrat for Kohl's seat as well as some

Democrat for governor on the ballot along with all the Assembly seats and half the state Senate seats. It would compress money into one big swoop, to be sure, but it also suggests that the damage Walker can do staying in office that long can't be all that bad -- and that's truly foolish. Frankly all anyone can predict is that the layout 18 months from will be a lot worse for the Republicans if a number of recalls have proven successful.

Democrats also have some strong experienced candidates but much the same problems of track record and over-familiarity. Are these candidates positive negatives or negative positives?

Some names hot in the Democratic pool are far more outspokenly progressive than Kohl, unlikely to play to the

middle, but that may actually reflect where Wisconsin is heading. They range from Madison Rep. Tammy Baldwin to outspoken former Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton to newly famous Assembly minority leader Peter Barca. Some experienced administrators and good fund-raisers lie in the wings, from US Rep. Ron Kind to Dane County's Kathleen Falk to even former Gov. Jim Doyle.

But the main names are Tom Barrett and Russ Feingold. Barrett has the inside track if buyer's remorse puts Walker under the recall gun -- and he offered a tantalizing piece of mathematics at the April 30 Democratic Party dinner when he told the crowd he would be back in the saddle "in nine months." That works out to January 2012, either to run

again as mayor in April or to take on Walker in a recall election. And now he finds himself talked about for the Kohl race.

But most talk is about a true maverick even the Democrat establishment knows will go his own way. That reputation for independence is both the appeal and the difficulty with Feingold, who is being actively recruited. He has to decide if 2010 was a fluke and whether the runaway national sense of loss in his defeat is now shared within Wisconsin borders.

All this instantly adds to the state's political turmoil. But that doesn't mean instant decisions. Some candidates may jump right in hoping to deflate any competition, but the biggest guns will probably take their time to assess -- and watch what the more immediate special races reveal.




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Working America attracts thousands in state to explore union values

At 28, Mark designs web sites for a Milwaukee firm - "and then I realized that only one guy knew I did good work and he's moving to another state," he said. "I can be fired at will. That's when I started looking at Working America."

"I was just glad to find out that I wasn't alone in feeling so desperate," said Ashley, 33, who lost her part time while raising two children. She has no union, and she had no hope until she started campaigning last summer with Working America.

"I'm one of the guys they're picking off one by one," said Tony, 41, when he was standing in line for a job. "Is this a group that can help me?"

"I don't even want to enter this lousy workforce," said Rashan, 21, a recent UWM stu-

dent. "But if I have to be out there I sure don't want to be alone."

All have joined or are looking at Working America, the community affiliate of the AFL-CIO that organizes people who don't have a union on the job - or frankly are looking for a job to support themselves or their families and feel abused and alone in the current system.

Citizens are newly interested in what these union principles are and how they can latch on to them. "Our organizers reach out to thousands of people every night at their homes to talk about economic issues they care about and ways to take action," said Carrie Geenen, a Working America coordinator in Milwaukee who recently has been working out of state AFL-CIO offices on Bluemound Ave.

"We are in 10 states and 12 cities, connecting working people with the union movement in suburbs, exurbs, rural areas, college campuses and more. The people we sign up at the doors are from all different backgrounds and all different stages of life, but all of them agree that the issues we are fighting for are important."

Nationally after a pilot start seven years ago, Working America has signed up three million members, 65,000 of those in Wisconsin, but the figures in

2011 are particularly remarkable - more than 20,000 non-union state members since Walker's shenanigans began.

Geenen has started collecting their reasons for joining, including:

"Walker isn't thinking about the rest of us who are hard working and live paycheck to paycheck. Things are supposed to be getting better but they just seem to be getting worse," said Jennifer, a 37 year old single mother in Beloit.

The response in Wisconsin and elsewhere has been so strong that Working America is now coordinating with state labor groups in several cities to hold monthly meetings of the unemployed to connect them with resources.

"We just want to help folks," said Chelsey Evans, a regional director of Working America who recently visited Milwaukee.

In general, those contacted are "mostly moderates or conservative working class people," Geenen noted. "Two out of three people we talk to at the doors join Working America. Often these are people no other progressive organizations are reaching out to."

You can reach Carrie and Working America at (414) 257-9622, or cgeenen@workingamerica.org

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