

# November 6 isn't just about Obama

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

When Mitch McConnell declared his party's primary goal was to make Obama a one-term president, that was only the surface of the threats, and something of a preening posture. He was in the minority in the Senate and could only control financial legislation requiring 60 votes to move forward.

So he had to lean hard on the Republican majority in the House that took over in the excess fear of Obama combined with Democratic laziness at the ballot box in 2010. He counted on the House intransigents under Paul Ryan to create obstructionist policies to gridlock the government, encouraging a series of repulsive measures he knew would never be approved by the president or the Democratic Senate. It was a guarantee of paralysis.

What the Republicans never anticipated was how such maneuvers would up-end their own base. Moderates were squeezed out and are angry at the loss of some of their most respected leaders, from Olympia Snowe to Richard Lugar. The extreme right

preened to excess, threatened independent thinkers in their ranks, embraced crazies like Florida's Allen West and wielded that outside money like a club, turning off much of the nation while freezing the House into inaction - but they underestimated the consequences.

That's now come home full force with an unprecedented rebellion. Before the election, their own presidential candidate felt compelled to push them into the ditch, now that he has their money firmly in his pocket and they have no place else to go. Mitt Romney has spent the last few weeks qualifying when not abandoning the most conservative stances and Tea Party promises that won the nomination, saying stuff that would have cost him the primaries. He declares his empathy with all and closeness to such Obama principles as helping the middle class, supporting government-aided health care and "protecting" the middle class.

The nation may not be ready for a president who will change stripes at will and say anything to

**Ballot** continued Page 4



Milwaukee voters crush in on President Obama during a 2012 visit

Polls are open Tuesday, November 6, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Make sure to work through the entire ballot since there are contests and questions aside from state legislative, US Congress and US president races. Check [myvote.wi.gov](http://myvote.wi.gov) by address to preview a sample ballot.

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## Transcending while informing our politics

### 'As Goes Janesville' succeeds as insightful documentary art

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

It sounded so old-fashioned and boring. That's why establishment media didn't bother to accept the invitation last April 21 to the labor heritage conference. It only learned afterward how it missed a news pearl inside that neglected oyster. Those there started the buzz -- the snippet of Brad Lichtenstein's in-progress documentary "As Goes Janesville" - and within a week the slow media exploded with a "gotcha video" that dominated front pages, newscasts and the Internet for months.

It showed Gov. Scott Walker, before even introducing Act 10 eviscerating bargaining rights for public workers, revealing his "divide and conquer" strategy to his biggest political donor, billionaire Diane Hendricks, as merely the opening legislative salvo to destroy all unions, public and private, with "right to work" (for less and at the will of the corporate masters). She was delighted while the media and the public were understandably dismayed at hearing his casual assurance.

In the immediate wake of the fury, Walker denied that was what he meant. Even some private sector unions who rely on public works largesse said they still "took his word" that he would not introduce "right to work." But that chat with Hendricks was vividly clear and the damage to Walker's candor was unrecoverable. It would take more than \$30 million in out of state advertising money just to survive a recall effort a few months later.

Inadvertently, the fury of the publicity did temporary damage to film-maker Lichtenstein. He stuck firmly by his pledge to all sides to keep footage under wraps for a year. But such amazing footage! It revealed the real motors operating right-wing mentality, so conservative bloggers inevitably condemned Lichtenstein as some sort of left-wing stooge fabricating rather than reporting. And even folks in the middle questioned his motives.

Now that the full documentary was made available and proved a hit at the Milwaukee Film Festival and in New York

and other screenings around the country, now that a strong one-hour version of the 88 minute film started showing on public TV "Independent Lens" Oct. 8, now that it is winning festival awards around the country, a huge public apology is due Lichtenstein.

His film is firmly and excellently rooted in the mainstream of reliable, revealing documentary film-making. It actually surpasses those roots.

It is humanistic and personal. It will make your eyes well up over its honesty. You'll wish to leap through the screen to strangle the unthinking business execs whose schemes for recovery ignore the real human pain or leap through the screen to hug the factory workers striving tirelessly to explore their options and retrain if necessary despite political extremism and corporate blindness heaping uninvited disaster upon them.

Yet amazingly they were not blaming anyone, though those who see "As Goes Janesville" surely will.

Somehow the film reveals and rises above the partisan fury. It is a time capsule of what happened in Wisconsin and Janesville in a bitter two years - hence perfectly timed to this political season in terms of looking under the rhetoric. But my suspicion is that five years from now, when Obama-Romney debates are long forgotten, the film will remain to expose and



Director Brad Lichtenstein is winning awards and accolades for honestly exploring the great divide that was Wisconsin political beliefs and social attitudes and how all that engulfed Janesville. explain what really occurred and what it all meant no matter who is in office.

"As Goes Janesville" pivots us between the extreme reactions to the economic downturn. In executive suites there is never any pause to blame the bloated, self-indulgent self-deceiving GM executives (so like the business types offering Janesville "solutions"). Both sets ignored facts, spoke with pride but no humanity about the workers and took advantage of Bush policies to close the GM plant in 2008 and then chart a future without GM.

(It would take President Obama to force all sides at GM to grow up and give, but that was 18 months away and too late for the new GM to revive Janesville.)

Fear and panic dominated just that wealthy side while among working people there may have been disgust and even brief despair but better, basic and more intelligent analysis of how steady persistence on known family values was now necessary.

So on the one side are politicians and business leaders talk-

**Janesville** continued Page 8

# You NEED to vote, but you also need to KNOW

Wisconsin is a little better off than the rest of the states where photo voting ID laws have been blocked by the courts in a series of overwhelming victories for civil rights groups, the US department of justice and frankly for the US Constitution.

But the preponderance of wrong instructions along with a refusal of the losers to give up are still confusing voters.

So now, while the state is free of photo ID for this election, that doesn't mean this state is free of voter confusion and misinformation, particularly when the leading law enforcement officer acts more like a Republican than a humanist in office. Attorney General J.D. Van Hollen keeps pressing the courts to support what several judges have ruled unconstitutional, and two federal courts are still examining. If he won't face facts, no wonder some voters are still confused.

So let's be clear. **The courts have successfully blocked the attempt to show a photo ID to vote for this November 6.**



Voters at rallies make vivid their views on the GOP platform.

But the GOP majority's new rules **do affect early voting and registration deadlines.**

The main thing is restrictive elements of the 28 day residency requirement, making Oct. 10 the cutoff proof of residency for the Nov. 6 election. If you moved after that, if you are a student who moves often, if you are a couch potato who hasn't thought much about telling the government where you live, if you've been foreclosed from having a residence, now you have to scramble.

**You can check under "regular voter"** whether you are registered to vote at the govern-

ment's My Vote Wisconsin (myvote.wi.gov, 866-VOTEWIS).

There are instructions if you have moved or need to update information.

**The site by address also reveals your voting place.** But there may be holes in the data, so check with your local municipality as well and gather the appropriate documents.

**If you've moved after Oct. 10 you are required to register.** Registration requires a Wisconsin driver's license number or state ID number or last four digits of Social Security number plus proof of residency, such as utility

bill with address. Electronic bank statements that list your correct address were recently allowed.

**You can still register to vote on Election Day** with the right documents and in the city of Milwaukee at City Hall. If you live outside the city, check with your local municipality for registration sites - and do it quickly.

**City residents can vote by absentee ballot until Nov. 2** in Zeidler Municipal Building adjacent to City Hall,

**C**heck city.milwaukee.gov/ election or (414) 286-3491 for more details and note that election helpers are still needed.

**Absentee ballots must be postmarked by Election Day.**

Another vital source of help is Wisconsin Election Protection, both on Facebook and at (866) OUR-VOTE.

**You are eligible to vote** if you are 18 years old and a Wisconsin resident for 28 days.

**A misdemeanor conviction does not remove your right to vote.**

**A felony conviction does - UNTIL** you have completed your sentence, are totally off paper, probation, etc., at which point you can vote.

**Polls are open Tuesday, November 6, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

**Make sure to work through the entire ballot** since there are contests and questions aside from state legislative, US Congress and US president.

That's one reason it's smart to check myvote.wi.gov by address to preview a sample ballot.

Voting is your right, but an informed voter has become a rare citizen indeed. The more you know, the more you can protect yourself -- not from in-person fraud, which is virtually nonexistent, but from knowledgeable-sounding people who make it a practice to deflect and deceive. So look sharp. Vote your choice. But vote.

-- D.P.N.



Virtually nonstop door to door walks and phone banks have been organized by unions and federations. On a recent October weekend, dozens came in to the Milwaukee labor council to pick up packets and participate.



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# THEY HAVEN'T WON UNTIL YOU VOTE

In a number of races where Democrats faced Democrats or candidates ran unopposed, you could well assume they won in the August 14 primary. But they really haven't unless you vote for them Nov. 6. There are independents and even write-in efforts in some of these races, so always work your way down the full ballot.

Among the races you might assume over but still need to vote for in the Milwaukee area depending on your district (naming those with union endorsements and remember, the applicable races will be listed on your ballot):

- State Senate District 6 --- **Nikiya Harris** (newcomer)
- State Senate District 4 - **Lena Taylor** (incumbent, unopposed)
- Assembly District 7 - **Daniel Riemer** (newcomer)
- Assembly District 8 - **JoCasta Zamarippa** (incumbent)
- Assembly District 9 - **Josh Zepnick** (incumbent)
- Assembly District 10 - **Sandy Pasch** (new district for known representative)
- Assembly District 11 - **Mandela Barnes** (newcomer)
- Assembly District 12 - **Fred Kessler** (incumbent)
- Assembly District 16 - **Leon Young** (incumbent)
- Assembly District 17 - **La Tonya Johnson** (newcomer)
- Assembly District 18 - **Evan Goyke** (newcomer)
- Assembly District 19 - **Jon Richards** (incumbent)
- Assembly District 20 - **Christine Sinicki** (incumbent)

# THEY NEED YOUR VOTE TO CHANGE THINGS

A number of noted progressives or respected moderates in the greater Milwaukee area have been endorsed in an effort to change Madison and replace incumbents or their chosen successors who have become notorious for blocking advancement. You are urged to vote for:

- Senate District 20 - **Tanya Lohr** (over incumbent Glen Grothman)
- Senate District 26 - **Jim Ward** (over incumbent Mary Lazich)
- Assembly District 13 - **John Pokrandt** (open)
- Assembly District 14 - **Chris Rockwood** (over incumbent Dale Kooyenga)
- Assembly District 21 - **William Kurtz** (over incumbent Mark Honadel)
- Assembly District 23 - **Cris Rogers** (over incumbent Jim Ott)
- Assembly District 24 - **Shan Haqqi** (over incumbent Dan Knodl)
- Assembly District 82 - **Kathleen Wied-Vincent** (over incumbent Jeff Stone)
- Assembly District 83 - **James Brownlow** (over incumbent Dave Craig)

## Kurtz uses humor in District 21 race



**WILLIAM KURTZ MAY BE NEW TO THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL** but as a former suburban reporter and local writer, as well as a longtime insider on state politics, he knows the power of wit and logic to influence citizens' opinions. So it was no surprise he regaled a USW rally October 6 while encouraging participation in his District 21 race against an established GOP incumbent.

"**VOTERS WHO'VE INFREQUENTLY MET** my opponent come away with three opinions — he's a pleasant enough guy, he's certainly much better known than I am and he's pretty dumb," said Kurtz. "He's got six brothers running against me - the Koch brothers, the Fitzgerald brothers and all those brothers from another mother." As recent events have demonstrated, Oak Creek clearly needs a more innovative and forward-looking representative than the Scott Walker yes-man Mark Honadel has been. Kurtz wants the job.



At a rally Oct. 6 encouraging union members to fight for progress, USW invited a number of Assembly incumbents and would-be newcomers to share their vision and, it turns out, friendship. From left at the event: JoCasta Zamarippa, Mandela Barnes, John Pokrandt, Christine Sinicki, Chris Rockwood, Daniel Riemer, William Kurtz, Sandy Pasch and Evan Goyke.



Checking his phone for the barrage of messages he's been getting since announcing efforts to defeat state Sen. Mary Lazich, schoolteacher Jim Ward attended the labor council's October delegate meeting.



A remarkable aspect of this election is neighbors strongly raising money and volunteers to run for office. Whitefish Bay mom and social activist Cris Rogers (left) is taking on Jim Ott, while teacher Tanya Lohr has surprised Republicans with her convincing challenge to Sen. Grothman, profiled last month.

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# Ballot

From Page 1

win, Romney knew it was not ready for a right-wing extremist either, judging by polling numbers. And give the GOP political credit -- they chose the one guy who will say anything to sell. If that's the American central value, they've found their debate guy.

He confirmed it after defending for three weeks the expose of his 47% remarks. After first saying only his remarks were "off the cuff" or "not elegantly stated," though correct, he went on FOX News the day after the first debate to say he was flat wrong in characterizing 47% of America as "entitled" dependents on government largesse, slaves to welfare thinking and not worthy of his attention. While apologies are always welcome, the timing in this case was so calculated as to be ridiculous.

More amazing has been the silence on the right as Romney moves away from them, but it's understandable. They so hate Obama that even Romney's blatant opportunism was acceptable - they can work on him later.

All that reinforces what the Nov. 6 election is really about. It is not merely, though certainly primarily, about re-electing Obama. The most powerful man in the nation is limited standing along. He has already shown centrist tendencies and unlike Romney is reflecting principles of compromise and conference he will not abandon. But he is open to being pushed by his belief in unions and civil rights -- if the right people are elected to encourage him and lend him voting strength.

It reinforces the need to give him a team of elected officials more committed to moving poli-

Gaining support to cut deeply into Paul Ryan's poll lead and compete with TV ads as the race tightens, Rob Zerban (below) demands Ryan stop ducking debating him. Zerban stumps corner to corner in Congressional District 1 exposing Ryan's record of indifference to his neediest constituents. Who is for the people has become a central theme of the race.



cies forward on jobs, energy and fair taxation rather than playing self-serving power games and opposing everything.

Suddenly the US Congress and the state houses are essentially in play for a stirred electorate and the Tea Party looks selfish and stupid and will be forced to rely on big money defense to fight back the tide of public outrage and disgust even among traditional Republicans.

As things now stand, it is looking better for Obama to win and for the Democrats to keep and even improve their edge in the Senate. Wisconsin is part of that movement as **Tammy Baldwin** holds a polling lead over the GOP's reluctant and clearly tired primary survivor, Tommy Thompson, who like Romney is now expected to pretend to moderation as he hoards all the money the conservatives can't take back.

Turning the Wisconsin US House to more team players committed to their communities and not to partisan extremism will be the next step: Re-electing **Gwen Moore**, quite likely, and the more testy task though looking stronger daily of replacing Paul Ryan with **Rob Zerban** (District 1), Reid Ribble with **Jamie Wall** (District 7), and Sean Duffy with long popular **Pat Kreitlow** (District 8).

To reclaim the state Senate, the GOP and its outside groups have invested heavily in two races ignoring most other contests. They hope the combination of their own pointed redistricting and huge outside funding will defeat their prime target, a strong and personable campaigner **Sen. Jessica King** in the Oshkosh area District 18. They also want to switch to the Republican camp the District 12 seat of retired Jim Holperin, putting hard cash



Senate candidate Baldwin loves correcting the record in TV and radio interviews as third party ads for Tommy Thompson attack her House tenure as the cause of a do-nothing Congress. She entered the House the same year Paul Ryan did and he had more Republican White House years and GOP control than she. So who helped cause the recession and since has blocked progress on jobs and health care? Baldwin can point to bills she pushed that Ryan blocked and Bush policies that made Thompson rich.

behind their tax-dodging candidate to destroy newcomer Democrat **Susan Sommer**. Expect Milwaukee Democrats to burn the phone lines working for King and Sommer.

But while the GOP has been so pre-occupied in those two contests, they've neglected what is happening in senate districts they have long felt comfortably red, such as District 20. There in terms of personality and "get things done" believability, **Tanya Lohr** is making surprising inroads over the much detested Glen Grothman, who took so much of the extremist brunt for Scott Walker during the Madison wars. But Grothman's manner has clearly turned off many who even went along with Walker and now are campaigning for Lohr. (The Milwaukee Area Labor Council represents most of that District 20 territory since it encompasses Ozaukee and Washington counties and has both union members and sympathizers working for Lohr, who has also been appointed a leader of the Washington County Democratic Party.)

Personality extremes are also playing a role in District 28 (portions of Waukesha and Milwaukee counties), where schoolteacher **Jim Ward** is a distinct underdog but incumbent Mary Lazich has created a lot of distaste with her tendency toward arrogance.

In addition, throughout the state as well as in the Milwaukee area, there are contests likely to weaken the Tea Party hold on the Assembly even if the GOP squeaks out a smaller majority. Citizens have stepped forward to challenge the Walker crippling of local communities, local classrooms and public workers and urge a more sensible way forward. In the Milwaukee area, voters are seeing surprising inroads in such contests as Democrats **John Pokrandt** (Assembly District 14), **Chris Rockwood** (AD-13) and North

Shore's **Cris Rogers** (AD-23). From Burlington to Brookfield to Green Bay and Dodge County, there are other contests for the Wisconsin Assembly where the GOP misjudged.

The maneuvers within the GOP, and Romney's desperate last-minute switch to the center -- abandoning what won him the nomination in the first place -- underscores two things for the public.

One, the GOP's idea of America is to win by any means, and they would govern the same way - which is not the historical image of the party. Two, the Republicans remaining will be fewer and must negotiate to retain any semblance of competence.

The nation's voters on Nov. 6 have a unique opportunity to either maintain a blockade against progress or end the gridlock and move forward. And the election will demonstrate the real power of paying constant attention. If a new majority fever fails to move the country forward, this election will demonstrate how voters have the clout to watch, react and step in again.



Big outside money has been invested by the GOP to defeat popular incumbent Jessica King, who won in an Oshkosh recall because she represented a more cooperative approach in Madison. Her victory is a key to keeping the state Senate in Democratic hands.

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# Why reform-minded voters must flip US House

How bad has been the GOP control of the House? Does anyone, even responsible Republicans, ever want to go back? The election is also about that, so let's take a nightmare stroll down recent memory lane, touching on merely some of the bills that passed with overwhelming GOP support and Democratic complaints. Most were either rejected in the Senate or never moved there because they would be rejected, but all succeeded in rigor mortis for government progress and contributed the precedent-setting loss of respect for today's Congress.

One of the silliest moments came from tying hatred of immigrants together with hatred of abortions. That was the GOP House rider bill banning the government from providing abortions to immigrants in detention, a solution for a non-existent problem since there was never any sort of federal policy or



Incumbent Gwen Moore of Congressional District 4 is regarded as one of the outspoken progressive voices though now in the minority in the House. Her explanations of the weaknesses of the Ryan budget and the obstructionism of her GOP colleagues are wickedly insightful and have made her a major voice at campaign events. money for such an idea.

For more than a year, they also refused to put President Obama's jobs bill up for a vote, even though projections show it would create nearly two million jobs without adding a penny to the deficit. They resisted because the \$447 billion would be fully funded by a surtax on millionaires.

Unable to block the repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," Republicans in the House passed riders to Defense appropriations to undermine the rights of gays in the armed forces. An amendment introduced by Rep. Todd Akin - Ryan's co-sponsor on "forcible rape" and the candidate for Missouri senate the Republicans first sought to remove - would prohibit gay

weddings and military chaplains at such ceremonies on base. Another rider would prevent medical, pension and death benefits to the spouses of gay soldiers.

In more than 300 votes seeking to limit the reach of the Environmental Protection Agency, the GOP House sought to ban EPA limits on climate-warming pollution, to reverse new fuel standards that would slash foreign oil dependence and even end Bush era standards on wasteful light bulbs.

If there was a signature initiative from the GOP House last year, led by Ryan and Cantor who both may not survive reelection, it was the debt-ceiling standoff. But the impact given their obstinacy was a jobs-killer, applying the brakes to the economic recovery. Even though the economy survived to the tune of creating some 5.2 million private sector jobs, during the uncertainty created by the congressional impasse, job creation was cut in half of what it could have been, according to the Economic Policy Institute. The immediate spending cuts required by the debt-ceiling compromise are likely to shrink the economy by \$43 billion in 2012, killing near-



Green Bay area District 7 has spun back and forth between the parties, settling in 2010 for Tea Party favorite Reid Ribble. Now Jamie Wall (above) is determined to swing the district back to progressive common sense. ly 323,000 jobs, but the economy keeps trudging upward.

As Rolling Stones noted in its analysis of the GOP House, "When they weren't trying to force women to birth babies for rapists, the GOP House was voting to make it easier for would-be criminals to carry concealed firearms. In the first major gun legislation passed after their colleague Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head, the House sided with her attempted murderer, passing an NRA-backed measure that would have undercut state limits on concealed-carry permits."

Labor Press is only providing the tip of a nasty iceberg, which included committee hearings where only men were allowed to testify about women's reproductive rights and a raft of amendments blocking Obama's directives on immigration reform.

Republicans in the House have voted more than 30 times to repeal Obamacare - even though such efforts if allowed through the Senate and the White House would deplete the Medicare trust fund eight years early, kick 6.6 million young adults off their parents' health insurance, cost seniors \$700 more on average for prescription drugs, and make it legal once again for insurance companies to charge women more than men and to rescind policies when people get sick.

Retiring conservative Democrat Ben Nelson, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee (his Nebraska seat may be a pickup for the Republicans despite the popularity of Bob Kerrey), commented, "If the House wants the Capitol Dome to fall in, I hope it falls on their side." But there is another way. Throw the bums out and keep the dome from collapsing.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



They tried to redistrict away his core past supporters, but Pat Kreitlow still intends to make a strong showing against Sean Duffy in District 8.

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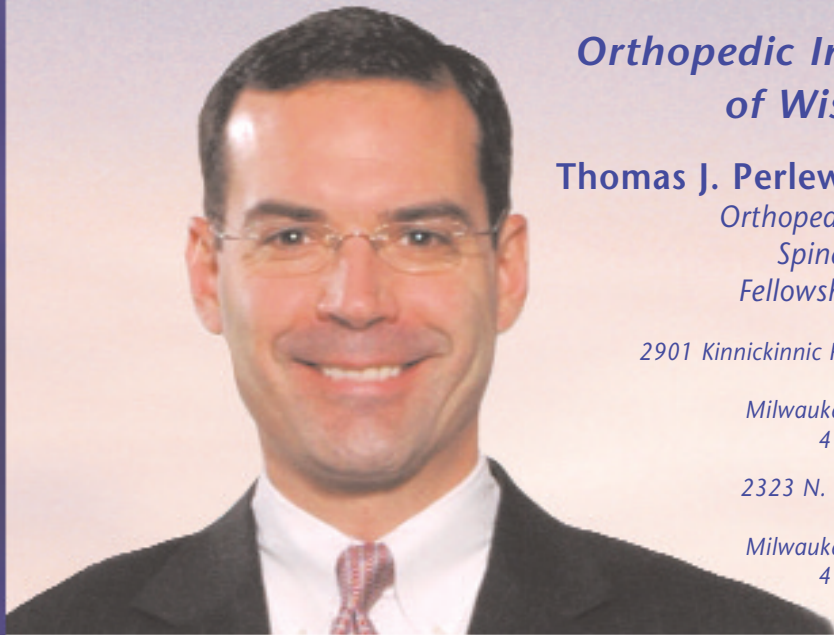
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# Tommy and Tammy: Find the real deficit hawk

## Facts of policies will startle voters

By Jack Norman

Special to Labor Press

Who's the "conservative" candidate in Wisconsin's Senate race? The answer may surprise you.

That's because both Tommy Thompson and Tammy Baldwin have plans that go farther than Paul Ryan's House budget, the touchstone document for conservatives.

If it's small government you most want, Thompson has a plan to cut federal spending even more than Ryan's House budget.

If shrinking the federal debt is your top concern, Baldwin has a plan with lower deficits and greater debt-reduction than the House budget.

The differences between Thompson and Baldwin are especially important because their race may determine which party controls the Senate.

## Guest Column

And while both are reliable supporters of their party and its presidential candidate, each has proposed budget refinements that make the contrast between them even starker than that between Mitt Romney and Barack Obama.

Here's why:

Thompson would cut government spending more severely than the House budget because of his goal "to limit federal spending to roughly 18% of Gross Domestic Product [GDP]."

That's a huge cut from the current 24% of GDP. It's much deeper than the House budget, which doesn't get below 20% until 2016.

To hit Thompson's goal in 2016, for example, would mean cutting \$319 billion more on top of the \$407 billion already cut in the House budget, compared with current law. That's the equivalent of more than half the defense budget in additional cuts



The author, a noted business reporter and economic researcher, now directs Tax Fairness WI, a joint project of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families and Citizen Action of Wisconsin.

beyond the House budget.

Thompson also goes beyond the House budget on taxes, by proposing an option to let taxpayers pay at "a flat 15% rate." The House plan moves toward a flat tax by merging the six current tax brackets into two. But Thompson goes further -- to

a single bracket.

Even with deductions and exemptions eliminated, a 15% rate means lower taxes only for the top tenth of taxpayers, those with pre-tax incomes above \$400,000.

Baldwin earns her anti-deficit credentials through her support for the budget alternative offered by the Congressional Progressive Caucus. She's among a handful of vice-chairs of the 76-person group.

The Progressive budget mirrors much of Obama's, but differs in some important ways. It spends more in the next few years (for example, investments to cut unemployment) but less over the long term because of cutbacks in defense.

It outdoes all other proposals including Thompson's in its deficit reduction goals. Its combination of lower defense spending and higher taxes on wealthy individuals and corporations means that over the next decade,

it will have run \$161 billion less in deficits than the House budget.

The Progressive budget spends \$786 billion more than current policy over the next two years on job creation and infrastructure. It would save \$1.9 trillion over the next decade by bringing troops home sooner and trimming the Defense Department. It also restores the estate tax; taxes income from investments at the same rate as income from wages; and adds new top brackets ranging from 45% (income above \$1 million) to 49% (income above \$1 billion).

There's a sharp contrast between Romney and Obama, but an even sharper one between Thompson and Baldwin. Whoever is president will propose a budget, but the makeup of the Senate will have a lot to do with what actually becomes law. The stakes are especially high in the race for Wisconsin's open Senate seat.

## Training unions to organize

Getting members to "talk union" - more specifically how internal organizing strategies can effectively realize goals and sideline apathy - will bring the University of Wisconsin's prestigious labor experts of the School for Workers to Brewery Workers Hall in West Allis for four Tuesday classes starting in November

The classes cost \$45 and run 5:30-8:30 p.m. Nov. 13, 20, 27 and Dec. 4 at 9618 W. Greenfield Ave., but first require a sufficient



Nack discusses worker classes at October delegate meeting. number of members eager to learn the detailed methods developed by experts, as Associate Prof. David Nack informed the October delegate meeting of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council.

He also revealed the extension's willingness to work with individual unions on developing plans and being available for advice and education. For registration choices: School for Workers, 610 Langdon St., Rm. 422, Madison, WI 53703, or schoolforworkers@uwex.edu (608) 262-2112.

Other Madison-based courses already on the School for Workers schedule that callers can inquire about:

**Time Study & Production Standards** -- November 12-16. This 5-day course provides participants with a working knowledge of work measurement and production standards and how related problems can be successfully addressed in the collective bargaining process. Direct experience in performance rating, conducting stopwatch studies and calculating standards.

**Strategies for Personal Leadership Skills Series** -- November 28-30. Savings for those who take all three one-day leadership courses.

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# Mixed moods of 2 Obama-Romney debates

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

I was up in the air, literally, during the second Obama-Romney debate Tuesday, Oct. 16, flying back from a family wedding and stuck high above Atlanta as the debate unfolded.

The up in the air may have also been philosophical uncertainty since to most Americans, not just left or right who think about the direction of America, Obama is the clear preference on all the moral and character grounds imaginable. Yet while the malls may be thriving, the resort towns full, the ballparks packed, the economy is tough. The hardship may have even reached the mass that many historians think forced the end of the Vietnam War - not that every family was directly involved but everyone knew someone who had been affected.

So it seems in the current economy, and the natural instinct of an impatient, instant gratification society is blame the incumbent. This whole campaign has been a strange contest of saying the government is not responsible for creating jobs, that's up to the private sector, yet trying to blame the president not the private sector for all the doldrums, at least if you're on Romney's side.

It's a mood where the Energizer Bunny may not really be moving forward, just cluttering around a lot, but seems more attractive than the slow steady progress of the turtle. Aesop may remind us that the rabbit didn't win the race, but the public tends to root for the hare whatever the facts.

As I said up in the air to a traveling companion, all that may put the obviously deeper Obama at a disadvantage even in a town hall format that favors his more humanistic style. Beyond that, I noted, I remained somewhat dumfounded while flying through space that a supposedly mature nation could decide its own future on something as transient as who does better in a 90 minute TV appearance. And I worried that the edge might belong in this environment to any hustler making a strong case for change. That was in fact the main point of an essay I wrote right after the October 3 debate, still online at [milwaukeeelabor.org/in\\_the\\_news/article.cfm?n\\_id=00299](http://milwaukeeelabor.org/in_the_news/article.cfm?n_id=00299).

Only truly came to Earth when watching a replay of that second debate with my feet firmly on the ground. The Obama the nation knew and that I prefer - bright, steady, articulate, succinct - emerged from the disaster of the previous Obama described in my column. Comparing the two debates is informative. It was Obama's ability to learn and focus that left Romney stuck in reverse, still enthusiastic on how he would

help the economy but totally devoid of or wrong on facts. Sincere selling was all. This debate exposed the difference between shallow salesmanship and flexible leadership.

The second time, Obama was prepared for the Romney who would close any deal at any price, the Romney who would ride roughshod over the moderator, the rules or the simple answers to make his point. When confronted by the used car salesman, this time Obama kicked the tires. Hard.

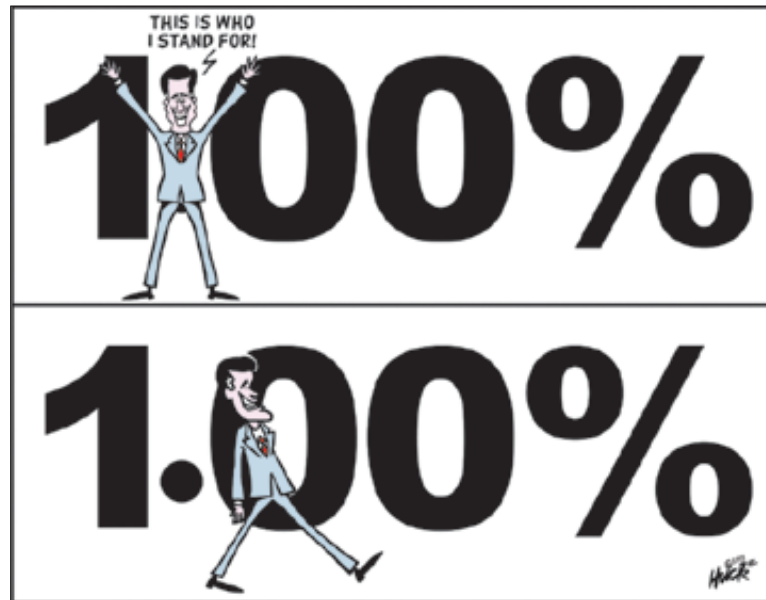
One notable moment came when Romney, thinking he was closing in for the kill on what happened to the ambassador in Libya and three protectors, ignored the pointed warning from relatives not to use those corpses to score political points. He misstepped badly anyway suggesting the president had waited for days to declare their deaths an act of terror because he was too busy campaigning to

## Housing marches again in drama

The history of the turbulent times in Milwaukee in 1967 will unfold through the eyes of two families, one Polish and one African-American - and unusually narrated by an 18th century figure, General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, whose monument symbolizes the Polish presence on Milwaukee's south side.

This unusual constellation of dramatic figures could only happen in the theater. "The March to Kosciuszko" as a play with newsreels will be performed on Saturday, November 3, at 8 p.m. at the Basilica of St. Josaphat at 2333 S. 6th St. (corner of 6th and Lincoln) in Milwaukee.

Milwaukee County Board Supervisor Peggy A. Romo West



care. Romney had to be corrected by moderator Candy Crowley that the president had called it an act of terror within hours at the Rose Garden.

But that was not the only stumble right into the president's headlights. Another came in opening the door for the president to bring up that Romney

dismissal of 47% of Americans -- behind closed doors to big money donors, a time when most seeing the video knew he was expressing his real feelings.

When trying to outline his differences from George Bush, Romney opened himself up to Obama's litany of reminders of how Bush was less extreme on

has encouraged the community to attend.

Sponsored by Urban Anthropology, Inc., the play is based on oral histories of the old Bronzeville and Polonia communities as well as residents' memories of the civil rights movement in Milwaukee. "This is an exciting piece of Kosciuszko Park and Milwaukee history brought to life at the beautiful Basilica," said Romo West.

It will also feature original newsreels of the march to Kosciuszko Park, and is likely to challenge many commonly held ideas about race, culture and neighborhood. For this reason, audience discretion is advised since the play contains ethnic and racial epithets.

At the close of the perfor-

mance, two guests - Reuben Harpole, an African-American historian, and Margaret Rozga Groppi, widow of James Groppi -- will lead a discussion about the housing marches.

Tickets can be purchased for \$25 at [brownpapertickets.com/event/271935](http://brownpapertickets.com/event/271935) or at [urban-anthropology.org](http://urban-anthropology.org).

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# Janesville

From Page 1

ing up America entrepreneurship in the abstract and how great that families can live and grow together side by side in Janesville - yet treating as nigh invisible and worth little more than a shoulder shrug the 11,000 losing jobs who were supposed to rely on neighbors, suggesting that all those working stiff should just tighten their belts, abandon their lifestyles and adjust.

Meanwhile the business committees were deludedly consumed by elaborate PowerPoint lures, "let's make a deal" giveaways and "buy a factory for a song" tactics. As the film reveals, while the workers struggled to continue to work and maintain families, the business community became married to billionaire figureheads talking economic motivational gobbledygook, fancy brochures and well-groomed spielmasters who seem borrowed from MGM central casting in the 1940s.

A frightening moment comes when the Janesville city council is bamboozled into an unprecedented \$9 million in tax incentives to lure a medical tracer isotope company with an unproven product, debated business plan, guaranteeing no local workers a job, simply because the business blitzkrieg prevailed over experienced public fiscal analysts.

Needless to say, Shine Medical Services is still searching for millions more if it ever gets off the ground in 2015- while another company, NorthStar Medical Technologies, will open a nuclear isotope plant nearby in Beloit, where billionaire Hendricks insisted it set up to take advantage of her property holdings.

It's one thing to take an intelligent gamble on the future. It's another to be suckered. And there were shell-game oversaturations all over Rock County as profit doomsday-sayers drew in well-meaning but feeble-minded chamber of commerce thinkers.

Banker Mary Willmer is featured and may not like the viewers' conclusions since she was so instrumental in the narrow approach to recovery, so willing to pose on brochures with Hendricks, founder of ABC Supply, and so quick to tell the media, sadly, how those \$27 an hour GM jobs will never come back. Devoted to Walker she never gave much thought to what the wealthy should also give up. If major assembly lines were indeed gone, the solution might require more than imposing radically less than decent income on those middle class families whose kids regularly face hers on the sports field.

Somehow in these corporate discussions caught on film it seemed that union wages and benefits were always getting the blame. Instead, business leaders smilingly speculate that it all could turn out great for Janesville to have far fewer workers willing to submit to far less pay.

For all that Rock County leadership talk about attracting entrepreneurs and companies, the reboot was never about selling a skilled, flexible and needy full workforce but vacant land and exploiting economic circumstances, pushing more doctors and hospitals for a community with less clients and less health insurance.

The film -- just by chronicling in shorthand rapidity - nails an amazing vapidity. It forces the viewer to work, to put two and two together, seeing logically what the business leaders failed to grasp much less attempt to solve. Lichtenstein had unusual access to boardrooms, rallies where business leaders fawned over Walker's "open for business" pledge and stacked slick sales flyers promoting sizzle.

In contrast, and without Ayn Rand romanticism, the lens creates heroes - realistic ones because they are simply common working folk worried about their families. He somehow gained intimate access to the union bread-winners, often female, all within 20 years of retirement, determined to keep families together in Janesville. Sometimes



The infamous video moment when Walker reveals his "divide and conquer" strategy on destroying union power to billionaire supporter Diane Hendricks.



Angie, who left her family behind in Janesville to work the GM assembly line in Indiana.

that meant moving themselves hours away to share cramped apartments with other GM workers in Indiana - just so their children and injured relatives could stay secure in their Janesville.

The human price is considerable. In one case a tragedy fills the absent working mother with guilt as she rushes home -- and costs her a GM job in Fort Wayne until her union steps in. Yet the unions are not unscathed - a GM UAW deal that allows \$14 an hour workers also shuts down hope among weary displaced veterans longing for early retirement.

In another candid story, a mother goes back to tech college after 13 years hauling tires (this after years of military service). And while she acs the classes to become a lab technician she does so without health coverage or unemployment insurance - and then comes news of cancer.

I am being deliberately evasive about some names and details because I don't want to ruin the experience of the film. Lichtenstein couldn't know all that would unfold, but by getting his cameras inside and letting the subjects flow he creates a constant texture, context and contrast. The



Cindy struggled but aced her tech college classes to improve her family finances.

political implications emerge from the fabric of honest but anticipatory and creative documentary work.

Let's not overlook how open were the fam-

ilies who invited Lichtenstein into their struggles. It may also have been friendship with the Paul Ryan clan that explains how the director got such access to the normally secretive chats of the rich.

But Ryan doesn't make the final cut. That's in keeping with the director's desire not to be overtly political and keep the story about Janesville people through his selective liquid editing.

Yet those extensive Ryan outtakes have been made available online at [asgoesjanesville.com/paul-ryan-outtakes/](http://asgoesjanesville.com/paul-ryan-outtakes/) -- and are quite revealing of his pre-Romney "gee whiz" manner and "I love Janesville in all its facets" pitch with those incomprehensible macroeconomic flourishes.

That caffeine hyped young congressman comes across today as full-fledged hypocrite. The outtakes actually expose the con act that went over so big once upon a time in Janesville but can't stand up to national scrutiny. (That's particularly true with the reality in Janesville today of how little he did to keep the big GM plant vital despite his clout because he was so busy selling those now nationally detested ideas about Medicare and Social Security.)

It is also ironic how Ryan keeps talking up all the businesses founded in Janesville in the last century, including those of his family, while the Walker minions on film describe those as death throes of the middle class, inevitably natural because Janesville's economy is so outdated for the 21st century.

Lichtenstein in online comments is forced to expose Ryan's flat lie at the GOP national convention seeking to blame Obama for 2008 GM plant closing during the Bush era. The interviews expose the Ryan who once wore a "straight-shooter" mantle from Russ Feingold and actually reveled in the power to be a one man Obamacare from his House office. But again and again, if you match the outtakes with what is in the film, his outmoded economic concepts simply didn't match what his hometown needed.

If there is political nobility within the film, it is relegated to an unexpected source, a politician out of public service since 1988 first seen delivering food for the poor. Yet at 66 Tim Cullen was pulled back into the fray in



Gayle, another UAW line worker forced to move to Fort Wayne, but on one return visit home she took her family to Madison to support the public workers' protest against Walker's emasculatation of bargaining rights.

2010, the lone Democrat to win a state senate seat and one of the 14 who fled to Illinois to force Wisconsin to rethink Walker's attacks on workers.

Cullen has a reputation of working congenially with all sides - Walker even singled him out - yet is clearly feisty in his Democratic beliefs, even temporarily seeking to run against Walker in the recall.

Yet as the film shows it is Cullen being jeered at by left-wingers for appealing for civility during a Walker tourism speaking event. It is the same Cullen biting his lip and holding his temper as the rich blather and crow about how Walker's election would save Janesville.

A viewer realizes it must have been difficult for the director to maintain the same lip-biting decorum in such a divisive universe, but he succeeded - the gift of a true documentarian.

In an interview, Lichtenstein conceded it was constant struggle for his team to maintain composure as they stumbled across entrenched views, "but I knew if it came out as some sort of polemic it would fail. I wanted to sincerely explore what happens to a community when it loses its middle class and becomes so fearful and confused."

That's why he hopes the response to the film will become a foundation of a business and labor discussion and movement to rescue communities in ways more intelligent and deep-seated than what Janesville is still going through.

He is encouraging all labor groups and federations to hold viewings and join the community effort. His 371 Productions will launch bizVizz, a mobile app and website, providing users with information about whether a company has paid their taxes, how much they've paid as a percentage of their income, and details about their employment records.

This is a film that not only must be seen, but should emotionally trouble viewers in the fissures it uncovers in our so-called exceptionalism. In one way it may be the necessary 2012 corrective to the 2010 election fever that sent the nation over the cliff through that violent Tea Party Koch-funded reaction to economic downturns that, along with lousy management, closed the GM plant.

Yet it is also could be a corrective beyond partisan ideology if you examine the simple human lessons.

Maybe those Janesville business leaders, married to Walker "divide and conquer" myths, flunked basic principles by ignoring the silent screams of agony from their own neighbors. "As Goes Janesville" without dramatic flourishes suggests there clearly is a more intelligent and empathetic way - and America had better listen.



Donning a hardhat to tour a hospital construction site, banker Mary Willmer emerges as a dupe of bad policy.



# Does that Romney prop clock scare voters?

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

As the GOP desire to win the White House spins into despair, the party clings to its most prominent symbol of Obama hatred, constantly ticking away in the background of its political rallies.

It is that old devil deficit clock, a masterpiece of incomprehensible digital dervishing that tends to conflate in GOP complaints the National Debt and the separate federal deficit. If you looked at the full combined meter online, rather than the simplistic ticking bomb hanging behind Romney and Ryan at their speeches, you would see many columns of numbers some falling, many rising, some reflecting prescription drug payouts Bush passed in a no-negotiate sweetheart deal engineered by Tommy Thompson (\$21 billion), some calculating how Americans still hold much of the National Debt in the form of treasury bonds and the like while foreign governments rise in the counting house.

\$15 trillion to \$16 trillion and counting up -- every penny in interest, every compounded spiral of largely incoherent interlocking abacus beads.

This spinning wheel of misfortune should well frighten the

average citizen - until they start looking deeper.

I do recall a former vice president named Dick Cheney noting that Reagan had "proved the national debt doesn't matter." Like most of Cheney's views, I hardly agree, the guy was so wrong on so many fronts. But I do agree the deficit clock is mainly an ooh-aah visual of inexplicable terror created by the modern GOP to blame President Obama without pointing out how much of its inexorable climb are accumulations from appropriations and policies before he became president.

That clock would have been more frightening if the Democrats had posted it for their rallies during the second Bush's eight years in office. Then it would have been a numbingly rapid climb from safety under Bill Clinton to mounting disaster under Bush policies and GOP control of Congress -- still more than \$10.6 trillion, over two thirds, the amount that even Paul Ryan in his stump speeches is forced to concede that Obama inherited.

So the president is only responsible for less than a third of the number accumulated in 12 years, quite bit indeed. But look what he inherited and what he had to solve. And look at the

## Comment

other compounded lies from the GOP. Is the federal deficit higher each year than what he inherited? Actually no, he's reduced it.

And here's something else the GOP won't tell you - and the Democrats aren't eager to explain either, since economics tend to confuse the electorate as well as the pundits. (If you doubt that, think of how easily Romney duped everyone in the Oct. 3 debate.)

Even talking heads on TV news shows constantly confuse the National Debt with that other figure that is far more immediate in terms of economic recovery and the need to increase revenue while controlling spending - the annual federal deficit.

The federal budget deficit is the annual difference between what the government spends and what it collects in revenue. It was most injured in the final Bush years and the first Obama year as the recession took hold. It's often similar, higher or lower, than the previous fiscal year's deficit. In contrast, the National Debt, that \$16 trillion plus clock count, is the total amount of money the United States owes to creditors, and this much larger figure requires steady attack over



Unmentioned by his opponents on the campaign trail, it is actually Obama -- shown at a 2012 Milwaukee event -- who has introduced major debt reduction and further offered a plan the GOP rejected to cut \$4 trillion in debt hefty step by step over a decade.

eight or 10 years under any administration and even better a series of cooperative administrations.

Presidents of either party can only bring down the National Debt piece by piece but that depends on a vastly improving economy, not the unpaid wars, tax cuts and prescription drugs handed Obama, along with the indifferent regulation of runaway financial companies that took advantage of laxness to further damage the nation. But what presidents can do most quickly is not the National Debt, which is why even Reagan shrugged it off, but attack that federal budget deficit.

The irony is that Obama according to many economists is already on the way - despite what he had to add in to rescue the nation from its past excesses, His policies have already chopped hard and his plan practically erases the entire budget deficit by 2017, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

The 2017 budget deficit, which will reflect President Obama's final spending requests (a similar dynamic to Bush's last deficit of 2009), could end up dropping close to zero, as a percentage of gross domestic product.

Conversely, the Tax Policy Center reported that the Romney tax plan would explode the deficit by nearly \$3 trillion over ten years.

And that's without considering his plan to reverse Obama's deficit cutting policies like the Affordable Care Act.

And who knows what worse stuff could happen if Romney decides to get adventuresome with Iran or drive us into another recession. Imagine if he followed up on his October 8 foreign poli-

cy pledge to send more American soldiers into battle! If you read the speech and look beyond his sincere body language, that is what he thinks we should be doing.

The "moral obligation" Ryan refers to in his stump speeches to bring down the National Debt may be another way to scare the populace, but it holds truth -- it is everyone's obligation, not just the president's.

So where has the GOP been? And why aren't they helping Obama attack both the National Debt and support his closing of the budgeted fiscal deficit through job growth, energy dynamics, fair share taxation and other policies they have resisted.

Ryan may not be the math whiz kid the GOP thinks, since his numbers never add up. But he should know enough arithmetic - Bill Clinton's favorite word - that any president needs partners in Congress to attack the deficit. Obama was right to put the country first in terms of recovery, whether Ryan agrees with the methods or not. But Romney and his misguided guru of House GOP economics have been more engaged with beating the president than helping the country.

This is not an exaggeration. Time and again the Republicans were invited in to contribute ideas and join Obama's effort to steadily push the nation's debt down by \$4 trillion over the next decade. Their refusal to blend ideas and get the nation moving requires this election to be about more than Obama, but about giving him better partners to work with.

Now as Obama climbs in the polls, it looks like the voters will actually have that opportunity. Up and down the ballot.



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## Official Notice

United Steelworkers Local 2-209 will hold a primary election Wednesday, Dec. 12 (if needed) and a general election on Wednesday, January 16, 2013, office terms ending May 2014.

The following offices and positions are up for election: President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, three (3) Trustees, Sergeant-At-Arms, Guide, and four (4) Bargaining Committee Representatives.

Elections on both dates will be held at the Harley-Davidson Pilgrim Rd. plant cafeteria from 5-8 a.m., 10:35-10:55 a.m. and 2-5 p.m. Laid off members will be permitted in the cafeteria for the purpose of voting. Any questions, please call (414) 531-4845.

Andy Voelzke,  
Recording Secretary

## State delegates stir ground for candidates

Hundreds of labor delegates met October 1 for the 27th biennial Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention at the Raddison Paper Valley. The theme was 'Workers Indivisible' and state AFL-CIO President Phil Neuenfeldt may have set the tone for labor's entire year when he frankly discussed the recent election losses and wins and the underlying solidarity.

"We laid the groundwork for a powerful movement to push back against extremist policies everywhere," he said on the eve of massive labor grassroots efforts for progressive candidates up and down the ballot.

"The fight we are in is not just about unions or who wins election in November. This is a fight for the hearts and soul of America."

That was in many ways the message from policy experts, labor leaders and candidates attending the convention.

Among the popular speakers were Laura Dress, of COWS, the Center on Wisconsin Strategy, the AFL-CIO special counsel and policy director Damon Silver, Assembly minority leader Peter Barca, state Sen. Jessica King who is in a tough fight for re-election in District 18, and Jamie Wall, the Democratic candidate for the 8th Congressional District taking on GOP incumbent Reid Ribble.

US Rep. and US Senate candidate Tammy Baldwin also took to the podium to emphasize what the polls have underscored -- that Wisconsin isn't buying the false attacks on her support of affordable health care, nor misunderstanding that her "liberal" record matches many others in the House who have voted for legislation that moved the country forward on jobs while the GOP refused to vote that way.

The polls indicate how Wisconsin voters believe she will be a voice for the people pushing better job policies and that her opponent in his retirement from public service to land big money working for corporations has become the lobby voice of the powerful while simply lining his own coffers.

Reports on industrial events and building trades activities were provided by Michael Bolton, director of USW District 2; Russ Krings, directing business representative of IAMAW District 10; John Schmitt, president of Laborers District Council, and Steve Breitlow, business manager of Plumbers Local 75.

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## Calendar

Visit [www.milwaukeeelabor.org](http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org) for updated events

**Wednesday, October 31**

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

**Tuesday, November 6**

**General Election**

**Wednesday, November 7**

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

**Friday, December 14**

**MALC Holiday Open House**

Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

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# GOP duplicity keeps politics a national joke

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

The clown car has pulled into the campaign station. A shame really, given how serious the issues are facing voters November 6. But the conceptions of a crazy election season have now become dominated by ridicule. It doesn't totally displace the repetitiously tiresome advertising claims, the false equivalencies that every side is the same or the hypocritical reversals of previous policy.

But all that pales in the presence of these endlessly laughable incidents that so spark the fire from Jon Stewart and SNL. Who woulda thunk? Scott Walker loving unions. GOP stalwarts amorally climbing into the Todd Akin bed they once shunned, Scott Brown abandoning any pretense of nice guy to encourage war-whoops that Elizabeth Warren is an academic Cherokee.

Walker pleading for union excellence leads the parade, because he was so upset that NFL owners took his ideology more seriously than the game he loves. How dare those filthy rich bosses follow his union-busting philosophy and cost his beloved a game just to save marginal costs and keep experienced referees off the field! Well, sure, maybe he did the same thing, but that was only to government, schools and working people - not the Packers!

OK, so those inexperienced non-union replacement referees blew several obvious calls and didn't even know the rules. So the players were upset by the loss of quality and the obvious danger to their personal safety. So the real refs weren't on strike over pay but over losing their pensions, not buying into the Romney-Ryan-Walker vision of retiring on 401(k)s.

All this brought rare non-partisan accord - agreeing with Obama that union refs should come back, which happened. Strange how regulatory proficiency looks good for pro football but not for Wall Street. Strange how no one likes refs, but you can get both sides together to save the sport but not better deficit control.

The episode brought examples from all quarters of how unions help professionals improve in their job --- giving the Bronx cheer to the view of only selfishly protecting their own, which was the Walker excuse. Remember the "Miracle on the Hudson" in the waning hours of the Bush era and how every multiple responder to the plane downing was a union trained worker, both public and private? Sully, the central heroic captain, was actually Chesley Sullenberger, a huge safety advocate through the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA).

Unions have led "Helmets to Hardhats" helping hundreds of

military veterans into construction jobs. Think of all those public first-responders at fires and medical emergencies. Or even Mitt Romney, when he ran the 2002 Olympics, compelled to applaud the IBEW training and efficiency of 20 union workers in three weeks doing what hundreds of untrained workers would have needed months to accomplish.

It turns out that union training and upgrading through experience, while often demeaned by the GOP, sounds darn good, especially when NFL owners and governors are so stubbornly selfish about investing in that effort and only find balance when forced by the workers to negotiate. (Details of the union referee's 8-year pact covering 121 refs? It keeps the current defined benefit pension plan through the 2016 season or until the ref has 20 years of service. Outside that, the 401(k) plan starts just for new hires and in 2017 for all the refs. So both sides got something through negotiation.)

Hypocritical as Walker's lament came across, it proved if your ox is being gored, your passion on the hook, suddenly you'd rather call in a union guy.

The Akin episode was as hypocritically funny - the scramble back by GOP bigwigs to support his race for the Missouri senate after roundly rejecting him and professing outrage at his "legitimate rape" comments. It was classic confirmation that political parties can be amoral rather than honestly compromising and tacking to the center for the good of the people.

The parade of elected leaders embracing Akin after promising not to was surely laughable but actually predictable once the Tea Party extreme backed his refusal to get out, even though it all flew in the face of fairness or announced principles. (Similar



Missouri Sen. Claire McCaskill

two-facedness emerged in Wisconsin over GOP Assembly candidate Roger Rivard's weird family vision that "some girls rape easy.")

True political shrewdness put Democratic incumbent Sen. Claire McCaskill, a cooperative moderate, in the canny tradition of Harry Truman. First she did her best from the sidelines during the GOP primary to point out that Akin was the truest - as in wackiest - right-winger so he could be the extremist she would face. Then she held back until it was no longer legal for him to withdraw and the GOP party that had disowned him was forced to lamely support their label.

McCaskill, from once behind against any Republican, is now 10 points ahead - and smartly not because she's just beating Akin up on his crazy belief that women who are raped secrete some magic anti-pregnancy juice.

She's picked up on something I noted in an August column --- that Akin wasn't just spouting rape nonsense, he was exposing an entire right-wing encyclopedia of bad science and weird policy. He and Paul Ryan co-sponsored the original forcible rape legislation and both opposed the Lilly Ledbetter Act for equal pay for equal work among the genders. The GOP is pushing to keep climate change deniers like Akin in control of key committees.

McCaskill, knowing her Missourians and Akin's many

"out of mainstream" positions, won't let him escape the whole package. She launched ads reminding voters not just of what Akin has said but what he believes - that private businesses have a right to discriminate by gender or race in how they pay, that ending Medicare is a "good idea" (he didn't even add the kneejerk "Medicare as we now know it" line, just "end it"), that he would eliminate the minimum wage, and that government help for student loans is "equivalent to supporting stage three cancer."

The GOP money once denied Akin for his outrageous views has now quietly crept back in because the party has married itself to winning at all costs, not principle.

That also explains Brown's descent into racism in Massachusetts, where he had been gunning his pickup truck to run away from Romney and the GOP label, pretending he would not be a party hack. Forget the R after his name on the ballot, forget the Wall Street Journal description of him as "Wall Street's favorite senator" given where his campaign cash comes from. Elizabeth Warren's the Obama stooge, he argues, though she convinced the president to support her consumer protection ideas -- and besides, he says, she's a white lady lying that she believed her mama about Cherokee blood.

But trying to buck the facts in a strongly Democratic state, where he had previously won on his retail politics nice guy image, he has turned nastier for only one reason - he's sinking in the polls. Knowing the state has sel-



Elizabeth Warren running for Massachusetts Senate on undisputed brain power

dom elected women to high office, knowing that his most yahoo white supporters resent Harvard and the mere concept of racial preference even when it doesn't exist, he has taken to attacking Warren because she "doesn't look Indian" to him. Obviously she is smart enough to become a professor without ever resorting to heritage - but without any evidence, Brown keeps pushing his myth, calling her "professor" to demean her. His staff even put on war chants at rallies as if he had any sort of point.

It's not only ugly and insulting to Massachusetts voters. It became an appalling exercise in buffoonery, but it sure lit up the comedy networks.

Yet while the world was laughing at Brown's descent into Akin territory, the nation had to be sobered by the sad vision of what all this has done to the once noble profession of public service. It now features participants representing the worst in crassness and desperation - and political insiders embracing their journey into the inferno.

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# Why attack on BLS data was desperate BS

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

## Analysis

The media's natural role of corrective watchdog has warped and sometimes flat evaporated. Normally, an extremely partisan over-reaction to good news for the other side is identified as routine sour grapes. Sometimes for a funny writer it is held up for ridicule.

But these days, the news media considers whether the source is underwriting their business and says, "Wait a minute! This nut job is one of our biggest advertisers so maybe we should report this as if there was some sort of point - we don't want to offend someone paying the bills!"

In this atmosphere -- when the right-wing fumes and retired GE CEO Jack Welch accused without evidence or facts that Obama was engaged in "Chicago style" politics -- the media listens when it should sneer.

No case was clearer October 5 when the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported modest continued growth in job numbers but a shocker few had expected -- a slight drop below 8% in the unemployment statistics.

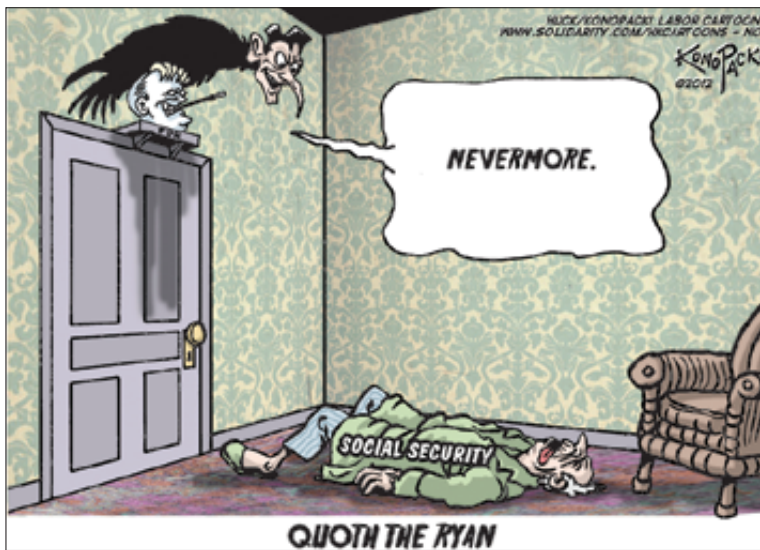
Politically that robbed the GOP of its major constant talking point that Obama had failed to bring unemployment under

8%. Now, 7.8% isn't enough of a drop as Obama quickly noted, but it exploded the chief talking and advertising point of the GOP. It actually did more than that. That 7.8% combined with more jobs than expected and revised upward figures from past months reinforced how Obama in three years added 5.2 million jobs to an economy losing 800,000 a month before his efforts.

Romney on hearing the news immediately fabricated a reason, that fewer people were looking for work. Another lie because the numbers reveal an increase (!) in people in the jobs market. Worse for Republicans like Scott Walker, the growth would have been vastly greater were it not for the GOP-led drop in public sector employment.

Well, it wasn't spectacular improvement but it was enough to blow Romney supporters' brains apart. The partisan extremists reared or tweeted their ugly heads. And weirdly, some so-called news outlets treated it all as news of deception by the White House.

Though the BLS numbers have for decades been respected for the care, statistical integrity, secrecy of results and professionalism of its civil service opera-



Being chosen for a national ticket helped force Wisconsin Rep. Paul Ryan to modify his most extreme attack on senior aid, but it has not slowed the cartoonists and pundits from exposing his view.

tion, even though its scrupulous methodology has been defended by Republicans in the know, today's right-wing cried foul and waved around -- of all things -- other BLS data to make their case!

Even the bureau is the first to concede that these are statistics that further information adjusts up and down under careful calculation - and they are the first to do it. Noted economist Jared Bernstein immediately pointed out why Welch should be ashamed of himself in his blog at jaredbernsteinblog.com detailing how BLS uses and protects analysis, includes margins of errors and rushes to correct results free

of political influence.

Normally, the media should ignore such nonsense, but it so notably undercut the GOP harping about Obama's steady approach to the economy that the corporate media masters who support Romney couldn't let their mouthpieces ignore it - and even seemed to encourage them going ballistic, particularly from Tea Party sources and GOP hires such as FOX and Rush Limbaugh.

Perhaps they hadn't noticed Romney's ability to pivot away from the facts and how he has probably invented some sincere sounding and nonstop bull-rush explanation of why 7.8% is just

as bad as 8%, so all their continued attack really does is undermine his likely tap-dance. (And the right-wing thought it was Obama who had rhythm.)

Accusing Obama of "cooking the numbers" is actually a recent trend not a routine partisan political device. Historically that is not how opposite parties react.

When BLS numbers went up in mid-term Reagan, the Democrats didn't say stuff like this -- they questioned the interpretation but not the numbers. When BLS climbed under Clinton, that GOP didn't question the gatekeeper.

Trust me, when job numbers were collapsing under George Bush, if VP Cheney with Mitch McConnell's wife, Elaine Chao, serving as Secretary of Labor could have gotten inside the BLS as he got inside the CIA to tweak the data on Iraq, he sure would have leaped there. But he couldn't and didn't.

The only thing that has changed is the willingness of today's political extremists to embarrass themselves, counting on today's media to lend them cover.

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