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LABORFEST: LONG MAY IT WAVE

Every year on Labor Day, the MCLC's long-retired president, Tom Parker, takes the same spot on Milwaukee Street to cheer the parade on. The participants, many of whom know him, wave right back. This year a motorized scooter let Parker get much closer (left).

For more photos of who was there for Laborfest, see our Special Pullout Section on Pages 7-10. Also see the photos below and those accompanying many of our stories.

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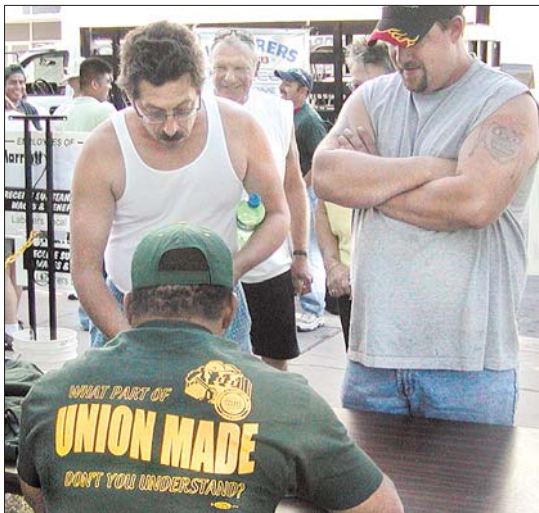
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



Thursday, September 29, 2005



(USPS 350-360)



The T-shirt said it all at Zeidler Park. But three days later, President Bush made it clear there is no part of "Union" he understands in reconstructing the Gulf Coast. Nevertheless, the Laborers and other unions have combined charity giving with offers of experienced help. See story on Page 13.

Plunder on Gulf Coast

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

As you read this, the real looters have descended on New Orleans. Freed by President Bush from paying prevailing wage on federal projects and flushed with \$62 billion passed by Congress, these looters are not after food to survive or even a flat-screen TV to stash away for a non-rainy day.

They are licensed by the government that brought you FEMA to ravage the Gulf Coast and pick the pockets of taxpayers across the US.

The familiar friends of the White House who have made a first flood into New Orleans. They were armed with no-bid contracts and accompanied by the private security firms that have

Comment

also made a killing in Iraq and now comprise the second largest military force in the "coalition of the willing."

The wags in the media suggest this was why Vice President Cheney flew in to assess Hurricane Katrina: He was scouting out the opportunities for his pals at Halliburton.

Not that he needs to. Halliburton and other insider companies were among the first to land base and levee contracts, along with housing projects and road and highway cleanup. They are all represented by lobbyists who recently worked high up in the Bush administration.

Two of the immediate winners (Halliburton subsidiary Kellogg Brown and Root at \$500 million; the Shaw Group at \$200 million) lobby through Joe Allbaugh, the former director of FEMA who made sure his old college buddy, Michael ("Brownie") Brown, also lacking emergency management experience, took over the agency from him.

Brown has now resigned (the traditional Bush euphemism for fired), but not before stirring up a political cocktail more toxic than the bacteria and chemicals in the flood water.

To take over, the administration reached down the line for a respected general, a respected admiral and, to head FEMA, R.

David Paulison, trained paramedic and firefighter who rose through the ranks to head major rescue divisions over 30 years.

Which simply raised the obvious question: With such experience within the ranks (and a dozen top emergency experts forced to quit over the last four years) why on earth were American lives put in the hands of political hacks?

The answer has become visible behind the presidential flood lights. Big Business cronies are gulping down most of the \$500 million a day in liquid Gulf Coast pork while ensuring, with executive blessing, that the poorest workers will get the lowest wages for some of the toughest jobs facing the region.

"Nothing can salve the wounds like money," one Bush official told Time magazine -- and spending money to give the illusion of protection is something this administration mastered after 9/11.

In this case, the surge of activity might deflect the nation's anger from the incompetence of the original government response.

But so far, this money is not acting as a salve. It's boiling up wounds in the nation's psyche as well as in its economic security. It's bubbling with new insights into Bush's priorities.

He asks us to wait to assign blame, but he's dispensing billions through FEMA without

Looters continued Page 12



The acting president of the labor council rose to new heights of service the Sunday before Labor Day. Willie D. Ellis of Operating Engineers Local 139 installed the new banner that greeted visitors.

Calendar

Wednesday, September 28
MCLC Executive Board meeting, 3 p.m.
MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Road

Wednesday, October 5
Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO
Delegate Meeting:
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma

Monday, October 17
Faith Community for Worker Justice
5:30 p.m., Assembly Room, 633 S. Hawley Road

Wednesday, October 26
MCLC Executive Board meeting, 3 p.m.
MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Road

Party to benefit Burn Camp

The 3rd annual charity-supporting Packer Party of the Milwaukee Professional Fire Fighters Association Local 215 will start at 1 p.m. Sunday, November 6, at the union hall, 5625 W. Wisconsin Ave. (Packer game time is 3:15 p.m.)

Each \$25 entry ticket qualifies for one chance to win a big screen television. There are other raffle prizes, along with free food, beer, and soda. Capacity is limited to 500.

Proceeds benefit the Wisconsin

Alliance for Fire Safety "Burn Camp." For more information call Local 215's secretary, Alice Zyniecki, at (414) 259-8000.

Squad of union neighbors saluted at United Way event

A first occurred Thursday, Sept. 22, at organized labor's public endorsement of the United Way Community Campaign. A tradition at the Labor Kick-Off Rally - held at the Four Points Sheraton



When the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council marched in the Laborfest parade Sept. 5, it didn't know that a group of its unions had won the labor-United Way community service award.

-- is presentation of the annual top award for community conscience and consciousness by a member of labor.

This year for the first time ever, the Werner J. Schaefer award was given to a group for commu-

nity service projects.

The suggestion came from the Neighborhood House, a United Way agency.

Clarence Johnson, the executive director, and Marge Beil, development director, pointed out to the nominating committee how much Neighborhood House had benefited from the activities of the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, with special recognition to IBEW Local 494, Laborers Local 113, Operating Engineers Local 139, Operative Plasterers & Cement Masons Local 599 and Plumbers Local 75.

The Operating Engineers, Cement Masons and Laborers replaced walkways, fixed garden beds and refurbished access.

The Plumbers and IBEW will be adding bathrooms to the early childhood classrooms.

The trades council and the unions had arranged donations of material and volunteered their

workers' time to help the children Neighborhood House serves.

Sorrow for Lepp family

The labor community offers its deep condolences and prayers to a past winner of the Schaefer Award -- Earl Lepp, the MCLC's long-retired secretary-treasurer. Last Aug. 5, he suffered the loss of his wife of 55 years, Ruth, age 75.

Earl and Ruth married a year after he joined Mailers Local 33.

Within a few years he was president of that union and went on to serve leading roles in the International Typographical Union, the Allied Printing Trades Council, the AFL-CIO itself and as MCLC delegate.

He was elected secretary-treasurer of the MCLC in 1979, retiring in 1991.

His extensive community activities as well as his labor leadership won the Schaefer Award in 1992.

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Acting President	Willie D. Ellis
Secretary-Treasurer	Sheila D. Cochran
Communications Director and Editor	Dominique Paul Noth
Advertising & Editorial Assistant	Lynda Guyton

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AFL-CIO Milwaukee Labor Press
Editorial and Business Office
633 S. Hawley Road, Milwaukee, WI 53214
Telephone (414) 771-7070 FAX (414) 771-0509
E-mail: laborprs@execpc.com

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Moore among AFT 'excellence' examples

Milwaukee's congresswoman, two major religious leaders and a veteran instructor at the Milwaukee Area Technical College will be the first honorees of a new annual "Excellence in Education" event.

Created by the civil and human rights committee of the American Federation of Teachers Local 212 (representing MATC teachers), the awards ceremony and luncheon will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 1, at the Manchester East (Radisson

North) hotel, 7065 N. Port Washington Rd. Attending and being honored are Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), the Rev. Joseph Jackson of MICA and WISDOM leader David Liners.

Also being honored: Cory Odom, who has taught at MATC for 32 years. Tickets of \$15 are only being sold in advance through the Local 212 office.

For office hours and more information, call (414) 765-0910.

First contract, 320 new members for IBEW Local 2150 in Waukesha

Battling for more than two years on behalf of workers at Waukesha Electric Systems, IBEW Local 2150 emerged in late August with 320 new members who will enjoy their first raises in four years.

The production and maintenance employees at the Waukesha plant, which manufactures electrical transformers for utilities across the US, ratified their first labor agreement August 21.

It was Dec. 18, 2003, when the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers won the right to represent the workers in a National Labor Relations Board

election. It was the first time the workers had agreed to unionize.

The company promptly hired Jackson Lewis, the same union-avoidance law firm that led the fight against the organizing campaign, to represent it in contract negotiations. Months of wrangling and NLRB complaints by the union followed as the company that had frozen wages actually tried to reduce them at the bargaining table.

The hardships of first-contract negotiations and management tactics, if anything, seemed to increase the workers' commitment to the union process, said Randy Sawicki, a business repre-

sentative for Local 2150.

In the end, the workers got a three-year contract with pay raises under a different wage schedule.



Rep. Gwen Moore enjoyed a laugh as she toured Laborfest Sept. 5, visiting old friends and speaking about issues.

Seniors power up for fund-raising lunch

The Wisconsin Alliance for Retired Americans takes a moment each year to honor notables and power its year-round activism with one big fund-raiser -- a Power Luncheon.

This year's will be held at 11 a.m. Monday, October 10, at the Four Points Sheraton.

The president of the state AFL-CIO, David Newby, is the invited keynote speaker.

The honorees include:

- Rep. Tammy Baldwin, the Madison Democrat who has been a champion on health care issues;
- Bob Haase a member of the Iron Workers Local 8 for 49 years who also serves on the Milwaukee Aging Commission;

• And from the Fox Valley retiree activists Merle Brimmer, a former member of the machinists. Special recognition will be given to the ailing Carston Koeller, former president of the group.

There will also be a memorial tribute to Joe Rody, the tireless advocate of public education and world peace who died Aug. 7. Rody's life was celebrated in last month's Labor Press.

Tickets for the fund-raiser are \$75 a person. The luncheon is also set up for groups to have a table of eight for \$600.

There are special opportunities for the exhibit table or to sponsor an ad in the luncheon booklet. For more information, call (414) 771-9511.



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— Rod

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City vote increases fees - and fairness

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

Despite what you may hear from state GOP legislators on the campaign trail, it has been local officials who have had to come up with innovative, creative solutions to the expectation of quality service versus the tax burden.

The most recent example of creativity combined with common sense occurred Sept. 12 when the Milwaukee Common Council, working with proposals from Mayor Tom Barrett, approved higher fees for garbage pickup and sewer use. The vote removed from the annual property tax bill several inescapable jumps in cost.

It also captured payments, which the property tax can't, from nonprofit and commercial entities.

"If you're a user of quality services, you should assist us in paying for them," said Common Council President Willie Hines. In the view of Hines and other aldermen, this is a far more equitable approach to paying for public services than just piling the costs on the homeowner.

Hines pointed out in an interview with the Labor Press that the vote offers the city comptroller a definable revenue stream ahead of time as the mayor and aldermen work through the 2006 budget.

"It's also easier to explain to

citizens," commented Ald. Michael D'Amato in another interview. "They see we were faced with stark choices - do we raise fees or do we close firehouses and libraries and cut back garbage pickup from a weekly service?"

Barrett has also pointed out that fuel charges, health prices (soaring way ahead of the national average in Wisconsin) and the desire to train and put in service more police officers are all factors that will cost a lot more in 2006 and were not considered in the state's arbitrary percentage limit on property tax increases.

Barrett voluntarily met those limits a year ago. This year they are mandated by legislation.

Gov. Doyle provided some wiggle room this summer in his line-item vetoes after the legislature insisted on a sweeping 2% cap on property tax increases. By removing debt payments from the cap, Doyle has actually allowed the city budget to grow 5%.

"I do thank the governor for helping us with shared state revenue in a difficult, I might even say, hostile environment," said Hines. "I think when it comes to innovative, creative solutions conscious of taxpayer costs, the city of Milwaukee's good stewardship is evident. It's our bond rating that has increased while the state's was being lowered."

City workers with the AFSCME District Council 48

union have also been saying that the budget has gotten leaner and meaner - to the point that, if further cuts in workers come out of the budget, "it won't be fat but needed services that are going," said one city union leader who is at odds with his bosses over some proposed manpower cuts.

So there will still be intense budget debates and cruel choices, but the fee decision has eased the pain by about \$15 million a year. It also suggests that the aldermen are heeding the demand for efficient service from their districts.

Approved by the council vote were an increase in garbage pickup fees (listed as "solid waste fee" on the municipal bill that a property owner receives quarterly) and an increase in sewer fees (technically adding a storm sewer maintenance fee).

The municipal fee bill received every three months is still erroneously called "a water bill" by many homeowners. Years ago, it started reflecting a range of non-faucet services.

Increasing the "solid waste" fee was the only close vote on the council, 8-7, which D'Amato believes reflects that most aldermen don't object to the fee concept but some had trouble with the actual amount.

News reports on the garbage pickup fee indicated that it was an increase of 76% for a homeowner. That didn't emphasize what the total cost of garbage pickup would now be. It works out to



At Zeidler Park on Labor Day, state Sen. Spencer Coggs had a big hug for Ald. Joe Davis (right), who a week later was on the winning side of the fee vote at the Common Council.

just \$11 a month for a homeowner in 2006.

In practical terms, the vote increased the three-month \$18.75 "solid waste" fee by \$14.75. As a yearly total, garbage pickup would cost a homeowner \$132.

D'Amato pointed out that, even now, owners of multi-family dwellings (apartment houses that have at least five units) don't pay this fee but the actual full cost for city garbage pickup.

The new storm sewer fee works out to an average of \$12 a year for a property owner, according to city calculations. But D'Amato and Hines, as well as Barrett, are particularly pleased that a combination of new technology and new calculations will lift several million dollars of storm sewer costs off homeowners and onto businesses and nonprofits.

The city can now figure the costs of all those impervious-surface parking lots that flow water into the sewers - "everything from Wal-Mart to large churches," said D'Amato. Thus, it can charge more fairly for actual use of the storm sewers.

But the new approach also allows the commercials and nonprofits to reduce their costs by adopting draining approaches that doesn't rely on storm sewers. Better environmentally savvy ways to handle such runoff would also reduce the burden on the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District during heavy rains.

"That means that, as a property owner, you have the ability to reduce costs on your own," said D'Amato.

"I completely expect to see other municipalities in Wisconsin follow our lead," D'Amato added. "The state hasn't given any of us much choice if we want to keep the local services people clearly want."

Little noticed in the tax debate is what has happened in the last 15 years. State legislative changes have moved the majority burden of property tax payments off businesses and onto the backs of homeowners. Nonprofits that don't pay property tax have expanded to include not just churches but "assisted-living" housing complexes and other entities once thought of as business operations.

It was also the state legislature that helped hand Doyle a \$3 billion deficit while it continues to stick it to local government units by reducing shared revenue and imposing local property tax freezes.

Yet, D'Amato argues, if you study expenditure comparison documents, the city of Milwaukee comes out on top in providing quality services at the best cost.

Hines noted that the fees increased by the vote are not set in stone. They could move up or more likely down, Hines indicated, depending on what happens in the budget process.

But the vote, Hines said, sets a benchmark of what the aldermen will agree to in increased fees and may prove particularly helpful since they were voted in advance of what he expects to be "very challenging" budget deliberations.



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AFSCME, SEIU pick harmony over discord

There was a collective sigh of relief in the labor community Sept. 19 when the two large unions most likely to butt heads in the recent disaffiliation agreed instead to "healthy competition" and some remarkable cooperation.

Negotiations had been going on for some weeks at the highest level between Andy Stern, president of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

Stern was the acknowledged primary force that last July brought disaffiliation from the national AFL-CIO. SEIU has aggressively organized janitors, homecare and hospital workers among other service sectors and carries 1.8 million members.

McEntee heads the largest (1.3 million members) of the 50 unions that stayed within the AFL-CIO. He also emerged as one of the most aggressive advocates of the current AFL-CIO leadership, headed by John Sweeney, and its

efforts to spur organizing — which AFSCME has also sunk a lot of resources into — while keeping political and local unity.

Stern and his new Change to Win coalition want even more money put into organizing and aggressive merger of unions in like sectors of interest.

Since many of AFSCME and SEIU sectors overlap, the unions have long been natural rivals, but the conflicts had been kept in check by a binding AFL-CIO procedure to resolve disputes. The binds unraveled when SEIU pulled its national union and per-capita dues out of the AFL-CIO, joined by the UFCW, the Teamsters and in mid-September by UNITE HERE.

Quickly eruptions occurred involving homecare workers in California. The fight for representation wound up at the National Labor Relations Board, a government agency that neither union has been enamored of.

On Sept. 19, the two unions didn't just step back from the brink. They stepped forward. They announced a series of new

cooperations.

Both presidents admitted to their leaderships that poaching and uncoordinated efforts could prove counter-productive in image and in successfully attracting workers.

In California, the two unions agreed to combine forces to win first contracts for 25,000 homecare workers and to bring all homecare workers together in a revitalized Home Care Council to affect issues and legislation.

The two unions agreed not to raid each other's members or attempt to decertify or undercut each other. They agree to submit to a binding dispute-resolving procedure and, in both California and Pennsylvania, to create a "unity union" led by both to organize home-based childcare providers.

The pact extends for two years, by which point both unions can evaluate how the agreements are working.

The winner, McEntee said, would be "the millions of workers who want a union but don't have one" — emphasizing that both

unions would pursue expansion, not trading members.

Stern agreed: "When we strengthen our cooperation and help workers in the same industry unite, everybody wins."

The press announcement and matching statements were carefully orchestrated so that neither union would seem in a subordinate role. Both unions agreed that this would not end competition but create an avenue for resolution and a clear emphasis on adding union members.

There were also some interesting olive branches that should affect central labor councils, such as the MCLC.

In memos to his leadership, Stern made it clear that the pact was part of rebuilding relationships at the state and local levels.

The disaffiliated unions gather after this newspaper is published, joined by unions that at this point want to work with both sides (the Laborers and the Farm Workers) and by the Carpenters, who have gone their own way since 2001.

The SEIU-AFSCME pact and the words surrounding it may signal a new openness to the concept of Solidarity Charters, especially since the national AFL-CIO has been at pains to emphasize that rejoining local labor councils is in no way an attack on, or

requires some sort of loyalty oath against, the disaffiliating national unions.

The Solidarity Charters would allow the locals to return to full involvement on councils like the MCLC via per-capita payments plus a 10% surcharge for the work and staff provided by the national AFL-CIO.

Initially, both SEIU and UFCW spoke harshly of the Solidarity Charter proposal, while the Teamsters welcomed it. Since then, Sweeney and other AFL-CIO leaders have released several advisories to the disaffiliated unions clarifying the concept and debunking some of the early interpretations.

Is there a desire for engagement on both sides? Definitely. Is there a softening on tactics and issues? It's dangerous to read tea leaves in an evolving situation. Unions in both camps continue to cooperate on national and local campaigns, so the facts on the ground may trump any power posturing at the top.

The only thing that seems definite about the Change to Win conference at the end of September is that it will be a Change That Name conference. No one seems happy with it. But then, at one time, "AFL-CIO" didn't exactly roll off the tongue either. — *Dominique Paul Noth*

Labor delegates tackle by-laws

Over the past decade, committees of officers and executive board members of the Milwaukee County Labor Council had met several times to take a stab at fixing the arcane wording in the local constitution's by-laws.

More pressing issues interfered with grammatical correction, simplified delegate oath, removing references to McCarthy-era politics and changing the names of unions that, through merger and other factors, no longer existed.

The disaffiliation of several unions from the AFL-CIO put the by-laws issue on the front-burner. The council was coming down to one full-time officer. Several board seats would open up.

But then, several locals of those unions, it became apparent, could come back to full voting status and even board service. The AFL-CIO amended its national by-laws to allow local council Solidarity Charters.

Other legal complications

ensued. The local by-laws had to change to preserve procedural clarity while being flexible.

On Sept. 7, the board proposed to the delegates that nominations be delayed until new by-laws were approved. There were some initial objections to change at this juncture but overwhelmingly the delegates voted in support of a delay.

Then Douglas Drake, the board member who also chairs the by-laws committee, took the delegates line by line through their printed copies of the adjustments, a thoroughly detailed approach that caused ripples of amusement

when delegates realized how ancient some of the language had become over two decades.

The sequence now is that in October delegates will vote on the by-laws changes. In November, nominations will be made for open seats. Elections will take place in December. Depending on who is elected to what, that might open up some other nominations and elections.

Copies of the by-law changes are available for local officers and delegates who missed the meeting at the labor council offices, 633 S. Hawley Rd., or call (414) 771-7070.

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Sheet metal workers, families and retirees conveyed their solidarity in the Labor Day parade.

Chopping retiree health support runs into a sheet-metal wall

Around Wisconsin over the next few months, you're going to see handbills and demonstrations by Sheet Metal Workers over a jaw-dropping stance by management on health support for retirees.

The workers are fighting to continue to defray health costs a couple of hundred dollars each month for these fixed-income retirees.

Management doesn't contribute a penny to retiree health costs – that is negotiated in the hourly benefit rates paid to Sheet Metal Workers. Nevertheless, management is telling the workers what that money should do and is insisting that the workers stop contributing to retirees by June of 2006.

Marc Norberg, the president and business manager for the statewide Sheet Metal Workers' International Association Local 18, which has 3,742 active members, calls the management position "obscene."

The deadlock has forced the conflict into arbitration.

For decades, the benefits portion of union sheet-metal pay has been negotiated and monitored through the Wisconsin Sheet Metal Workers Health and Benefit Fund. Its board has eight representatives of labor and eight management representatives (who speak for the construction companies).

In any deadlock, lawyers for both sides are paid out of the fund, which may in practical terms give management a leg up, since the workers are in effect paying both sides to settle a legal dispute.

Three years ago, Norberg recalls, the fund was in financial trouble. Active workers took cuts in their own benefits to restore it to viability, which is solid now.

At that time the management trustees went right after the retirees and, through arbitration, increased the retiree health premiums to levels that were disastrous to those folks.

"A big part of the worker concerns was that we remain good stewards for those who devoted their lives to this profession and have retired," he said.

Out of the \$5.77 an hour in compensation apportioned to benefits, the workers had agreed to spend 29 cents for early retirees (over 55) and regular retirees (65 and up). Now that the fund is financially sound, the Sheet Metal Workers want to increase that amount to 50 cents an hour.

That proposed amount is actually half what some other trades devote to retiree benefits. Management on the Sheet Metal fund board certainly know that, since several sit on those other trades' boards and have in those cases supported the concept.

Norberg sees several reasons behind the desire to cut off health help for the union's 712 retirees. One is to try to drive a wedge between retirees and the

active members worried about health costs for their own families. "But that's not going to work," said Norberg, pointing out that his members know "all too well what goes into doing this trade over 30 or 40 years."

"Our members are also going to retire someday and they expect the union to be there for them, too," he added.

Another reason is to remove a crucial item from negotiations. Norberg cites comments from management trustees: Their theory is to remove items from the benefit package that have a risk to increase in cost, believing that will lower Local 18's wage demands at the bargaining table.

"Removing a viable retiree subsidy will have just the opposite effect," said Norberg. "Our members will demand much higher wage packages so they can save post-tax wages to afford retirement health care costs."

At one point, the management bloc on the fund board offered a one-time \$8 million subsidy that would culminate in the retirees being required to pay the full premium in just a few short years.

"When we became deadlocked on the labor proposal, management dropped this offer," Norberg recalled. "They then came in with this proposal to stop retiree support by the middle of next year."

This is all part of a "horrible, shameful" trend affecting retirees around the nation, Norberg said. Businesses are seeking to dump negotiated pension deals and health benefits for retirees.

"The issue with the sheet metal workers sounds complicated if you don't understand how multi-employer funds work or how construction workers receive their retirees," said Norberg.

"But underneath it's the same thing as the rest of the country. Some of the companies we work for and big business in America see nothing wrong in taking the most vulnerable people in our society and making them more vulnerable."

"Now they're even trying to order us not to care."

Winning ways at Laborfest

For the second time in the last 10 years, a union worker at Harley-Davidson won the Harley motorcycle at the Laborfest raffle.

It's probably not poetic justice. And it's certainly not dirty work at the crossroads. It may reflect how many of the members of the local (formerly PACE Local 7-0209, now USW Local 2-209) like the idea of winning a bike they helped make -- in this case a Harley Sportster 2006 -- and how heavily they are sold tickets by their fellow workers.

The winner collecting his prize from the House of Harley was **Jeff Bruchhauser** - and yes, his family already owns a bike.

Other raffle winners were **Randy Hebert** (\$500 winner) and \$100 winners **Plumbers Local 75, Brian Fox, Calvin Fowler, Susan Chadha, Sindia Caban, Mike Wood, Randy Hader and Jan Mucerinio**.

There were also free raffles and special prizes during Laborfest.

ADULT

Marcus Hotels & Resorts - one-night stay & breakfast for two at the Grand Geneva Resort



This young winner seemed to hope no one was going to take the prize back.

& Spa: Tanja Wieseke

Four Points Sheraton Milwaukee Airport - overnight stay: **Mark Escamilla**

Pfister Hotel - One night deluxe guest room: **Shirley Robinson**

Milwaukee Brewers Baseball - Four tickets to Brewers game, preferred parking pass, 300 club passes: **Raymond Harris**

Karl Ratzsch's Restaurant - \$25 gift certificate: **Gary Silverman**

Mader's Restaurant - \$100 gift certificate: **Lisa Abbott**

American Serb Hall - two winners - gift certificate, fish dinner for 2: **Steve Cychosz** and **Andrew Duke**

CHILDREN

Wheel Barrels - **Amanda Escamilla, Alyssa Pechauer, Rashad Harrison and Nevaeh Silverman**

36" Wagons - **Jaz and Yvonne Summerville**

Discovery Wagons - **Nicole Scaffidi and Joshua Jackson**

BASKETBALL

SHOOT-OFF

(13-17 year olds)

First prize - Huffy basketball hoop - **Terry Anzueto**

Second prize - 4 tickets to Bucks games - **Byron James**

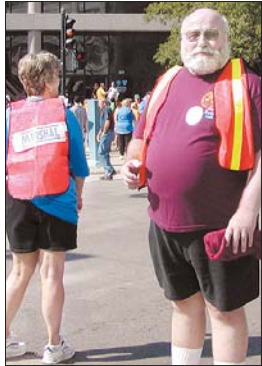
Third prize - Autographed Brady Clark baseball, cap, T-shirt - **Alfredo Lee**

Fourth prize - autographed Damien Miller baseball, cap, T-shirt - **Chris Curtiss**

Were You There? LABORFEST 2005 *Sharing at the Park*

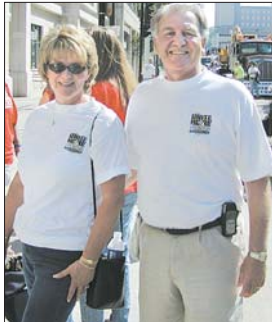


LEFT: Michigan St. was jammed for two blocks with Harleys and (in the distance) trucks awaiting the half-hour call to start the parade.

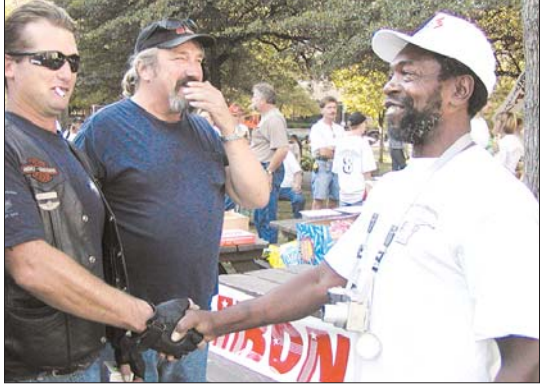


RIGHT: The new guy unsnarling such tangles as parade marshal was retired Smith Steel Worker and veteran labor council leader Duane McConville.

BELOW: Percy Robertson (right), an MCLC delegate from Iron Workers Local 8, was among the many at Zeidler Park meeting workers from other unions.



Affable and always supportive Sam Gallo (above right) of the executive board sensed his union was disaffiliating, but he and UNITE HERE members (right) still turned out in force.



LEFT: You would expect Harley motorcycles to be all over the place at Zeidler Park, but these days so are cell phones.



RIGHT: Workers and their families were encouraged to make a pig of themselves when Operating Engineers Local 139 brought a gift: A whole roasted pig and two professional carvers. The delicacy was skillfully deboned and voraciously devoured for breakfast within a half an hour.



ABOVE: Hanging out with the AFSCME 48 crowd was what, apparently, is America's youngest FBI agent. RIGHT: But that's OK. What was apparently the world's youngest printer was chowing down with the Graphics International Conference staff a half block away during the Zeidler Park pre-parade gathering.





In perfect rank and pretty high speed, a bigger squad of Harleys than in years past kicked off the hourlong Laborfest parade.



The Laborers brought a drum (left) while Stanley Macdial brought oversized tools of the bricklayers' trade (above).



Some teamsters and families marched (left) while others waved from the bus (above).

Were You There? LABORFEST 2005 Marching Together



Continuing their bridal protest against Aurora's pension parsimony, AFT nurses also gave a baby in the wedding convertible.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: The letter carriers, the UAW, the seamstresses, the Rockwell UC local (still proudly labeling themselves the Altheide workers), the plumbers, the deputy sheriffs, the sprinklers, the IBEW broadcast engineers and the insulators.



State Rep. Barbara Toles (center) supported the banner of her fellow teachers at WATC - AFT Local 212.

BELOW: Brewery Workers Local 9 on their way to sampling some of their own Miller handwork.



Aid, Willie Wade was the dapper stroller ahead of Iron Workers Local 8.



BELOW: A youngster and a motorcyclist lead the way for Painters District 7. RIGHT: A series of venerable flags signal the Brotherhood of Carpenters marching unit.



ABOVE: A former union member now Milwaukee County Supervisor Mike Johnson Jr. led his fellow AFSCME District Council 48. RIGHT: Tucked further back in the sea of green that reflects the largest number of locals within the MLC were other elected officials. Among them were Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic (clutching a canister) and next to her State Sen. Spencer Coggs.

BELOW: Members of the Communications Workers of America Local 4390 headed toward the finish line.

— Labor Press photos by Dominique Paul Noh and Lyndia Clayton.





To the delight of children and onlookers, a web of dancing ribbons was spun in time to the music of Spider George and the Web by stilt-walker Debra Davis.
 BELOW: Some children took the face-painting clowns very seriously.



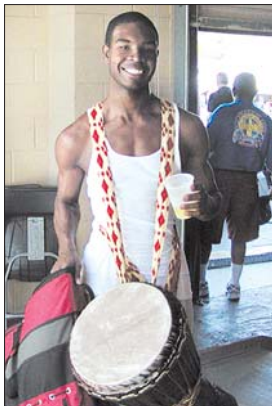
Snoopy (the MetLife mascot) hangs out near the raffle tickets (smart dog). BELOW: Only the IBEW operator wasn't nervous as patrons got ready to ride the sky in WE Energies' bucket trucks.

Were You There? LABORFEST 2005 Party On



Photos (c) Labor Press

Pro wrestlers preen for the camera before their matches while (below) the next subjects pose for rapid caricaturist Reynaldo near the Miller Stage.



A Ko-Thi drummer cooled off backstage (top left) while children worked off excess energy in the popular Bounce House.

ABOVE RIGHT: Miller Stage festivities included several surprise thank-yous. Sheila Cochran presented trophies to longtime parade marshals (from left) Elmer and Betty Knutson and Ron Salmon. RIGHT: His friends in labor also created a memorial plaque for John Goldstein (center) presented by IFPTE President Gregory Junemann (far right). Another surprise – a government proclamation honoring MCLC's just departed president for service to the community – came from state Rep. Jon Richards (back to camera).



Teachers lose chance to help taxpayers

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

Analysis

Local media apparently didn't read the arbitrator's 76-page decision and documentation that chose the Milwaukee school administration's health offer over the proposal put forth by the teachers' union.

If they had, fairness would have required a different emphasis to the stories, editorials and talk-show glee that followed — including a realization that the union plan would have saved taxpayers more money, immediately and guaranteed.

This is probably a shock to the public. The casual news reader or listener didn't even realize that the teachers had offered to pay for health care — to the point of contributions even by members who don't use the benefits — while the Milwaukee Public Schools lean heavily on changing behavior by making all care options more costly.

A look at the facts, even among those who agreed with the final decision, would have added greater understanding of the disappointment among teachers when they learned about the results (most getting the news on the very first day they went back to the classroom).

Many of arbitrator Jay E. Grenig's comments lament that the law didn't allow him to mix and match the competing proposals, which would result in a contract "better than the two final offers alone."

This was a winner-take-all arbitration, and the bargaining impasse kept both sides from concentrating on the soaring health provider costs in Milwaukee, which Grenig's decision points out as a culprit.

Another big culprit — and the frequent digs in Grenig's opinion make it as clear as an arbitrator can — is the state of Wisconsin for its drop in school funding and reduced legislative commitment to public education.

Grenig actually credits both sides with responsibly facing the financial crisis of the public schools caused by the revenue drop. There is little difference in the competing plans in financial impact on the taxpayer, Grenig pointed out — in fact, the union proposal saves more money from the get-go.

Still, following the rules of interest arbitration under the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission, and adding his own analysis and preferences, Grenig opted for the MPS plan, which imposes co-insurance, deductibles and co-pays for teachers who stick with the preferred provider option (Aetna) and co-insurance and co-pays for those in the HMO option run by UnitedHealthcare. As a result, both Aetna and

HMO members will pay \$10 for an office visit, \$35 for urgent care and \$50 for emergency room visit.

Rather than imposing such out-of-pocket costs on employees, the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association (MTEA union) proposed across-the-board salary contributions whether a member used health care or not — 1% of wages for those in single coverage and 2% of wages for family coverage.

Under the rejected union plan, an educational assistant making \$16,000 a year would pay \$320 a year in family coverage regardless of plan choice while a teacher making \$50,000 would pay \$1,000.

The teachers' idea would have enlarged the pool of contributors and guaranteed the financial reduction in health costs to the school board.

The MPS proposal was clearly designed to force teachers out of the Aetna plan, which still has better mental health care and a larger in-network pool, by drowning it in the bathtub of higher charges, including a front-end deductible imposed only on Aetna users (capped at \$100 for an individual and \$300 for a family).

Now, under the approved MPS plan, both the \$16,000 and \$50,000 union employee would pay exactly the same for a similar medical situation.

By Labor Press' calculations, three modest surgical procedures spread out in one family could easily reach \$900 out-of-pocket for a family that sticks with Aetna or \$600 for a family in HMO coverage.

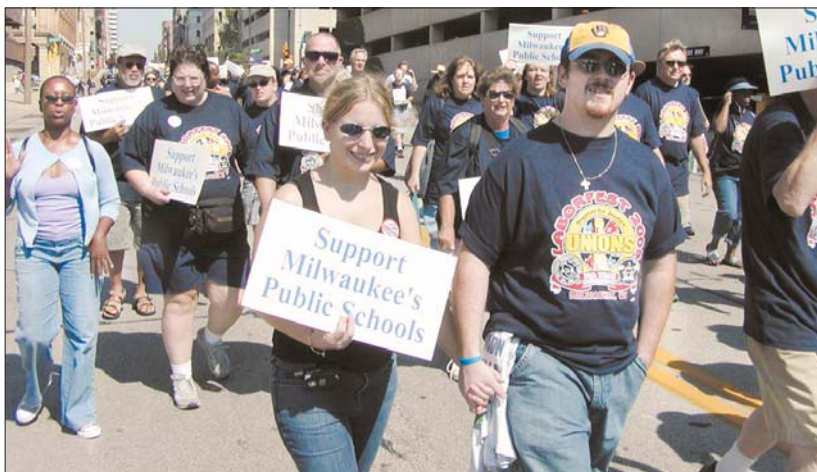
You'll note that this is far less than the union would have had a veteran teacher pay to the school board for health coverage but double or triple what its low-income members would have to pay.

The decision to move all drug oversight to Medco was in both offers, but there were other disputes.

The arbitrator's decision dumped something the MTEA fought to keep — the hold-harmless language that has been in place since 1971. "Hold-harmless" forced the MPS through a third party to resist paying charges that exceed "usual and customary."

While there is a legal cost for the MPS to fight for hold-harmless cases — far less cost than the amount of overcharges — the gain is small for the school system while likely to bite hard on employees in Milwaukee's confusing and inflated health-provider environment.

Before the decision, health providers could have a legal fight on their hands if they overcharged. Not now. Employees



The MTEA walks off the results of health cost arbitration in the Labor Day parade.

who believe they have stuck within their health network for a hospital or an outpatient service could find out differently, since they can't walk around the operating room and question every anesthesiologist and technician. If a non-network provider was added into the mix of an in-network service, the employee could be liable for a big bill and no remedy for redress.

Grenig's final decision reads like an educated guess that, while the teachers' approach would save more definitively for the first years, the MPS approach would work in the longer term. There could be a backlash, though. Both sides proposed a health and wellness program. Such programs take years to implement and assess, but over time should bring down costs by changing behavior and encouraging early recognition of health problems.

But teachers Labor Press interviewed worry that sticker-shock on basic services may cause members not to take problems to a doctor in timely fashion.

"As far as I can tell, no one including teachers wants to go to the doctor," noted Pat O'Mahar, a representative for the MTEA. "The MPS plan may turn out to be another disincentive."

Another factor for Grenig was that other unions at MPS, with far smaller work forces and different issues than the 6,000 teachers, had already accepted the administration's health plan, including the Milwaukee Building and Trades Council, the Operating Engineers and two AFSCME locals.

But these unions are not in competition for teachers. The MTEA is particularly concerned that the MPS win makes it harder to lure or keep good teachers.

There was a curious concession by the arbitrator that many health plans in competing school districts are lower in cost to employees than the MPS plan, but he saw an effort by the MPS to work toward

salary equity — and he also argued that this was an orange and apples comparison.

The suburban districts have higher money per student to work with because of state revenue and property tax levies, Grenig said, so they can reward teachers better without cutting into services or reducing teachers, as the MPS had done for three years.

But if such districts have more money to play with for teacher benefits, that also gives them an inside track in poaching from the MPS, particularly with established teachers who see their benefits fading and with brand-new teachers of promise.

(Many suburban districts do not accept teachers candidates directly out of college, but the MPS does and often grooms them — only to see them depart for the suburbs or even other states because of pay and benefits issues.)

Such nuances, complicated and long-term, were certainly not hinted at in the news coverage on the arbitrator's decision. Most

pundits took the tone of sarcastically welcoming MTEA teachers to the unhappy club of co-pays and deductibles.

You certainly didn't hear that the MTEA plan would have been instantly more generous to the taxpayers and also showed a social conscience in making higher-pay members contribute more than low-income workers.

Generally, only health care was at impasse and dealt with by the arbitrator's decision. Both sides were already close on wages — and since it took so long to settle this blockade, negotiations now proceed on a new contract. Only the teachers represented by MTEA were immediately affected by the arbitration, with health plan changes going into effect Nov. 1.

Three other units within the MTEA (bookkeepers, substitute teachers and educational assistants) will likely follow the same path but negotiations of those contracts (including back-pay checks) were still open as we went to press.

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Storm clouds of greed hover over Gulf Coast

Looters From Page 1

determining fault. "What I'm interested in is solving problems," he told the news media Sept. 12, but the biggest problem may be the very system through which the nation's treasure is flowing.

So let's not look too closely, Bush says. Else we might see how that system is relentlessly widening the already-incredible gap between rich and poor, how it offers no comfort about future preparedness for disasters, natural or man-made, and how little voice beyond lip-service it provides residents of the region about their own future.

If anything, it recalls the lack of government planning for post-war Iraq. Who would have thought there were no WMDs? Who would have thought people would fight occupation? Who would have thought the levees would break?

In other ways, this gulf invasion is emulating the other Gulf War. Pentagon auditors today cite hundreds of millions in wasted or corrupt spending by the same privateers.

In Iraq, it took the auditors years to catch up with them. Within our borders it ought to be different. But knowledgeable accountants hoot at that, since there's just one official to audit each \$2 billion plus in contracts.

FEMA is subsumed within the Department of Homeland Security (with its 180,000 in personnel and \$40 billion in bud-



Richard Trumka's impassioned speech at Laborfest pales next to his anger over Bush's attack on Gulf Coast workers.

et). Homeland Security is subsumed within the most secretive administration in US history. That puts disaster profiteering on a course to surpass war profiteering.

And this is merely the first wave of money. Congress is finally suggesting hearings for the inevitable third bill, which could easily top \$150 billion. There is talk of creating a reconstruction agency modeled on the Tennessee Valley Authority -- an ironic longing by both conservatives and liberals for FDR's New Deal that Bush has been trying to undo with his judiciary nominations and Social Security schemes.

As this belated concern for oversight buys some time for thought, the financial insiders press on carving up the Gulf Coast. Large insurance companies are maneuvering in D.C. to minimize their payout damage. Private sector money is rushing in to lock up land, lock in con-

cepts and decide levee systems, port development and construction projects before local leaders speak up or seek input from their constituencies.

A million citizens, middle class and poor, saw their livelihoods and even families washed away. They're now dispersed into the largest forced migration in our history, which makes it easier not to ask them how to restore neighborhoods or pool resources.

So who will decide how communities will be brought back and with what infrastructure of jobs and education? And why isn't there a specific procedure to hire the people of the region who lost their homes, neighborhoods and jobs?

Oh, wait. There is a commitment to make sure they don't get much of the American pie.

The president who took too many days to react to human suffering was mighty quick the day Congress passed out billions in blank checks. He instantly pushed construction jobs deeper into the Mississippi mud.

By executive order Sept. 8, he suspended the Davis-Bacon act, which from the 1930s has required prevailing wage on such federally-funded projects as highways, bridges and tunnels -- all a goldmine right now on the Gulf Coast

Organized labor was furious, as were many in Congress. Laborfest's special speaker, Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the national AFL-CIO, is also point man for organized labor's relief effort of money and personnel. Reached by Labor Press Sept. 9 for an interview, he blasted the president's decree as "shameful."

"I'll tell you the real purpose -- it's to keep the Gulf Coast poor," said Trumka. This is not a union issue but a people issue, Trumka said. The president's order will help keep the region depressed and make sure better wages and real voice at work won't radiate out to other jobs.



The marcher behind this pointed sign at Laborfest turned out to be retired alderman Don Richards.

As Trumka pointed out, Bush's decree also applied to key big-construction counties in Florida such as Miami-Dade and Broward.

The contracts going out are not just no-bid but "cost-plus," meaning the companies can go over their estimates with no reduction in profit. Suspending Davis-Bacon makes sure no worker will share fairly in the fruits of this labor.

Yet in Louisiana, "prevailing wage" for construction was already below sea level. It averages \$9 an hour.

You would have expected the government to raise the standards of so many thousands thrown out of work. You would have expected the American public, which gave so generously of purse and heart, to insist on it.

Instead, the initial emphasis in the president's speeches is on pet projects -- vouchers for housing and education that tend to reward landlords and private schools rather than establish long-term skills and reliable

income. What a sad follow-up to the heroism exhibited daily by so many soldiers, public servants, neighbors and volunteers. What a sorry reward for the enormous outpouring of money and empathy from families across the country (who are beginning to realize how easily this could have been their own)..

The White House and the new looters are hoping that better visual images -- rebuilding and return rather than dead bodies and screaming mothers -- will wash away America's universal disgust and shame over how poorly the government responded to crisis. The Bush team has to distract us, to pump outrage and anger out of the body politic.

But can we really forget what Katrina taught us about our national security preparedness? Can we suspend the expectations heard across the political spectrum that government's main purpose is to protect us, knit us together and serve the public good?

Can we ignore that, in this administration, corporate greed is the man-made disaster, the hurricane-force wind driving the ship of state into wreck and ruin?

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Unions instantly poised for hurricane relief

Put on alert that help would be needed on environmental and hazardous-material cleanup, hundreds of Milwaukee union workers volunteered, eager to train Gulf Coast citizens in professional hazmat procedures and cope with overwhelming wreckage.

Weeks after being told to get ready, these union workers are still on hold. During that time, contracts were let to non-union companies and the Bush administration suspended wage and environmental rules, then said the Army should be in charge. Just like Third World countries do.

Some local leaders now suspect that bearing the union flag down South would be about as welcome as aid from Cuba, Iran and Venezuela.

Still, without fanfare and despite the Bush stiff-arm, organized labor came instantly on board, adding on-site muscle to sizeable charity giving (\$2,000 in loose change collected in four hours at Laborfest alone).

The suspension of Davis-Bacon pay standards could understandably chill skilled workers from lending their experience and efficiency to the rebuilding efforts. But such government behavior didn't chill their hearts.

Often working with the Red Cross and local disaster agencies, small bands of union nurses, fire-



Last year's Laborfest was almost stripped of IBEW Local 2150 trucks as the power repairmen went to Florida for a series of hurricanes. This year the bucket and other trucks were in the parade and on the grounds. Most calls for help came right after Sept. 5.

fighters and police have been quietly melding into volunteer efforts. CWA rushed people and money to support its uprooted and scattered union brothers and sisters at Bell South.

The AFL-CIO's Richard Trumka has sent 1,000 union volunteers to the region and set up

three modern centers to connect dislocated workers with jobs.

And as has been typical within the power industry, where contractors and utilities have special arrangements in times of trouble, hundreds of members of IBEW Local 2150 and unions in Illinois and Iowa put the power

lines back in operation in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

"This is the Band-Aid stage," said John Holtz, vice president of operations for Michaels Power, one of a half-dozen contractors that sent crews from here to the Gulf Coast. That Band-Aid should be done as you read this, "but then comes rebuilding the system, which could last several months," Holtz said.

How do union members, with better pay and benefits and generally more experience, interact with the largely non-union power crews of the Gulf Coast?

"Very carefully," joked Holtz. "We kind of circle around them," said one IBEW leader.

But both agreed that there was smooth cooperation. "They're all focused on the same job, getting power back to the consumers and dealing with overwhelming problems," Holtz said. "Issues that might crop out otherwise -- well, this is not the time."

Last year, IBEW Local 2150 sent crews three times to help restore Florida power after hurricanes. Katrina's damage, all report, is the worst.

Gulfport is just smashed, Holtz said. "It's worse than what happened (to the buildings) in New Orleans."

Mississippi was so devastated that for the first nights, "these crews slept in their cabs." Now the "comfort of home" is a large warehouse "with a thousand cots, head to toe, where they sleep eight hours and then work for 16," relates Holtz.

He's very proud of how the crews are handling it all.

"I don't want to make my friends in the South mad at me," he said. "But when it comes to experience and work ethic, no place matches these workers from the Midwest."

Milwaukee unions are also helping close to home. Among the unions absorbing evacuees is Operating Engineers Local 139, which worked with Walsh Construction to open room on the Marquette Interchange project.

There are now hundreds of Hurricane Katrina victims taken in by Milwaukee families, friends and generous neighbors. The Machinists Union and the Hunger Task Force are establishing a food pantry for them at United Lodge 66, 2609 W. Oklahoma Ave.

There is a need for individuals to staff the pantry as well as for food donations. To help, call Doug Curler of the AFL-CIO Community Services (office 414-771-9829 or cell 414-378-1597) or contact Hunger Task Force's Cindy Bromberg at 414-777-0483.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

Official Notice

Elections for officers scheduled at Harley local

USW Local 2-209 will start nominations for various union officers for two-year terms at 10 a.m. Sunday, November 13, at a membership meeting at the local's hall, 12034 W. Adler Lane, West Allis.

Any full-time permanent Harley-Davidson worker who has been a member of the local for a year may be nominated, but nominees must attend the meeting or have an acceptance letter on file.

All executive board positions are open for nominations including president, vice-president, financial secretary, recording secretary, three trustees, sergeant-at-arms, and guide/guard. Six Bargaining Committee posi-

tions also need to be filled.

If more than two members accept nomination for any executive board position, or more than 12 accept for bargaining committee positions, the local's election commission will conduct a runoff election in December to

come down to only two candidates for each opening.

The final election will be held January 11, 2006.

Andy Voelzke
Recording Secretary

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Pulpit report



THEY WERE LAWYERS, NUNS, community activists, elected officials, and lots of labor leaders and rank-and-file. More than 100 Milwaukee area congregations opened up their doors to them, mainly on the weekend before Labor Day, to hear personal takes on what religion tells us about the social responsibility of businesses. (Many speakers noted that business also includes those who work for the business, union and non.) The Faith Community for Worker Justice did a debriefing event of sorts Sept. 19 and heard back from virtually everyone of the warm welcome by the religious leaders at each church, synagogue or other faith center and the positive reception to the theme from the listeners. Among the events that Sunday, Sept. 4:

FAR LEFT: Sister Mary Pat Norton, a Maryknoll nun and missionary, brought another view to the topic when she spoke at St. Benedict the Moor's church. She has returned from spending 30 years in South Korea, the last 20 years working with the labor movement there. **CENTER:** The children are part of the service at Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church and here the pastor, the Rev. Karen Hagen, offers her own interchange before turning the pulpit over to the guest speaker, Dominique Paul Noth, the editor of the Labor Press. **RIGHT:** The high energy of the youth orchestra and chorus at St. Anthony Catholic Church on the South Side prepared quite a prelude to the "Labor in the Pulpits" talk from Milwaukee County Supervisor Peggy West.

WisCOSH trains workers, feeds supporters

WisCOSH, the Wisconsin Committee on Occupation Safety & Health, has been occupationally busy of late. It's been setting up free training seminars for at-risk workers while preparing its annual dinner, informational gathering and membership meeting on Oct. 21.

The dinner is open to all interested parties and is actually a

way to offer good food and speakers while highlighting the importance of its work. WisCOSH holds the dinner and speeches at 5:30 p.m. and pushes the member formalities (including election of the board) to afterward.

Because the event this year falls on a Friday, WisCOSH has made it a home-made fish fry with a choice of perch or cod (or

chicken fingers for those not into the sea chow). It will be held at the historic Amalgamated Transit Union Hall, 734 N. 26th St.

The at-risk worker seminars are something WisCOSH will travel with. They'll bring the training to interested groups at schools, community centers or even faith and youth congregations. The seminar can also be multilingual. The program has

been sponsored by Susan Harwood grants through the Department of Labor and OSHA.

"At-risk" involves different categories of groups that sometimes overlap. The targets include workers with limited English, teens new to the job world, high-risk professions (meat-packing plants, foundries) and new workers. New in this case doesn't mean age. It may include a worker

being trained to a new profession or a mother entering the job world now that her children are grown.

All are categories with heightened risk. Some 200,000 teenagers, as just one example, were injured on the job in the US last year.

For information on both WisCOSH events, call (414) 933-2338, email wiscoshm@execpc.com, or visit www.wiscosh.org.



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Christine Neumann-Ortiz (right) of Voces de la Frontera translated as Sheila Cochran addressed a bilingual crowd (left) to open a Cathedral Square rally on immigration reform.

A call for reform and unity

If you want a clue as to how tough it will be to bring needed immigration reform to the US, you got it on a beautiful afternoon at Downtown's Cathedral Square.

A few blocks away that Saturday, Sept. 17, the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce was wrapping up its national convention. Members had advance notice of the Cathedral Square rally, yet virtually none showed up.

The local immigrant and undocumented worker population turned up, as did Latino students from Milwaukee and Racine, community leaders and TV cameras.

The bright banners, special T-shirts, music and speeches sought to create awareness of the principles and details underlying the McCain-Kennedy bill in the Senate: Border security, guest-worker programs and a pathway to legalization.

It was not the turnout the coalition of sponsors had hoped for — which raises questions

about whether the social understanding, political will and moral caring are really there to create reform.

If these convention visitors, if related business groups, if the community at large are not very interested in creating grassroots pressure on Congress to fix this mess, who is?

Organized labor, for one. Both their members and leaders were actively present. The first speaker was Sheila D. Cochran, the secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, who immediately pointed out that Cathedral Square was once the site of a stop on the Underground Railroad for escaping slaves.

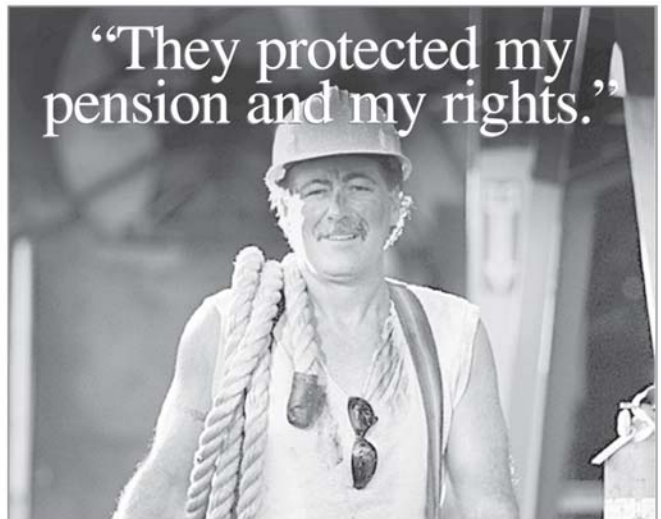
Recalling the long US history of abuse and legal blockade suffered by workers of color, Cochran cited the natural empathy in the African American community for what this underground of workers was facing.

Pointing out how companies once used black workers to try to break unions, she warned that

the same tactics are emerging now in trying to turn Latinos, blacks and even unions against one another.

"Black and brown need to stand with each other" and fix the laws, Cochran said. "I will do whatever I can to help. Exploitation is exploitation."

From Hurricane Katrina to Iraq to the tidal wave of federal deficits, recent events have temporarily receded immigration reform from Congress' brain. But the rally sponsors are planning extensive future public airing of the road up and out of America's immigration debacle.



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