



Media cameras (far right) caught the crowd waiting Nov. 2 as the last legacy flight landed at Mitchell Field. Fired colleagues, among the hundreds left aground by Midwest Airlines and its new owner, Republic Airways – milled around to embrace, take each other's photos, or clown for the press, as did the three above: From left, Allen Ohm, JoAnn Holling and Greg Ueselman, who was long the pilots' delegate to the Milwaukee labor council.



The death of Midwest

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

On the night of November 2, Mitchell Field saluted the final flight of Milwaukee's real hometown airline with arcs of water sprayed from fire trucks, an honor usually reserved for the retirement of a captain.

This was the last Boeing 717 flown by the last legacy crew from Midwest Airlines, before all were mothballed ahead of their time.

Select dozens at the arrival gate and hundreds more gathered inside Mitchell Field Concourse D paid tribute in a moment of profound sadness. But the farewell salute turned surprisingly into affirmation deeper than cheers, hugs and hoopla -- a celebration of the resilience and camaraderie that made Midwest service special.

The real spirit of these flight crews shown through as they refused to submit to what would be natural bitterness over corporations robbing them of their careers and often their homes. Instead, they filled this final departure with the humor, confidence and optimism shown passengers over the years through both routine moments and crises in the air.

More than a hundred colleagues were waiting when Flight 210 arrived from Boston, even though most had already been furloughed by the newly cobbled Republic-Midwest hybrid. The pilots and flight attendants in the terminal were joined by a hundred airport and security workers, crews from other airlines offering appreciation, clapping passengers from other flights, families and friends bearing signs and by some surprisingly notable travelers who stumbled upon the 10 p.m. celebration. **Story above left.**

The impromptu party was followed by a real party at a



Capt. Bryan Jandorf of the bargaining team escorted the Flight 210 crew into Concourse D.

nearby inn, crammed with 200 axed veterans and their families who could more openly greet and embrace each other and share drinks and memories of 15, 20 even 25 years of service.

Some had not seen each other in years - a reminder that about 800 had been let go over the last two years by the airline before and after it became a wholly owned subsidiary last June of Republic Airways (continuing to use the Midwest brand and reputation to lure clients).

But all partygoers immediately picked up on the friendships, the anecdotes and the warm feelings that have always distinguished the "best care in the air," a motto that with no sense of history or validity is being maintained as a slogan by the corporate manipulators who



Guess which CEO dropped by?

Not a single senior executive of Midwest or Republic Airways showed up to greet legacy Flight 210 or salute and thank the flight crews Nov. 2 for so many years of special service.



Gary Kelly

But curiously enough, the CEO and president of the newest competitor at Mitchell Field, Gary Kelly of Southwest Airlines, was there and met several of the Midwest pilots and

flight attendants.

Kelly's unpublicized presence was a happenstance. He

was attending a marketing meeting in

Milwaukee about Southwest's newly started service from Mitchell, but his home airport isn't yet included, so he had to rely on another airline to fly home - and that flight was delayed three hours. Ironically it was on Republic Midwest. So Kelly was stuck at the airport when the final legacy flight arrived and he was drawn to the excitement and to the arriving

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Major Changes in US Aviation
Brighter future for workers.
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Dubious Record of Excuses, Job Promises
Commentary
Page 9.

Last to Lead
Meet everyone's choice for final flight. Page 5



Proud relatives carried signs to the airport to welcome a flight attendant on the last legacy flight, at right: Karen Clement Marchner.

helped send all that "best care" to pasture.

While most of these crews were veterans tested many times in flight, all had universal praise for the choice of Dan Norden to pilot the last legacy flight, for reasons

abundantly clear on Page 5.

But while the praise and the party was going on, most of the print and electronic media were engaged elsewhere in secondhand nostalgia and misplaced romanticism, parroting the self-serving explanations of the business community that the Midwest service model was doomed and belonged in the Stone Age.

Come down to earth for a hard reality landing. Nov. 2 made clear it was not the vanished leather seats, lobster dinners and even the remaining in-flight chocolate chip cookies that led the airline to dominate the nation's top service awards and first place in the hearts of customers for so many years.

It was the flight crews of Midwest who delivered on the care and fought to keep the promise of quality even when management abandoned it.

In the process the Midwest crews rank high as examples of safety and confidence in the skies,

while the loss of aviation roots and solidarity

has become the subject of congressional inquiries into regional airlines' safety and operations. Meanwhile, recognizing the negative public relations from its behavior, Republic engaged in an

Be Afraid
D.C. testimony should worry air travelers
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Legacy continued Page 6

Moves to help jobless

The media has devoted its airtime and news space to how long health reform is taking, the actual number of jobs saved or created under the recovery bills and the fight over cap-and-trade advances. But quietly Nov. 5, Congress in an astonishing bipartisan agreement confirmed that aspects of the government stimulus efforts are clearly working well and acted to continue the programs helping America recover.

After a month of public carping by the GOP, the Republicans ended that needless political boondoggle by voting in favor 98-0 -- and the House immediately followed with a 403-12 vote (yes, only 12 Republicans disagreed) -- to expand a popular tax credit for homebuyers and extend unemployment checks for nearly 2 million workers about to exhaust or face termination of such help in a stingy market.

The package also contained an estimated \$20 billion in tax credits for struggling businesses and a way for the government to recoup federal costs through how private business expenses are allocated. Businesses that incurred losses in 2008 and 2009 now have guidelines to seek refunds for taxes paid on profits over the past five years. All these measures became law with President Obama's prompt signing the next day.

While this is in effect the fourth stimulus package Congress has passed since June of 2008, new pay-go rules and the Democratic majority insisted on only a temporary \$43 billion increase in the national debt since the help will be paid off within a few years and is designed to immediately stimulate the economy.

For instance, the \$2.4 billion increase in unemployment benefits is offset by extending through June 2011 the federal unemployment tax that employers pay for each employee, and the extended benefits focus on basic living expenses to quickly mean money poured into the American economy.

Milwaukee's representative to the US Congress, Gwen Moore, has been a champion of this Emergency Unemployment Compensation Extension Act as a way to speed immediate assistance to

unemployed families as well as increasing spending in the economy. She points out the legislation will provide families in all states with 14 weeks of additional benefits, and then six more weeks to the 27 states with the highest unemployment rates - where it is most difficult to find employment. Wisconsin is among those high unemployment states.

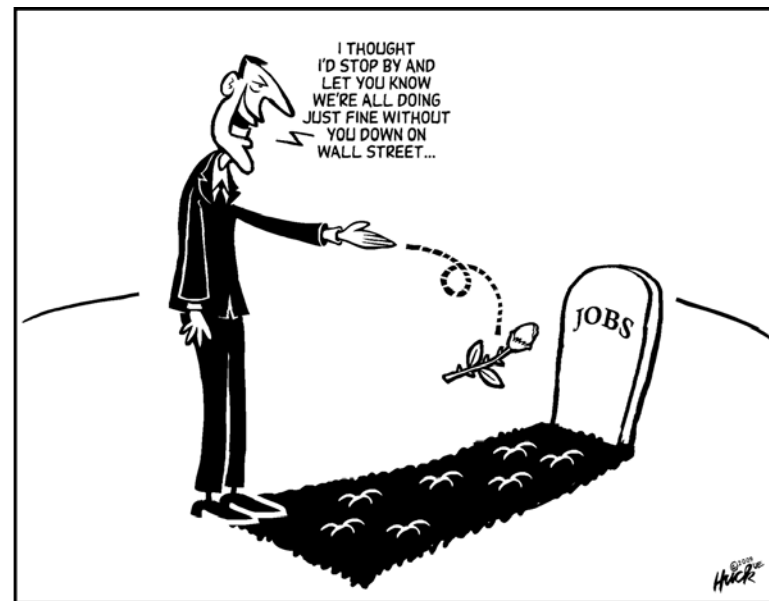
Numbers from Moore's office indicate that an estimated 24,140 workers in Wisconsin have or will run out of unemployment benefits by year's end and are eligible for this expansion. In the state, 24,685 have applied for the homebuyer's credit.

The Congressional Budget Office has cited unemployment benefits as one of the most cost-effective forms of economic stimulus, since every dollar spent on unemployment benefits generates \$1.63 in new demand, according to Moody's chief economist Mark Zandi.

Similarly effective in helping the economy and paying future dividends is the homebuyer's credit. It has already sparked the housing market, with some 1.4 million applicants for the credit through August. The new legislation would extend the \$8,000 first-time homebuyer tax credit program through June (if the buyer signs a contract by the end of April of 2010). It also offers a \$6,500 tax credit to those who have lived in their current residence at least five years and it doubles the income ceiling for eligible individuals to \$125,000. (Homes must cost less than \$800,000 to qualify.)

The statistics reaching back through the last 14 months of the Bush presidency and extending into the first (only!) 10 months of the Obama administration reveal that the nation has lost 8 million jobs in that period, noted a chief sponsor of this legislation, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.). So even though the recession is winding down, he said, "we know it will take considerable time to restore those lost jobs."

The House is signaling even more aggressive action - since more than one-third of the 15 million unemployed have been looking for work for at least six months, which is a record.



Veterans' Corner

Moving quickly to make the federal government the model employer of America's military veterans, President Obama issued an executive order in November creating the inter-agency Council on Veterans Employment to advise the president and the federal Office of Personnel Management OPM)

The order also establishes a Veterans Employment Program office within most federal agencies responsible for helping veterans identify employment opportunities, providing feedback to veterans about their employment application status, and helping veterans recently employed by these agencies adjust to civilian life and a workplace culture often different than military service.

To give the enterprise teeth as well as clout, Obama ordered a top team to head the council. Chairs will be Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki. OPM Director John Berry will serve as the vice chair and COO.

This council "underscores the administration's commitment to our military men and women, and keeps us squarely on the path to achieving the goal of good jobs for everyone," said Solis. Veterans deserve particular support as "they reintegrate into the civilian workforce," she said.

"Veterans have shown unmatched dedication to public service," said Shinseki. "They offer leadership and technical skills that are in high demand, whether in the public or private workforce. Not only does this initiative present an opportunity for veterans to serve their nation once again, the nation will benefit from the education and training veterans received in the Armed Forces."

The president's move will be of crucial help to federal hiring at a time when the Union Veterans Council reports that unemployment among veterans now exceeds 25%, much of the problem in the private sector.

The Veterans Council is calling on Congress to quickly enforce the laws allowing veterans to claim their former jobs when they return from active duty. Council chairman Mark Ayers said he is "dumbstruck" that Congress is considering cutting funding for the Helmets to Hardhats program - which places veterans in good construction jobs.

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As community groups swirled around the City Hall rotunda in opposition to the mayoral takeover of public schools (right and below), MPS Board Chairman Michael Bonds listened (at left) as Amy Stear laid it on the nose why Tom Barrett has already convinced city voters he is likely to ignore their wishes.



When flu, schools intersect, mayor loses

The most powerful proof against Tom Barrett's concept of mayoral takeover of the Milwaukee Public Schools is swine flu.

That was the message from 9to5's Wisconsin director Amy Stear, one of many speakers and groups at an early November rally in the City Hall rotunda urging the city to keep an elected school board in charge of tax decisions, governance and the choice of a new Milwaukee Superintendent of Schools, all things Barrett says he will do better if he holds the reins alone.

Cough together in disbelief. Because swine flu is the evidence against him.

"When it comes to issues of public health, education, transit, jobs, and green space, Milwaukeeans know best and want to safeguard our city," said Stear, pointing out that exactly a year before this rally, the mayor didn't listen to 70% of the voters in the same election that chose Barack Obama as president.

The voters chose to support a minimum of mandatory paid sick days for all private company employees working in the city. It should have been clear then but it is certainly clear today that the size of the support was not because, as business groups claimed, voters mistook paid sick days as some kind of free health largesse. It was because they had experience and



anticipated the danger of public illness without some protection from being fired or getting sick. The record was clear on the frequency in which parents of sick children could not get time to help their kids or were afraid to stop working themselves when sick. Workers could be fired if they forced the issue, or patrons would get ill from their presence.

Despite the overwhelming size of the vote, and despite Barrett's professed belief in the basic principle, or so he said, he refused to support the required ordinance or make the city attorney defend it through the court appeal system when the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce went to court.

So without the ordinance in place as the public wanted, along came swine flu, which hit Milwaukee particularly hard and vindicated the case for paid sick

days, showing that Milwaukee voters were a year ahead of the curve, as Stear noted.

In fact, in the construction field, which is largely union, contractors have told workers that even if they run out of sick days they can take time to get

well because of flu, and these are people with paid sick days.

In contrast, Stear reminded the rally, "In the food service industry over 85% of all workers do not have a single paid sick day. Many feel they have to work even when they have flu symptoms, endangering their own health and risking the spread of illness to consumers."

The ordinance is far from dead. 9to5 Milwaukee continues to work on winning against the MMAC through a court appeal, statewide through legislation in the next session, and nationally through the Healthy Families Act.

But 9to5 also has special memories to support the MPS against a mayoral takeover,

Stear said, having learned firsthand about mayoral lip service of a principle.

Rather than have Milwaukee serve as a beacon of how workers should be treated and companies should behave toward their workers, something that might actually improve employment in the city, Barrett clearly feared the city would become an island alone among its phlegm-rich suburban neighbors, that doing the right thing was not as important as doing the MMAC thing.

Why, she asked the rallygoers, should voters expect any different buckling to the MMAC on school issues than the mayor did on swine flu? -- D.P.N.

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Attack on a national scandal: wage theft

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL
 This provocative warning to businesses underlies the overwhelming problem of wage theft. It is being used by Interfaith Worker Justice (IWJ) to launch a nationwide campaign of social consciousness and legal action.

The effort formally started November 19 with a National Day of Action. Events around the country included a campaign by Madison's Worker Right Center. Now a series of actions are underway by Milwaukee religious groups, unions and the worker rights center Voces de la

Frontera, which intends to directly confront corporations engaged in the practice.

For Voces activities here in December, visit www.vdlf.org or call (414) 643-1620.

All this "push back" against wage theft can now include effective enforcement agencies that work cooperatively with community partners to educate workers and employers, investigate industries and punish those who steal wages, especially those who do so willfully and repeatedly.

IWJ can work on legislative bills to stop and deter wage theft

because of changes in the federal administration, particularly the new commitment by the Obama Department of Labor.

Wage theft is a term covering a variety of infractions that occur when workers do not receive their legally or contractually promised wages.

It occurs across the boards for citizens of the US as well as for the vulnerable undocumented workers. Common forms of wage theft are nonpayment of overtime, not giving workers their last paycheck after a worker leaves a job, not paying for all the hours worked, not paying minimum wage, and even not paying a worker at all.

Most commonly, wage theft is a violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which provides for a federal minimum wage and allows states to set their own (higher) minimum wage. But for decades a lack of investigation, not to mention enforcement, has given workers little chance of redress.

In 1941, the DOL's labor wages and hours division boasted 1,700 investigators, a number that at least covered one in 10 businesses of the era. Those experts examined payroll records and talked to workers. By 2008, though 15.5 million workers were covered by FLSA rules, the Bush DOL had dropped to under

750 investigators, a twentieth of what existed in World War II.

Now consider the wage theft under the Davis-Bacon Act. Workers being paid by a contractor or subcontractor of a federal contract are entitled to receive the prevailing wage in the city or region where the work is done. But many contractors could simply ignore this law, knowing that with such light enforcement there was little change of being caught.

Wage theft also frequently involves violations of tax laws, through such devices as misclassification of employees as independent contractors. When a worker is called an independent contractor, the employer does not pay its share of federal taxes and avoids the taxes that honest companies pay.

All this makes wage theft endemic. It affects millions and costs them billions of dollars. No group is immune, including workers earning good wages. It is more likely to occur in non-union workplaces -- union workers generally receive pay according to their negotiated contract, and any theft would be challenged by the union.

Immigrant and native born workers alike have their wages stolen, though low wage workers are particularly vulnerable. Agriculture, poultry processing, janitorial services, restaurant work, garment manufacturing, long term care, home health care and retail are industries with significant cases of wage theft.

IWJ's Workers Center Network now includes 200 centers reporting wage theft in the Northeast, Midwest, Southwest, South, and West Coast. Small grassroots organizations and committed religious groups are

also at the forefront in wage enforcement, which includes direct action by workers and their trusted advocates to recover stolen wages. It also includes lawsuits and sometimes class action suits against large employers.

During the last federal administration, the DOL concentrated more on policing labor unions than enforcing wage and hour or health and safety laws. Labor Secretary Hilda Solis now has secured the hiring of hundreds of new investigators and declared that wage theft enforcement is a top priority.

But better legislation is still needed to mandate that employers give workers pay stubs, so that they can accurately calculate their hours and earnings and have a record if they need to prove they were cheated. Advocates also want to fix the statute of limitations on wage claims. The IWJ is also pushing legislative action to protect workers from retaliation.

Unions and other groups are pushing hard for the Wage Theft Prevention Act (HR3303), introduced by Rep. George Miller (D-CA) in July 2009. It amends the Fair Labor Standards Act so that the DOL can offer stronger protections for workers.

The commandment against thievery is hardly the only historical injunction to get this done. The IWJ also is using a famous quote from Abraham Lincoln to push its campaign:

There has never been but one question in all civilization -- how to keep a few men from saying to many men: You work and earn bread and we will eat it.

For updates on the Interfaith campaign, visit www.iwj.org.

Bowling

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Legacy captain flies home to bankruptcy

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

A sense of impending loss spurred remaining veterans at Midwest to rush to fill the last B-717 flights -- yet there was broad endorsement among peers of the choice to captain final Flight 210: Dan Norden, the always cheerful and measured 24 year survivor of 23,000 hours flying for Midwest Airlines.

"Everything that could happen to a Midwest pilot -- including having an engine fall off your plane on takeoff -- has happened to him," noted his colleagues.

Among those making such recollections was Cat Reed, who represented all the flight attendants at last September's Laborfest.

Cat has a daughter in high school, lives in the heart of the city and will be finishing up union business at Midwest while exploring a new career. "We really are one big caring family being torn apart," she told me, and her warm feelings for Norden were echoed at the party. Said a fellow pilot: "Whatever the fates laid on Dan, he always brought the flights home with calm and even laughter."

If you ask Norden to respond to all this praise, he was typical of these crews, brief on anecdotal details, reluctant to dwell on bravery past or economic suffering present.

Only two weeks later in a phone interview did he open up. He felt honored to captain the last legacy flight but not sure what was waiting for him and his family. Their Muskego area home has gone into foreclosure and they've entered bankruptcy.

Norden was at the helm in January 1993 when the engine of his Midwest plane exploded and crumpled 100 feet off the ground after takeoff from Denver. The incident was caught by an aghast controller on video as Norden and the crew climbed 800 feet into the air, righted the



Among the crew buddies greeting Norden when he brought the last B-717 legacy flight home from Boston Nov. 2 was Toni Higgins, president of the flight attendants AFA unit at Midwest.

plane and returned for an emergency landing - during which the sparks flew, the brakes failed, the plane did a 180 and he went off the runway into a ditch without losing calm or total control.

So everyone walked away unharmed -- and today Norden can chuckle. "Was that his scariest moment?"

"Not sure," he said, recalling a time out of Dallas before 9/11 when an explosion in the air left him and the crew with an agonizing "five minutes of what the hell was that." Yet he brought that plane down without injuries as well.

Norden may demonstrate the sort of calm steady nerves that every passenger wants behind the wheel -- unless you manage Midwest, which showed no reluctance to let these crews go. Like so many others we spoke to at and after the reunion, he

seemed buoyed with hope and good memories, only casually pointing out how little Milwaukee media has documented the impact on hundreds of families, of veterans who have had to abandon careers they loved and excelled at in aviation.

In many cases they like Norden are being forced from the homes and communities where they raised families and brought that quiet strength to the community.

I had caught up with Norden before he had to fly off on a job hunt, after weeks of phone calls and farewells from colleagues. "I just had dinner with two flight attendants I've long worked with, and it was nice to hear that one reason they'll miss me is I knew how to work the system," he laughed.

But he explained. Without practice and experience, they

know well the temptation to let the little things go. Midwest crews were known for being bears about everything feeling right and even smelling right.

Norden recalls one time in April when both he and the flight attendants thought something "smelled funny and it was the plane," so despite pressure from the dispatcher, the ramp crew and down the line, who thought the problem was outside, they refused to take off. Sure enough, the plane filled with smoke, they opened windows to clear it and returned to the gate.

"That's so much of being a good crew, knowing when to speak up and stand up -- and

younger pilots might not know when to be firm, or think they'll lose their jobs if they're labeled troublemakers," he said.

He'll miss the B-717s, though agrees it would be a slam dunk to learn to fly the smaller Embraer jets Republic leased to its own future subsidiary. That was the financial deal that made Midwest throw in the towel and cede control.

But Norden has also done the math. "Did anyone notice that Midwest paid more per plane in the lease deal with Republic than it cost to fly the B-717s, and we seated more passengers? It's all about numbers and how you sell them, isn't it?"

Just who are the abandoned?

The sizable number of lost jobs recently at Midwest Airlines and five other companies spurred Milwaukee's HIRE Center for dislocated workers to urge the state to provide \$560,000 in special funding. In support of that urgent demand, HIRE did an in-depth study of the characteristics of the hundreds of workers recently discarded by Midwest. The demographic profile is startling.

Only 1% lacked a high school diploma. About 24% had earned either bachelor or master degrees and 25% more had advanced special training. The skills reflected all that would be needed to operate "a fully integrated airline service" since those hunting new jobs included flight attendants, pilots, customer service, reservations services and ramp agents. Median wage across all these occupations was \$20 an hour; given \$10 at the low end and \$150 an hour for a few top-trained experts at the high end.

While pilots and first officers were predominantly male and 89% over age 45, representing what should be peak earning years in the profession, the flight attendants were 83% female, 17% minorities, 55% over age 45, a startling 39% the only wage earners in the household, along with 49% with dependent children -- and 52% had more than 10 years of seniority when they were let go, confirming the race to the bottom at the airlines.

There was a strong preference to retrain within health care (42%) and professional/business services sectors (26%), but among the pilots a strong demand for type rating training to broaden the range of aircraft they can fly.



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Legacy

From Page 1

exercise in hole filling Nov. 10. It announced it would add 800 jobs to the Milwaukee market in the next year, a promise that in its excess raised more questions than answers. **To clear up the numbers game, see Page 9.**

"No question what Milwaukee is losing," said one partygoer looking around Nov. 2. Labor Press found dumped veteran pilots and flight attendants scattered from Fond du Lac to Oak Creek, from Glendale to Appleton. Captain Norden, **profiled on Page 5,** knows of six other families in his Muskego area who have lost careers and secure income.

About 270 recent or departing employees can be found seeking new work or even new communities in online job search centers.

Yet most we talked to Nov. 2 preferred to focus on the good times and their hopes for the future, continuing the pattern and experience of facing disaster with remarkable cheer. "I'm not sure where my family will end up," one pilot told me at the party. "But at least we'll be happy!"

"Well, one good thing," a flight attendant told me. "Now I'll have time to schedule my home life."

Most are leaving aviation



Betsy Olsen, the most senior of the flight attendants, shared a hug at the party with Cat Reed, the union's vice president.

reluctantly. The flight attendants are moving to everything from making pottery to teaching to sales.

Many just don't know what lies ahead but have confidence in themselves and supportive families.

Karen Clement Marchner, who served the last B-717 flight from Boston, started at Midwest at a ticket counter in Appleton in 1984 and then advanced to flight attendant. Proud parents, relatives and husband crowded around her at the airport -- **see photo on Page 1** -- but she will have to go to college to establish a new career.

Pilots we spoke to are being trained in air-conditioning repair, as bank tellers, in real estate sales, or applying as police officers, both public and private. Greg Ueselman, once the pilots' delegate to the Milwaukee labor council, was furloughed a few years ago and has been working for SEIU in Madison.

"We no longer exist," said one pilot, but then he brightened up. "But at least we'll always know we did."

Others echoed a refrain that has been picked up in those Internet social communities: "The airplanes will still say Midwest on the side but it's what was inside that counted."

A few hope to remain pilots but unless they luck onto the still evolving seniority lists, they will have to move elsewhere and probably into private aviation to do so.

The bad vibes in Milwaukee have propelled Republic management to want to add a few Midwest pilots to the Embraer jet service or even the Airbus planes they intend to move over from bankrupt Frontier Airlines. Some Republic employees say CEO Bryan Bedford has actually ordered them to "bring in a few tokens."

But not many and not flight attendants, or FAs as they are known in the trade. Republic FAs, members of the Teamsters with a weaker contract than its Midwest counterparts agreed to, say management is far more discouraging, even telling Republic FAs that this is "not a real career" and they shouldn't expect those jobs "to last more than two years." Perhaps because of the attitude recounted, Republic

loses a remarkable number of FAs every year -- apparently in the hundreds.

In contrast, Betsy Olsen worked in the air for nearly 25 years at Midwest and that's why she fought for a spot as flight attendant on one of the final B-717 trips. She and her husband intend to stay in Milwaukee where they raised seven children. They have traded the job duties back and forth over the decades depending on which one had better health care.

"My family will survive," said Olsen, described as the most senior member of the union unit. "We've always been frugal. We'll find a way to stick," she told me at the party.

"But my concern is still with the passengers. I'm truly worried about them."

"Maybe there are jobs where experience, skill and devotion to safety are overrated," she continued.

"But not in aviation. The loss of these crews is going to have consequences."

Kelly of Southwest

From Page 1

gate.

As related by a Southwest manager traveling with him, Kelly was amazed at the scene - first by how many veteran B-717s crews were now out of work (his airline also flies Boeings, the 737 model exclusively). It may also not have escaped notice how many of these Midwest crews trail-blazed the East Coast routes out of Mitchell that Southwest intends to add.

Kelly told traveling companions he had never seen such affection and kinship among flight crews as he did at this legacy reunion. Maybe part of that is the geographical proximity - and also the mutual reliance over the years of these Midwest legacy crews. But the Southwest executives perceived in passing exactly what has struck at the hearts of so many in the Milwaukee community.

It is for others to speculate

if this legacy moment will have any impact on how Southwest sells itself here. With flights that started in November, it has already made inroads as a no-frills airline that emphasizes friendly people and direct connection. It's also won media applause with its "luggage flies free" commercials. In union-strong Milwaukee it openly reminds customers that it is not only the nation's most profitable but also its most unionized air carrier.

The Transport Workers Union has taken out print and radio advertising to introduce Southwest Airlines to the Milwaukee market and seek applicants. It represents about half the company's workforce, about 17,000 employees including flight attendants and ramp and provision operators. The 5,900 pilots are represented by SWAPA (Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association).



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Airline management receives past credit along with blame

Regional air carriers, as our story on Page 8 indicates, can be an avenue of good value to travelers, depending on how companies use the rules of these non-national air roads. But as congressional details and comments from veteran flight crews also reveal, this is clearly one of the concerns about the Republic Airways takeover, given the track record and the expert testimony also described in that Page 8 story.

Republic has profited from the regional needs while Midwest tried to also play with the big boys over the years with its service model, routes and experienced flight crews.

Republic worked the higher profit, broader low-cost codeshare connection caravans needed by so many bigger airlines, serving as an ever-increasing tight-margin go-between among regional destinations.

"One thing I will credit the old Midwest management for," said one "furloughed" pilot who has every reason to avoid pointing this out. "They had a good eye for hiring people, not just in the crews but in finding ramp people, baggage handlers, mechanics, right down the line, people who went beyond the call of duty to take those extra steps that made it all work. It's the one thing you definitely aren't seeing under new management, and you won't see in the way Republic does business."

Technically a few Midwest Airlines flight crews have a chance to return to Republic -- IF they agree to be trained on the less complicated Embraer and Airbus planes from the B-717s they mastered, IF they also agree to existing Teamsters contracts that cut wages by 40% to 70% despite the cuts previously agreed to help Midwest survive, and IF the blending of union seniority lists at Republic -- despite their obvious seniority -- lets them rise from the bottom to maybe a level where despite all the ifs they would be hired.

By law the airline must agree to the concept of seniority lists, but there is clearly no haste on management's part. Negotiators in fact say Republic has left it up to the unions and really doesn't want many of the senior Midwest flight crews back since they're known for fighting hard for better pay and working conditions, as well as respect.

"Republic doesn't even believe these should be careers," several flight attendants also told me. "They say it's not a job to stick with longer than two years." -- *Dominique Paul Noth*

Good memories mask feelings of a last call

It began with cameras snapping and warm greetings at Mitchell Field among Midwest colleagues returning Nov. 2 for the last legacy flight. The crush forced even a flight attendant on the final legacy voyage, Linda Clement Marchner at far left, to leave her cluster of relatives (Page 1) to roam group after group among longtime friends. The party got bigger and more crowded as it moved to the catered party room at the hotel where the AFA had long kept its Milwaukee offices. With appetizers for all and bartenders kept hopping, the large room grew smaller. Even after midnight it was busier than a sports bar during a Packers game -- with two notable differences: No TV set and a lot more conversation. Eavesdroppers would hear jokes and teasing from yesteryears, but there were also trivial and serious tales dealing with moments of teamwork before, during and after 9/11. Back then, the memories suggest, peers had good reason to assume your competence. Today, the pilots joke about front office rather than cockpit skills. Flight attendants know they will be far more scrutinized for how they dress on the long bus rides from out of state to the airport rather than their manners with passengers during a flight.

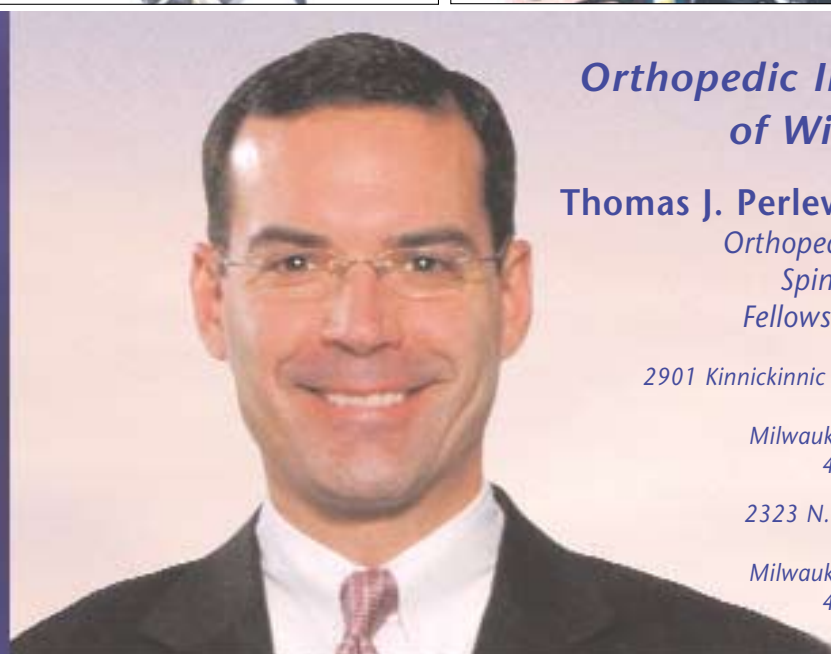


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Air safety hearings no place for faint of heart

Despite the optimism the grounded flight crews express for their personal future, you also hear considerable scorn and plain mystification about the short-sightedness of Republic-Midwest management in discarding its most experienced, proven and safety-conscious workers.

You could dismiss that as sour grapes. You may well argue that Republic Airways meant positively -- not as a slap in the face to Milwaukee's workers -- when it trumpeted that it would join the board of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce despite the MMAC opposition to helping low-income workers (see Page 3) or including parents and voters in education reform.

You might also think the Air Line Pilots Association and the Association of Flight Attendants -- the ALPA and AFA unions that continue to fight for every benefit due their Midwest members -- are overstating the consequence of airline industry behavior.

But that means you must also ignore the annals of recent aviation history and the frightening testimony from the Federal Aviation Administration and safety experts at congressional hearings.

All serve as goading reminders that some of the very things lost in the Midwest transfer to Republic set the standards for quality in the airline industry -- and that losing such mutual safeguards should deeply worry the public.

Both Midwest and Republic emerged from the world and reg-

ulations of regional carriers, under the radar of regulatory emphasis on national airlines.

A regional carrier can be an honorable road to better air service, but it can also escape close legislative notice. It's in the cracks between regulations that short cuts and inattentiveness occur, when the bottom line is more important than the treatment of the workers, or safety on the ground and in the air, or operational and scheduling details.

A series of recent disasters among regional carriers has brought warning testimony to Congress in hearings about just such issues.

Colgan Air, a regional code-share carrier providing Continental Connections Flight 3407, was on the congressional hotseat last May for that fatal crash in February that killed all 50 aboard near Buffalo, N.Y., and clearly blamed on pilot inattentiveness. Colgan's vice-president for operations admitted that the pilot lived in Florida and that the co-pilot not only lived in the Seattle area, there was no record of a hotel stay, she had complained about not feeling well and she worked a second job at a coffee shop in Virginia because her pay from the airline was a mere \$16,200 a year. Testimony also revealed that the pilot had never received hands-on training in a key instrument control.

National Transportation Safety Board member Kathryn Higgins said during testimony that the low pay, fatigue and long commutes were "a recipe for an accident."

Legislators also learned of



On Nov. 2 at Mitchell Field, several radio and TV crews asked flight crews about losing their jobs, but media has not much covered the devastating hearings about regional carriers and safety.

investigative reports on how flight crews had established crash pads near airports to catch some secret shut-eye between flights or grabbed a nap in airport lounges, because they were not domiciled in the communities they regularly flew from.

FAA Administrator J. Randolph Babbitt -- a former president of ALPA -- testified about long-term concerns, and steps for improvements. He focused heavily on crew fatigue "because piloting is a highly mobile profession (and) one of the persistent challenges is that pilots are often domiciled in places that are hundred of miles from the airlines' bases of operations."

It is the responsibility of pilots, flights attendants and dispatchers to be fit for duty, the testimony detailed, but the experts also insisted airlines should operate in a supportive accountable manner and noted that experience was a key factor in reducing ever-present human risk.

Yet regional air carriers for cost encourage mobility and distant domiciles, an emerging issue with Midwest Airlines where once so many crews lived near the airport they flew from. These days the Republic Airways pilots and flight attendants operating under Indiana based Teamsters contracts are often bussed in or pooled from afar to fly from Mitchell Field.

The far less experienced crews at the current Republic-Midwest, or even from the bankrupt Frontier Airlines acquired

by Republic and likely to be added into the Midwest mix, don't make the annals of aviation status the way the Midwest legacy crews do, though those airline operations have been around a long time.

Regular fliers who put their loyalty in Midwest legacy crews' vast experience were apparently on the right track, judging by aviation historians.

It's notable that two Midwest flights over Manhattan on 9/11 were singled out for experienced pilots who kept their cool and control amid chaos. Midwest crews were a big part of that day's remarkable safety record across the nation when all commercial planes returned safely to the ground within minutes on orders from the FAA -- and there are also detailed FAA records over the years of mechanical problems and air turbulence that Midwest crews quietly overcame. (ALPA represents nearly 54,000 pilots at 36 airlines in North America.)

Flight attendants have been part of this safety concern and fight for their own protection as well as that of passengers. Their largest union, AFA/CWA, representing some 55,000 flight attendants at 20 airlines (including the legacy Midwest that ended in November), has emerged as a leading voice not just for air careers, better pay and working conditions but also improved safety.

In the first eight months of 2009, the AFA testified recently, 143 flight attendants at two

major carriers it represents were injured by in-flight air turbulence incidents.

The Midwest unit sure knows about that. In one case, profiled both in the Labor Press and the New York Times, Toni Higgins -- now president of the Midwest AFA unit -- was one of two flight attendants seriously injured in 2003 when a sudden air pocket over Colorado careened her twice from ceiling to floor.

"I remember hitting the ceiling the first time and the second I don't remember because I was unconscious," she recalled. The injuries kept her out of work for a year. Her colleague on that flight never did return to flying.

Yet these flight attendants, as Higgins frequently pointed out in her union role before media cameras, "have been the main public face of the airline" as well as the most prominent embodiments of its best care. Passengers have always cited that Midwestern warmth at Midwest, married with the disciplined control and calm that commanded obedience under all circumstances.

(Republic can also worry that the pressure to scale up will happen from many quarters. Frontier flight attendants have already petitioned to switch to the AFA in an effort to get decent wages.)

Despite the realities of congressional testimony and the stalled negotiations, the media has allowed both Midwest and Republic to claim with a straight face that far less experienced flight crews, far less pressure to retain good workers, less demanding contracts and hiring procedures, tighter cost and scheduling strictures will have absolutely no impact on quality or service.

Labor Press asked the legacy crews if they felt Republic management was resisting their unions, much as Midwest Airlines had done in its negotiations, because they were known for pushing safety and working conditions as well as respectful decent pay. "If that's their reason," said one negotiator, "well, shame on them."

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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City needs steak, airlines deceive with sizzle

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

The consolidation of the aviation business has always been more about money than service. Which also makes image and promotion more essential in convincing passengers than facts and reality, as Republic's recent promise to add jobs in Milwaukee confirms.

For instance, the Midwest Airlines brand continues under Republic's cut-quality practices and its ads assure Milwaukeeans that it is still the hometown airline with 1,000 jobs in the area. But that number has already dropped by several hundred.

In fact, it is only by calling the remaining 800 jobs "Republic Airways jobs" that Republic can now claim it's bringing 1,600 jobs here while saying it's "adding" 800 new jobs to Milwaukee in its Nov. 10 announcement.

The only people who blindly accepted Republic's magic numbers were MMAC luncheon guests, elected officials to whom any job promise is a gain and Journal Sentinel reporters.

Unmentioned: None of these Republic employees in Milwaukee are anymore in the skies. What remains are basically disposable clerical workers or backroom bean counters. Several told Labor Press they have no assurances about their immediate future.

Official notice

United Steelworkers Local 2-232 is notifying its members that nominations for the Executive Board and the Strattec Bargaining Committee will occur at the January 17th (2010) meeting at 9:30 a.m. that Sunday at Frank Monreal's El Matador, 9155 W. Bluemound Rd.

Nominations of eligible members cover the president, vice-president, financial secretary, recording secretary, sergeant at arms, guide, Briggs trustee, Strattec trustee and Strattec Bargaining Committee (two positions).

If a primary is needed because of too many nominations, that will be held February 5 in voting in the plant and at the union office, 8500 W. Capitol Drive.

The general election will be held March 5 in the plant and at the union office.

Ralph E. Schwieger
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Comment

Few in the aviation business even believe the additional jobs Republic pledged. It's good to move any jobs, even low-income ones, to Milwaukee from places like La Cruces, N.M., or Denver (though management insiders are hedging that the 400 jobs moving here might turn into 150).

But aviation consultants laugh at the idea of \$8 an hour workers leaving La Cruces without a sizable pay raise, or Milwaukee employees willing to bend in half from their current \$14 an hour (which they may have to do to keep those jobs).

Republic's job moves are mechanical (slightly better pay) and clerical positions tied to more tax advantages here and an effort to stem losses at bankrupt Frontier Airlines by folding more operations into and flights out of Mitchell. Of course, if Frontier doesn't turn around, those jobs will turn around - and leave.

One former military pilot said he understood the desire by politicians to fill the space left vacant at Mitchell with the departure of the 440th air wing, "but at least we were here for decades; they're trading that for a few months."

The other added jobs are mainly customer-service if Republic can reverse the decline of ticket sales against new formidable opposition. This is not money to write home to mother about yet.

As to the promise that it might base more flight crews here and offer opportunities to fly Frontier and Republic planes to the dumped Midwest crews, Republic in the same breath said it was up to the unions to resolve the seniority issues.

Even talk radio now regrets the loss of the good service of Midwest, though it likes to blame the original Midwest management for not moving fast enough with the times, not responding to the Internet, or not having enough cash as did Delta/United Airlines or Air Tran.

Those were factors -- but there were also airlines in equally bad circumstances that outplayed expectations. Such as Southwest, which anticipated the volatility of fuel costs by locking in lower bulk rates early, by unifying its fleet before it became too expensive, by retaining its best employees through



As they said farewell Nov. 2, the flight crews may have been sending Milwaukee a quiet message on their cell phones and cameras - don't believe what the airlines keeps promising about job security.

downturns.

Yes, there has been a fever in the airline industry spurred by 9/11 to consolidate, to lure passengers back, curtail to fewer flights for bigger profit and cut wages (which the Midwest crews had been among the first to agree to) while seeking deeper financing and more efficient planes.

One result has been that the highest skilled crews are treated by management as mule skinnners hauling freight from city to city.

In the Midwest Airlines story, it is remarkable as well as dumfounding how many discharged represent the top skilled, educated and accomplished citizens of the community.

The service model was never the deciding expense, nor were the crew salaries - it was always the cost and efficiency of planes and fuels, and management perks. Midwest swooned because of bad financial deals, bad anticipation, refusal to spend on upgrades even when workers and shareholders begged -- and basically a desire to protect executive pay by abandoning the very elements that set Midwest apart. Republic has taken it on without the very things - style and people - that made it work.

Midwest Airlines has already dropped to 35% from half of the traffic at Mitchell Field - yet amazingly it seems to be getting away with pretending that nothing has changed by slapping Midwest insignias on Republic Airways' Teamsters uniforms or painting the

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Midwest brand on Republic planes.

The remaining shoe to drop will be how long Midwest can maintain such pretense when even business journalists have started describing it as a "virtual airline," an airline "in brand name only" and even a "shadow airline." The speculation is how long will it be for Midwest to turn wholly into Republic and sell off the naming rights to its downtown convention center, still the most prominent relic of the service that once was.

(One who suggested it should be called "The Brett Favre Center" -- "something else that has left but at least still represents quality.")

There should be a temporary advantage for passengers at Mitchell in ticket prices. But prices are expected to drop for only a few months, mitigated as recent news stories indicate

because fees have expanded for everything from ticket booking to baggage to airport fees.

The industry now theorizes that the public doesn't care about service distinction or quality if prices go down. Many aviation consultants quietly disagree -- they see danger in relying on the financial leverage of consolidation and ticky-tacky uniformity.

Speaking off the record, an executive at one of the airlines flying out of Mitchell talked about what will happen five years from now when the air traveler gets tired of being treated "like a sardine."

"Some bright fellow is going to realize that competitive prices and good service can go hand in hand," he said, "and he'll re-invent the Midwest service model and make a killing. Only it won't be an airline in Milwaukee."

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National gains on horizon in aviation

The cruel dismissal of veteran flight crews explored in our main stories was not the only airline news this month.

Other major developments involve a campaign to win union rights for the nation's transportation security officers (TSOs) who handle 600 million US air travelers each year; basic rights restored to even more aviation and railway workers through a simple rule change at the National Mediation Board; an impending \$18 million runway improvement project in Milwaukee that means good construction jobs over the next year for skilled area union workers, and -- lurking in the background -- the continuing efforts of Republican legislators to hand privateers one of the jewels of clean operation of Milwaukee County government, the General Mitchell International Airport.

Solidarity for TSOs

The campaign to finally win bargaining rights for the TSOs is the most prominent tale, with many key factors.

The Milwaukee labor council, the national AFL-CIO and such major unions as the flight attendants and pilots who represented Midwest Airline workers have all endorsed the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) as key representative should the country's 42,000 TSOs finally achieve, as seems more likely, collective bargaining rights after eight years in the desert.

All citizens can show their support for this campaign during National TSO Solidarity Week Dec. 13-19. Along with activities and rallies, there are stickers, pins, leaflets and tags to apply to airport luggage to announce solidarity. Visit the Take Action center of www.milwaukeekeelabor.org

to share a poster on the campaign.

The AFGE is not only the federal government's largest union, with 600,000 federal and D.C. government workers nationwide and overseas. Its many duties and training regimens embody everything from veterans administration workers such as AFGE Local 0003 at the Zablocki Center in Milwaukee to the civilian police officers at the Ft. Hood military installation in Texas, where AFGE Local 1920 member Sgt. Kimberly Munley was wounded stopping Major Nidal Hasan, accused in the killing rampage.

Despite its track record of solid training and active bargaining for diverse government workers, AFGE was blocked in 2001 by President Bush when he created the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Except for a few existing units, the TSOs were legally stopped -- for still bizarre "security reasons" (translation: Unions would have halted cheap low-cost employees, a hiring practice that became a scandal of how lightly credentials were checked).

Ignoring the pressure against unionizing, more than 12,000 TSOs have become dues-paying members of AFGE despite being denied the right to collective bargaining. They clearly have been chafing for the day they get their rights.

Since 2003 members of Congress have introduced legislation to help them but were always blocked by Bush's threat of a veto.

Now a new president has nominated a security veteran and open-minded executive to head the TSA. Since September, Republicans have tried to block the appointment by President Obama, but Erroll Southers is

expected to be confirmed shortly after two hearings and is described by many in Congress as a good leader well informed on the issues.

This fall, the House oversight and government reform committee approved HR 1881, not only restoring the workers' rights that the Bush administration stripped away but granting the baggage and passenger screeners and other TSA workers "whistle-blower" rights and the civil service protections enjoyed by other federal workers.

Politics may play a part -- elections do have consequences -- but the committee also cited the desperate need for improvement after so many confirmed reports of the high attrition, low morale and severe workplace injury rates that have plagued the TSA since its creation in 2001.

So Congress seems poised to change the ground rules if the public shows its support, which is the reason for the December solidarity campaign. To find the form to get baggage tags and for more details, check out www.TSAUnion.net.

The 'Silence Veto'?

Time to Shut It Down

Another related move that could free airline and railway workers to more easily attain basic rights is simultaneously underway. This involves overturning an archaic interpretation of the 1934 Railway Act, which actually controls aviation and railway workers to this day.

For all the fuss about the proposed Employee Free Choice Act and how it would take away the secret ballot in National Labor Relations Board workplace elections, that turned out not to be true.

But all the hoopla kept the public eye off an egregious denial of free choice known as the "veto of silence."

The NLRB doesn't control aviation and railway employees, who have long suffered under a bizarre reading of the Railway Act. At the NLRB at least, a majority of voters in a workplace election can choose or reject a union.

Under the ancient interpretation allowed at the National Mediation Board (NMB), anyone who doesn't vote in a railway or aviation election is counted as a "no" vote. That's right - no secret ballot here. If you don't even know or decide to vote, that's a

no. So a union not only has to have a majority vote of those who cast a ballot, it has to have a majority vote of all potential voters.

Now the NMB, applauded by many unions but opposed by several airlines, has announced new voting procedures that echo the existing majority vote standards at the NLRB. This simple long-overdue decision could have profound impact on hundreds of thousands of workers.

Construction Boon for Mitchell

A month ago, in support of grants approved by the federal 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and the FAA, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle released both federal and state funds to complete financing of an \$18 million runway improvement construction project at Mitchell Field.

The governor supported the second phase of this project by directing \$1,086,214 in state funds to match Milwaukee county funds while also freeing federal improvement funds.

All this directly affects building and construction trades union workers in southeastern Wisconsin, since the work involved will require several different specialties. The investment also recognizes the growing regional and national value of Mitchell Airport and its seven hard-surface runways that handle seven million passengers and 215,000 takeoffs and landings each year.

Our house is yours for the holidays

Last year's annual open house of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO was clobbered and canceled by bad weather.

This year, all hands are on board, all food and drink are being sumptuously assembled -- oh yes, traditional festive fare to make the stomach groggy -- and all weather systems had better be go Friday, December 18, from noon to 4 p.m., when the council hosts its annual holiday get-together.

Yatchak Hall at 633 S. Hawley Rd., just outside the offices of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, will be decorated for the holidays and good cheer is the command of the day.

All union members and affiliates are welcome to this

A Threatened Gem

It's all a reminder of another reason why the GOP is so eager to take over the state legislature in 2010 as well as the governor's mansion -- the largesse the party could lay on private companies by taking control of the airport away from the Milwaukee County Board.

This seems the prime motivation behind this constant push for creating a regional airport taxing authority that local voters can't control. Such a change, unlikely under current legislators, would also remove from the community a successful nonpolitical public service.

To this point supervisors have focused on working with residents and businesses around the airport and providing only oversight to the professionals running the airport.

That has kept out the maneuvering that has roiled the airline industry from infecting key operations -- and kept profit motives out of the equation by using government workers for both crucial and basic functions.

Yet the airport also works well as it must with private companies, from vendors to airlines to service providers. These gains in success and reputation are both tempting and grating on the politicians eager for another profit center for privateers, so the issue will bubble underneath the next election cycles in the state.

-- *Dominique Paul Noth*

great party tradition. It is customarily attended in droves by a range of public officials and community and religious leaders. So please, take a few hours and join a good time!

Health Forum Dec. 2

The December meeting of delegates will become a health care forum with testimonials. It will also accept nominations for the open Ozaukee County position on the executive board.

Rules require that no more than one delegate from a member union sit on the board at the same time and that only unions with up-to-date per capita payments can participate.

If final election is needed, that will be held at the January 13 delegate meeting.

The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, December 2, at American Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

We need to recover

Because of these holiday celebrations, the offices of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO will be closed from Dec. 24, 2009, through January 3, 2010.

The office re-opens January 4.

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Gala adds power

Voces de la Frontera organized remarkable public reminders over the last few years by rallying tens upon tens of thousands to march through the streets as a show of power and unity for immigrant families and rights. Some tried to dismiss that as simply an uproar of "illegals" but that ignored both the common humanity and how many voting citizens and veteran community groups were also engaged.

If you need fresh proof that the workers' right center has hardly retreated and has actually grown into a full-fledged political and economic force -- with its own newspaper, legislative and education agendas and election-deciding influence on politicians and businesses -- that came in late October with its first formal fund-raising gala. Well-dressed hundreds added tens of thousands of dollars to Voces coffers and causes in a sumptuous banquet hall at the Potawatomi Ballroom on Canal St.

At \$50 per person, participants enjoyed a lavish dinner, roving Fuego Musical troubadours, a video reminder of Voces clout throughout southeastern Wisconsin, a silent auction and new awards for community activism at this initial "Reaching for the American Dream" event.

Ana Avedano, the keynote speaker, had just been elevated by new national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka to be his chief policy adviser on immigration issues.

She was also one of the recipients of the new Joe Rody awards, named after the warmly remembered activist (1918-2005) and self-taught inventor and businessman who spoke up for humanitarian and progressive causes while preaching the benefits of organic food. Other recipients of the Rody award presented by his son, Dennis, were AFT Local 212, the MATC teachers represented by local president Michael Rosen; the Racine Education Association (representing teachers, nurses and others at the Racine Unified School District), and John Rosenow, owner of a large dairy farm near Waumandee who talked of the essential place of immigration workers in the state's dairy industry.

A youth activist award, presented to two tireless recruiters for Voces, Valeria Gonzalez and Yazmin Romero, is named after a late visionary, Richard Oulahan, creator of Esperanza Unida. His son and one of his brothers helped make the presentation.

Avedano, long legal council and leader of the AFL-CIO's efforts for centers such as Voces focused not on unions but all workers, outlined the state of immigration reform efforts, calling them much better today with



Dairy owner Rosenow

a labor secretary who comes from an immigrant family and even with a homeland security secretary who "listens and works with" the minority community.

Avedano has spoken often about the shame that should be felt in a nation founded on inalienable rights that "we have created a subclass of workers who have no meaningful way of protecting their civil rights" because of fear-inspired immigration laws further enshrined in court rulings.

She still has disagreements with homeland security, underlined in a recent report about how the Bush administration's crackdown on illegal immigration, combined with lax enforcement of labor laws, undermined federal labor standards and left not only illegal immigrants but many legal workers at risk of abusive employment practices.

But things are different today since working behind the scenes well with federal agencies was almost half the battle -- though Congress "must still act forcefully to heal broken immigration laws."

She reinforced organized labor's commitment to a legal path for those hard workers and valuable families already driven to this country by repression and poverty in their home countries. The economic crisis in the US has already receded that undocumented tide, but she said the nation must now balance its concern by addressing the illegal subpar wages, cruel raids and refusal of legal redress by American companies to exploiting the vulnerable workers here. "There can be no worker rights for any of us if we allow this shadow existence for anyone in this country," she said.

Though Avedano seems to believe that honey and good sense worked better than acid, she nevertheless renounced those in Congress trying to institutionalize such exploitation and asked how "blind can we be to our good health?"

Indeed, GOP leaders had so demonized the issue of undocumented workers that they were costing American citizens big money, as well as the moral high ground, by refusing to let undocumented immigrants spend their own money for good coverage in the emerging health insurance exchange.

"Our time is coming," she assured the gathering. "The movement is toward fairness to all our workers."



Video highlights entertained hundreds of diners as did strolling musicians (right) at the Voces de la Frontera gala. The keynote speaker was the AFL-CIO's leader on immigration issues, Ana Avedano (below) and new awards included several presented to union groups.

BOTTOM RIGHT: The trio at the podium from left is Voces Executive Director Christine Neumann-Ortiz, AFT Local 212 President Michael Rosen and Dennis Rody, the son of the late humanitarian after which a major new award has been named. The fund raiser cleared more than \$20,000 and was held at the Potawatomi Woodland Dreams Ballroom.



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Labor history at last goes to head of class

For nearly 20 years, unionists in Wisconsin have been trying to make the teaching of labor history in the

schools a reality. It's not exactly a mandate but the dream came true when the state law passed the state Senate Oct. 27 and

Gov. Doyle fulfilled a promise to sign it into existence.

The State Senate approval of AB-172 calls for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to include the history of organized labor and the collective bargaining process in the state's model academic standards for our schools.

It took many efforts but the bill that easily cleared the Assembly sailed through the Senate on a vote of 20-12 vote, including 17 Democrats and three Republicans voting aye, and 12 Republicans voting no.

Since the early 1990s, WLHS, the State AFL-CIO, Teamsters, WEAC and AFT, among other groups, have been urging the state to allow teaching of labor history in the schools. This is not some public relations ploy. David Newby, president of the state AFL-CIO, said in hearings that this should be a "warts and all" approach, telling the truth but not ignoring the major place of labor concerns and organized labor in the march of history. Currently students learn nothing, though Wisconsin's history is particularly rich in labor activism. The state was a breeding

ground and a national pioneer in many of the labor campaigns.

The new law does not mandate the teaching of labor but it supports it by putting detailed lesson plans on the state's front burner. It requires the State Superintendent of Schools to make the subject part of the state standards, and, as such, to provide assistance in teaching the subject.

The bill is a major victory not just for organized labor, but also for rounded and truer teaching of American history in our schools.

Calendar

For updated master list of events, visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org

Thursday, November 26

Thanksgiving Holiday

Office Closed Until Monday, November 30

Wednesday, December 2

Health Care Forum

Open to All, Featuring Testimonials for Officials -- Separate MALC meeting with nomination -- 6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Saturday, December 5

Rally for Immigration Reform

With informational sessions from Voces de la Frontera 9 a.m.-noon, South Division High School, 1515 W. Lapham St.

Friday, December 18

MALC Holiday Open House

Noon-4 p.m., Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

December 24 - January 3, 2010

Happy Holidays! MALC Office Closed

Wednesday, January 13

MALC Delegate Meeting

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

Battle for fair trade with Woody, Charlize

Ten years ago, thousands of people converged on the World Trade Organization in Seattle to protest the devastating impact of corporate globalization. Now, big corporations are at it again. The World Trade Organization has brazenly scheduled a 7th Ministerial on November 30th, the exact day of the 10th Anniversary of Seattle activism.

Their WTO "Doha Round" expansion will hurt US workers economically, increase the flood of unsafe imports and undermine efforts to reregulate the banks and stabilize our economy. If you don't think the hurt will happen, think back on the last 10 years.

At the end of November, hundreds of groups across the country are joining together to turn around trade policies with a WTO Trade Turn Around Campaign.

To celebrate this historic ten year anniversary, fair trade coalitions around the nation are organizing movie house parties. If you sign up -- with at least

ten of your friends or family -- sponsors will send you a free copy of the film "Battle in Seattle," starring Charlize Theron and Woody Harrelson.

Sign up to host a house party at <http://houseparty.wtoturnaround.org>. You'll get a free copy of "Battle in Seattle" and then host a house party screening. Even if you can't organize a party or attend one, join the movement, which will be conducting other events throughout December.

Included is a bonus special edition DVD with original Seattle protest footage and a short new documentary to update your guests on the WTO and the WTO turnaround fight worldwide.

Learn more from the Citizens Trade Campaign at www.citizenstrade.org. Andrew Gussert, national director, points out that his group doesn't have the \$100 million budget of the Chamber of Commerce, but it does have details and facts on major reform -- and does quite a lot with small focused contributions from ordinary people.

Aurora Wilkinson Medical Clinic opens October 26, 2009, and the Aurora Medical Center opens early 2010

Thank you to these talented organizations that made this dream a reality



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Heat & Frost Insulators Union, Local 19
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Operating Engineers Union, Local 139
Operative Plasterers & Cement Masons International Union, Local 599
Painters & Allied Trades, District Council No. 7
Plumbers Union, Local 75
Roofers Union, Local 65

Sheet Metal Workers Union, Local 18
Sprinklerfitters Union, Local 183
Steamfitters Union, Local 601
Teamsters Union, Local 200
Tile & Terrazzo Layers Protective Union, Local 5



www.Aurora.org/Summit

Aurora Health Care is a not-for-profit health care provider and a national leader in efforts to improve the quality of health care.