



What kids see in Laborfest

The universal language of juggling at the children's stage (above). The entire parade from daddy's shoulders (top left). A new T-shirt pledging to be a future troublemaker for worker rights (bottom left). A ride on mommy's lap in a Teamsters truck (top right). Being awed by the range of banners and flags (bottom right). Or just bundled snugly against the rain in an OPEIU shirt (above). There was no homework at the family Laborfest, just one big party where thousands of adults respect and celebrate each other's work, and have fun doing it. But that's a pretty big lesson for kids right there. **More photos Pages 5-8 and other photos online at www.milwaukeelabor.org.**

AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE

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MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN



Thursday, September 28, 2006



(USPS 350-360)



mZuri

MCLC imports inspiring drama

It's perfect timing for this national touring show, given the continuing controversy around voting machines, accuracy and access to the polls. A dramatic work of song, prose and real-life heroine of the Voting Rights Act will be brought to Milwaukee Oct. 29 by the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

It is a one-woman show put together by an internationally recognized singer and actress known as mZuri, born in New Jersey but trained in Paris and Rome. She really came home in the 1990s.

She was driven to create this piece by the life of a Mississippi sharecropper shot at, abused and nearly beaten to death by policemen in her efforts simply to vote during the civil rights struggle of the 1960s.

Her name was Fannie Lou Hamer, and her testimony at the Democratic National Convention in 1964 has been widely credited with touching an entire nation and helping lead a year later to passage of the voting rights act.

The reasonably priced event takes place Sunday afternoon, October 29, at 3:30 p.m. at American Serb Hall, Hall of the Presidents, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

mZuri continued Page 3



Combining United Way's labor kick-off party with a preview of a new center to prepare hundreds of residents for good-paying jobs brought government and business together with unions Sept. 14. Left to right: MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Sheila D. Cochran, Roberta Gassman, secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and Frances Huntley-Cooper, administrator for the state's worker compensation division. **FULL STORY PAGE 10**

Labor cause becomes centrist campaign push

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

In a development with historic dimensions, a central issue for labor unions has been elevated into a central campaign issue for all voters nationwide in the November midterm elections.

The Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) - the influential middle of the road power of the Democratic Party - has embraced the Employee Free Choice Act and made it a major platform in its political activities for the candidates it influences and works for.

The announcement was made in Washington, D.C., by Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack, new chairman of the DLC and frequently mentioned as a 2008 presidential candidate. Vilsack, who has been meeting with union leaders since spring, has promised to bring new partners, key issues and a more accessible embrace of all sides to the DLC, which has often been criticized by unions as too moderate, too cautious and too swayed by corporate interests.

As a signal of this new unity around a crucial issue, standing with Vilsack at the Sept. 6 press conference were John Sweeney, national AFL-CIO president, and Anna Burger, chair of the Change to Win federation. Also joining leaders and founders of the DLC (which was

Democrats continued Page 9

How wise politicians end a family fight

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

Peg Lautenschlager joined a unity rally Sept. 16 and pledged support to the Democratic ticket and to Kathleen Falk who beat her in the close attorney general primary four days earlier.

But even before that rally arranged by Sen. Russ Feingold, labor groups that had backed Lautenschlager (including the state AFL-CIO and the MCLC) had escalated their consulting process and switched endorsements to urge support for Falk.

Realistically, the shift was a foregone conclusion.

Both women are progressives who have enjoyed union support in the past and both share much the same philosophy and concerns for working families, the environment, and balanced advocacy in an overly partisan state.

Agreeing to work hard for Falk came with a measure of disappointment, pain, surprise -- and even some anger as the vote numbers suggested that Lautenschlager had lost largely because of a hard-hearted response to her one alcohol-induced drift off the road on the way home from Madison to Fond du Lac two years ago.

Reality is hard after emotional commitment to a candidate. But reality also emphasizes that Falk and Lautenschlager have worked on the same issues and share an understanding of the civic and criminal law functions of the Department of Justice.

Falk worked as an assistant AG for 14 years ahead of her 10 years managing large government as Dane County executive. So she has miles more experience than the GOP opponent, J.B. Van Hollen, who is trying to make the race a narrowly focused law and order message about terrorists and "criminal aliens" hiding under every kitchen table.

His tone means this will not be an easy race. It's a low road that regularly tempts politicians in races bearing any law-enforcement label. Expect constant catering to crime fears, "CSI" simplicities and "lock them all up" rhetoric to dominate Van Hollen's attack.

That's why, despite Falk's superior knowledge of the DOJ and her winning personality, some observers now worry that this race will actually be harder for her to win than it would have been for Lautenschlager. It's a view that defies the popular "we're home free" logic of

Politics continued Page 3

How to stir up America's women

To help explain Stirring the Pot, an AFL-CIO campaign Oct. 10 aimed at non-union as well as union women, let's take you to a union event, the Labor Kick-Off for United Way Sept. 14. Our executive guide is the vice president and general counsel of Harley-Davidson, Gail Lione.

In preparing for the labor event, Lione told the assemblage, she looked up the first contract Harley signed with a union back in the 1930s. It spelled out a wage for men of 60 cents an hour — that in itself a comment on changing economic times.

But the contract also spelled out a wage for women employees — not a glass ceiling but a cash ceiling of 50 cents an hour, deliberately less than men.

There was amusement from the union women in the audience — but not disbelief. Even today, a recent AFL-CIO survey revealed, there is pay inequity, though hardly so blatant. Today it would be illegal to spell it out in a contract.

The overwhelming majority of the 26,000 women surveyed did see continued imbalance even as two-income households have become a norm in society for getting by. But their central shared concerns were beyond money, particularly regarding such issues as health care and quality of life.

The women also faulted corporate America for hurting them and the larger community by not striving to balance worklife and family life (including parenting life) in their policies.

Realizing that women share basic goals — and may not know it — the AFL-CIO is urging home-grown get-togethers in large cities and small, neighborhood by neighborhood, block by block — not just among co-workers but among female friends and even families.



Gail Lione at the Kick-Off event (see Page 10).

It offers Oct. 10 as a national day for potluck gatherings, or discussions over coffee, or over drinks, or after a sports event, for women to take the lead on a general discussion of issues of concern. The new website, stirringthepot.org, offers tips on how to organize such a get-together.

The timing and purpose of such individually-organized gatherings are cheerfully transparent. Non-union participants get to hear how similar their goals are to union women, and the issues in common could also provide a long-needed gathering around crucial issues at the polls.

An offshoot of Working America, a 1.5 million strong initiative for non-union workers, Stirring the Pot seeks to encourage that shared knowledge.

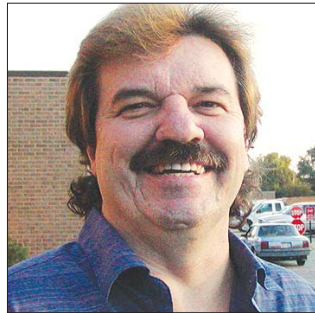
Women who work are a basis of American society, whether the work is in the home or outside it. It does seem high time, the AFL-CIO says, for women to work together for change.



Labor in the Pulpits flooded more than 100 churches with individualistic speakers the weekend before Labor Day, some speaking for a few minutes, some for a half hour as they took their own road to the theme of "Jobs, Justice and Poverty." For Journal Sentinel reporter Meg Kissinger, here being thanked after her talk in the emptying St. John's Cathedral, her recent articles on the county's treatment of the mentally ill became the doorway to the central subject.

A veteran labor activist joins MCLC liaison team

Jay Reinke -- who has hosted civil rights events for the United Auto Workers, volunteers for community access television, served as a loaned representative to United Way, and worked for more than a decade on joint training and human resources with Delphi for UAW Local 438 -- has reason to think he is well known in the labor community.



Jay Reinke

He ain't seen nothin' yet.


On Sept. 18, Reinke joined the field mobilization staff for the AFCL-CIO Community Services, working as a liaison for United Way efforts and also to help all unions that need expertise in disputes and mobilization.

He was chosen out of a field of candidates by MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Cochran, who runs the liaison staff.

Reinke replaces Doug Curler who was asked to return full time to his secretary-treasurer duties because of the membership growth of IAMAW Lodge 66.

Reinke is quickly familiarizing himself with the range of unions, companies and causes he will now regularly support. He was also heading to La Crosse Sept. 25-27 to meet more state union leaders at the Wisconsin AFL-CIO Convention.

He joins Annie Wacker and Mike Balistriere as one of the full-time field mobilizers.



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Red Wing Shoe Store

Politics

From Page 1

Democrats who sincerely believed that Lautenschlager's infamous DWI moment would be an insurmountable obstacle.

But Lautenschlager did have the criminal prosecution credentials to neutralize Van Hollen's tactics (both served as US attorney for western Wisconsin).

Democrats feel vindicated that the DWI issue helped Falk win. (Where Falk ran her TV ad deriding Lautenschlager's alcoholic night, she got the majority of votes.) But that included Republican crossovers who won't be there in November. Lautenschlager handily won Falk's home turf of Dane County, where the ad didn't run.

You can't translate to a general election what happens in a Democratic primary. This was a family fight of people with like philosophies, so the DWI mention gained traction coming from common allies on the larger issues. We'll never know now, but all that could have defused or even backlashed as just one more of those overblown GOP vs. Democrat negative ads.

However you analyze the primary, it's inescapable that Democrats will have to push very hard for Falk.



Kathleen Falk at a recent fund-raiser in Milwaukee's Hispanic community.

What Wisconsin did see, though, was a striking contrast in how families settle fights.

The Republicans proved dysfunctional kin when Van Hollen won big over Waukesha DA Paul Bucher, who couldn't dominate even his own county stronghold. Immediately in comments and behavior, Bucher proved a living definition of sullen sore loser.

On the Democratic side, all the principals - Gov. Doyle, Sen. Kohl, Falk, Lautenschlager and the Democratic candidates in the 8th Senate District race won by physician Steve Kagen - heeded Feingold's call to that unity rally in Green Bay.

They came together on the simple principle that the issues were too important to be charred by primary heat. It will take such principled unity to win.

mZuri

From Page 1

Prices are \$5 for students, \$10 for individuals.

mZuri, who was backup singer for the likes of Linda Ronstadt and Aaron Neville before breaking out with this one-woman dramatization and her own concert act, pours freedom songs, gospel, poetry and prose into "Fannie Lou Hamer: the Woman, the Legend, and Her Songs on a Rugged Road To Freedom." The work has been performed off-Broadway and around the country, as well as on Ivy League campuses and at the CBTU convention. The woman who inspired the story died in 1977.



The actress transforming herself into Fannie Lou Hamer.

It is an uplifting, pointed tale suitable for the family, with some surprises as it unfolds through music and re-enactment. There will be those of an older generation who recall hearing Hamer's message firsthand. But it especially reminds African Americans why so many regard the vote not just as important but as an almost sacred right paid for with blood and pain.



Tim Buban (left) was among the many union and community leaders crowded around John Chisholm at his victory party Sept. 12 as the TV cameras prepared to take aim. Buban is secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 200. **MORE POLITICS PAGES 4-5.**

Chisholm poised to become new DA

The satisfying primary victory for organized labor - and for the community -- was John Chisholm, a protégé of DA E. Michael McCann who won handily Sept. 12. He faces token opposition in the Nov. 7 election before becoming Milwaukee County's new district attorney.

The candidate he buried with 65% of the vote was former alderwoman Lorraine McNamara-McGraw, who had enjoyed union support in the past. But not this time. Chisholm is a veteran assistant DA who has been pushing for prosecutors to get out in the streets and into the precincts and has strong ideas about how to improve the service and results.

In the campaign, McNamara-McGraw dropped

several controversial speculations that thinned her reputation from a decade ago. Chisholm held firm to his ideas and convincingly threaded the anger on the streets about police behavior. He stuck with a message of change and modernity without personally criticizing his boss and friend.

On election night, Chisholm said he was determined to bring about change. But he also vowed that the office would never lose what everyone conceded was true about McCann - "a legacy of integrity." As union leaders and the legal community crowded close to cheer him at the Kelly's Bleachers victory party, one person avoided the media spotlight. McCann just hung in the background, quietly beaming.

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Election math didn't add up - and not just for Bobot

The election embarrassment of the city of Milwaukee, even explained and rectified in three days, was what most of the local TV and press talked about.

Sue Edman, new head of the City Election Commission, took the blame. Home-grown programming to save money, she says, was an error that did not affect results in actual races but double or triple counted the number of actual ballots cast.

It was a whopper of a glitch - more than 33,000 ballots that were later described as phantoms.

Two things immediately happened. First, the city of Milwaukee fell back to earth, or rather back to a 15.5% turnout like the rest of the state, not the misreporting of 27% turnout.

And the loser of the closest race, Vincent Bobot, formally asked for a hand-recount that he would pay for.

You sure can't blame Bobot, who waited until Sept. 17 to make his request. A 33,000 error in computerized counting!

But even the night of the Sept. 12 election, as reported in our next-day analysis at www.milwaukeeelabor.org, the Bobot camp was not just disappointed but mystified that 3,700 votes separated him from incumbent Sheriff David Clarke.

Were they taken in by over-

confident ward watchers?

Could be, but in an interview with Labor Press, Bobot revealed his campaign had hard polls that didn't match the final results.

Did a few thousand Republicans take the bait offered by conservative radio? The talk shows asked listeners to do what Clarke does and pretend to be a Democrat. The numbers suggest that many did, at least for a day.

But that was anticipated. The real key seemed to be the central city, where there was a rancorous airwaves split among black leaders about Clarke's gamesmanship leadership -- and also a familiar but troubling rationale for supporting him, echoed on call-in shows: "I want my children to grow up seeing a black man in charge."

Even with all that, Bobot's supporters found the final numbers strange early in the night -- and then learned of the 33,000 mistake. And then collected reports (passed along to authorities) of "discrepancies" or mischiefs inside polling places.

"It just didn't seem right," Bobot said, "but at least Wisconsin keeps the paper trail, so we can go back and find out."

If Bobot's request for a recount is approved and completed by the time you read this, the issue may be settled. If not, Bobot said he was exploring the viability of a write-in campaign



Huddled in a corner counting during his election night party were Vincent Bobot (center) and his brain trust. They weren't just disappointed in his numbers in the sheriff's race, they couldn't make sense of them.

for sheriff on Nov. 7.

The day after Bobot's request, Edman was taken to the woodshed by aldermen who correctly pointed out that every mistake in Milwaukee is seized upon by partisan foes as another doubt about the integrity of the urban vote and another reason to cry "Fraud!" and push for mandatory photo IDs.

The only difference this year is that no one can point fingers. Worse things happened elsewhere. Waukesha County's computers called the wrong winner

for a while and befuddled both poll workers and voters with breakdowns and fouled ballots. Similar "hiccups" (but aren't hiccups hard to get rid of?) affected a number of counties.

Edman was given her job after snafus in the 2004 election. This year's events suggest that the aldermen and the media owe some measure of apology to the ousted election boss, Lisa Artison.

Not reporting the programming error (which Edman said the staff knew of but never thought would get out of hand) may actually have been Edman's biggest mistake. That made the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel the first to notice and headline the huge discrepancy in ballots reported and votes made.

Inflated and overblown, some called those stories. But frankly, the public had a right to

be angry and to expect well-run elections.

Edman, a former police officer, vowed that "we will not allow this to happen again."

But hold the tough cop awards for a moment. Edman and the aldermen should read some other newspapers. If they did, they'd know no local official can make so absolute a promise.

The state's new mandated master election database was outsourced to a private company and remains plagued with delays. That turns our Nov. 7 into a gigantic field test.

In other states, the federal HAVA law demanding new machines and regulations has been manipulated by partisans. This month Princeton computer experts showed how easy it is to hack the newest Diebold machines and infect a system without notice.

And let's not even talk about the funding lags by both local and federal officials -- except to point out that Milwaukee is not alone in being understaffed and relying on volunteers (in a time when the national median age for a poll worker is 72).

The Washington Post, pointing out that a third of the nation's polling places will face new technology for the first time, warns that the primary blunders in two dozen states may be just a light prelude to Nov. 7. A bipartisan national policy commission says bluntly that every municipality had better have a backup plan.

The main solution, the experts say, is well-trained poll workers and watchful eyes.

And the more people voting, the more eyes we'll have.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



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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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Celebrities on (Labor Day) parade



Doyle's running mate, Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, joined US Rep. Gwen Moore (left) in welcoming some 12,000 to Laborfest.



After restoring Michael Rosen (right) to the state tech college board, Gov. Doyle congratulates the AFT Local 212 president as he shakes hands at Zeidler Park. The governor then headed off to Labor Day events in Janesville and Madison.



It's not as if his vote count Nov. 7 is in jeopardy (he rolled up 85% in the Sept. 12 primary). But Sen. Herb Kohl asked to and then quietly walked the entire Labor Day parade, at a pace almost too fast for the photographers.



At Zeidler Park before the parade, Mayor Tom Barrett (left) traded handshakes and humor with MCLC President Willie D. Ellis. Maurice Pulley (center) of AFSCME Local 1654 joined in.

Doyle slaps back at GOP secrecy

On Sept. 1, a downtime when the Senate GOP caucus could create no mischief in Madison, Gov. Jim Doyle reappointed Michael Rosen to the Wisconsin Technical College System Board, continuous to May of 2011.

Rosen, who has taught economics at the Milwaukee Area Technical College since 1987 and holds a Ph. D. in urban issues, had served ably on the board for a year after Doyle's original appointment in September 2005. Such appointments require state Senate approval to become permanent, normally a routine procedure since both parties generally acknowledge a governor's right to appoint qualified citizens.

But, as recounted in May's Labor Press, the GOP decided in a secret caucus on the last formal day of sessions in May to reject Rosen.

The move mystified Democrats (as well as Republicans who did not attend). The mystification turned to outrage when the GOP refused to say why.

Doyle labeled it a partisan stunt. Pointing out that the Republicans had stalled cabinet and DNR appointments and even a Republican for the board of regents, and recalling how the GOP used to accuse Democrat Chuck Chvala of such shenanigans, he said the Republicans had "brought the politics of obstructionism to levels never seen before."

Union leaders saw something further — a resistance to union voice that had long been a part of

the Republican playbook.

This, after all, came from GOP legislators who routinely attack teacher unions and push cheaper construction standards sought by non-union companies. It is no secret that moderate Republicans have felt squeezed out by hard-line conservatives. All this seemed to play out in the Rosen case.

While a frequent speaker on economics respected by management as well as educators, while helpful to businesses in his technical board service, Rosen is best known as a tenacious bargainer and defender of unions as president of AFT Local 212 (the MATC faculty).

His initial appointment by Doyle had brought a whisper campaign to derail Senate approval of the nomination and even some hardily veiled comments at Senate hearings about whether union leaders should even serve on state boards, to heck with qualifications.

But by refusing to offer a reason for resistance, the GOP suffered a considerable backlash. From both sides of the aisle, con-

cern was voiced that by not standing up and defending the rationale, the behavior sent a chill over any citizen contemplating public service, "that you can be voted off because someone doesn't like you," as one legislator put it.

Doyle's reappointment of Rosen brought universal applause from Milwaukee area Democratic legislators, who also took the occasion to underline Doyle's point:

"Their (GOP) refusal to approve Doyle nominees has left Prof. Rosen and many others in limbo about the validity and future of their roles on critical state boards, and has impaired the efficient functioning of these boards as well. These include the State Dentistry Board, the Veterans' Board, and the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents."

Several union leaders remarked that the Rosen case, along with the others, was a potent reminder to voters right before the November elections: The only way to change the hostility to unions reflected by the GOP secret vote was to change the party power balance in the Senate.

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Above: President Lyle Balistreri carried the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council banner – and his son, Vinnie – the length of the parade. Left: Carrying a tune in beautiful harmony was the pleasure of the Men of Gospel, part of the Hansberry-Sands opening at the Miller Stage



Top to bottom: The sheetmetal families marched together, the Ironworkers Local 8 provided a smooth ride for children and friends, and the Graphics Communications Conference workers sported deep purple as the backdrop for American flags.



The AFL-CIO's LCLAA greeted the immigrant workers and flowed along with them across the Milwaukee River on Wisconsin Avenue.



Top to bottom: Units from UFCW and UNITE HERE.

Right: Thank ATU Local 998 for providing the bus drivers shuttling people back and forth and then for adding a trolley. During the parade, of course, ATU also showed it could clown around.

Left: Voces marchers filled several blocks as they concluded the parade with enthusiasm.

Below: The Steelworkers USW locals marched together.



Top and right: Operating Engineers Local 139 provided a ride for the children of members and a flatbed so that the MASH coalition of entertainment unions could float music down the avenue.



Left, top to bottom: Troubles at Delphi didn't keep UAW Local 438 from proudly celebrating. IBEW marchers (Stanthia Grier in red) threw candy to the crowd. AFT Local 212 made its feelings clear about Wisconsin talking about gay marriage rather than health care.

Right: AFSCME families hitched a ride on the street cleaners in the parade.

Below: A toddler, encountering Debra Davis at Zeidler Park, couldn't understand how adults could grow THAT big.



On all our pages, primary Laborfest photos were taken by Dominique Paul Noth of the Labor Press and Sue Ruggles of AFT Local 212, with additional photos from Lynnda Guyton of the MCLC staff, Eleazar Galaviz, Ken Greening and Laurie Onasch. More photos can be viewed at www.milwaukeeelabor.org

Meet the winners

Laborfest was an attendance winner but also a material winner for a lot of Milwaukeeans.

The Harley bike was won by Lew Gross, who believes he bought the ticket at the union booth at State Fair. Winners and amounts of the cash prizes were:

- \$500 prize: Audrey Wyman
- \$100 prize each: Mitch Halstead, Lisa Trap, Susie Johnson, David Lessard, Ray Kulka, Mike Casey, Maria Garcia and Mary Brooks.

Laborfest Free Raffles Children:
Milwaukee Sportservice Inc. - Autographed (Prince Fielder) Baseball.

- Winner: Samantha Syta
- Three Wagons seating two.
- Winners: Ralph Wahl, Alesha Wilson, Nicolette Scoffidi
- Three Wagons.
- Winners: Hailey Onasch-Shaw, Danielle Rodames, Marcus Scaffidi

Adults:
American Serb Hall - Gift Certificate - \$20 certificates.
Winners: Valerie Taylor, Carol Yahn
Hilton - Milwaukee City Center - one-night stay with deluxe accommodations and water-park privileges.

Winner: Marlena Anderson
Hilton - Milwaukee City Center - \$50 certificate for the Milwaukee Chop House.

Winner: Shirley Robinson
Pfister Hotel - gift certificates for a champagne brunch for two at Café Rouge.

Winners: Steve Turzinski, Catherine Palmer
Karl Ratzsch's Restaurant - \$40 gift certificate.

Winner: Jerry Zwolinski
Benefit Services Group, Inc. - four Brewers baseball tickets, including parking pass and four guest passes for the .300 Club.

Winner: Pam Kowalski
Four Points Hotel Milwaukee Airport - overnight stay.
Winner: Johnnie Little



Hailey Onasch-Shaw (left) and friend Bella Rodaner were super face-painted up when Hailey won a wagon in the children's raffle. Her mom is from OPEIU Local 277 (American Income Life).



LEFT: Christine Neumann-Ortiz joined the Miller Stage festivities to thank the unions for their open welcome and example for her marchers from Voces de la Frontera. BELOW: Every year, UWM prof Bryan Kennedy carries son Noah in the Laborfest parade. Which may be easier than his always uphill battle in the 5th Congressional District. But one of these days, maybe Nov. 7, voters will come to their senses and help him oust Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner.



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- Steamfitters Local 601
- Teamsters Local 200
- UAW Local 469
- UAW Local 9 - Brewery Workers
- UAW Southeastern WI CAP Council
- UE Local 1111
- UFCW Local 1473
- USW Local 1343
- Waukesha County Labor Council
- WE Power LLC
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Democrats

From Page 1

once headed by and is still influenced by Bill Clinton) were USW International President Leo Gerard and AFSCME President Gerald McEntee, who touched on the historic importance:

"Those of us who've been around for some time I'm not sure ever thought that we'd see this day."

Even the Washington Post described as "surprising" this new alliance. National unions that separated last year and the center-focused DLC have now joined around the free choice legislation -- known as EFCA -- which ensures workers the right to union representation without being subjected to intimidation or lengthy battles.

Underlying the depth of the partnership was the participation of founder and CEO of the DLC, Al From, a combative presence who sometimes prevented Democratic policy getting too close to union causes.

But From was outspoken in praising the EFCA, perhaps because it already has quiet but broad Democratic support. Senate originator Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) now has 43 votes in the Senate and Rep. George Miller (D-Calif.) has lined up 218 co-sponsors in the House.

Should a shift in congressional power occur in the November election, even moderate Republicans might see the EFCA as a good election issue in a troubled economy. A majority vote and even a veto-proof vote (given President Bush's resistance to unions and the opposition of such Bush money bags as the US Chamber of Commerce) could then be in reach.

EFCA is a legislative solution to the shift away from the original intended balance between labor and management of the National Labor Relations Act, created in the 1930s.

Diluted in the late 1940s by the Taft-Hartley Act and further affected by court interpretations and bureaucratic tactics, the current crippled US labor law has also generated a major corporate industry in union busting, making it difficult for some 50 million workers (according to polls) to do what they'd like -- choose



Iowa Gov. Tom Vilsack

a union if it weren't so hard.

Under EFCA, employers are required to recognize unions when the majority of workers request representation through a card-check procedure. EFCA also provides mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes (which currently can take years to settle), plus stronger penalties when workers are prevented from forming unions.

The National Labor Relations Board would still investigate to make sure a true majority of a workplace wanted a union. The difference from today's procedures is that an employer, faced with a majority wanting a union, can demand a secret ballot election, go after the now-exposed union supporters and pursue a range of intimidating and stalling tactics.

Said USW's Gerard, "The freedom to join unions will change America's direction for all working Americans."

McEntee's comment touched on the general wariness between the DLC, which pushed free trade deals and a move to the middle by the Democrats, and unions that early on saw the weakness in the trade agreements and are generally associated -- at least by the media -- with the most liberal members of the party.

When Howard Dean delivered the amusing line during his presidential race ("I represent the Democratic wing of the Democratic Party"), many insiders believed he was referring to the DLC, which often sought candidates to straddle the middle of the road to refute Republican sneers about liberalism.

But today, most Democrats concede that the unions were right about the lack of teeth in trade deals and the failure to help either workers here or those in other countries. Today, Dean is

the chairman of the Democratic Party. The DLC has been forced to change with the frustrating times while remaining a powerful policy-shaping arm for the party.

Still, eyebrows went up when Vilsack, elected twice in Iowa through strong labor support, took on the DLC chairmanship.

One of the first things he did, however, was sit down with the split labor federations and ask how everyone could work together. Given the strong but hardly publicized support across the Democratic Party spectrum for the Employee Free Choice Act, the legislative effort became a natural campaign issue.

As Vilsack noted, "(Labor and the Democratic Party) have always talked about working families. My humble suggestion is we start talking about worried families because there is a great deal of anxiety in America today."

Pundits call this a marriage of "mind and muscle," since the DLC is noted for its ability to shape the political agenda while unions are best known for their grassroots ability to drive voters to the polls.

But there is also a longer historical perspective. Time and again, initiatives pushed by labor were viewed as extreme or even derided, and yet over decades became such standard expectations of American life that many people forgot that it was unions that first promoted them.

You don't have to go all the way back to the 8-hour workday, the 40-hour week, the weekend, the creation of Labor Day or the elimination of child labor. Add worker's comp, unemployment insurance, company health plans and pensions, workplace safety standards, Social Security and on and on.

Many of these concepts moved from being regarded as radical, or even Commie-leaning, or un-American, to self-evident, middle of the road acceptance and even expected defining elements of our society.

Sometimes it has taken decades. But the DLC endorsement assures EFCA can no longer be demonized, that the middle of America is being asked to take up this mantle of change.

Church features Cochran for Women's Day

The public is invited to Women's Day Sunday at 10:45 a.m. Oct. 8 at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church where the featured speaker is Sheila D. Cochran, chief operating officer and secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee County Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Cochran's union credentials and other community services -- such as board president at Wisconsin Citizen Action -- are well known and generate media attention.

But there has not been much publicity about her lifelong roots and service to her faith.

That sense of community and mission will be the focus of

her talk at the church, which is located at the corner of 2nd St. and Garfield Ave.



Cochran was also head honcho for Laborfest, which put her on radio throughout the day (here with WMCS at Zeidler Park).

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United Way party centers on 'good jobs' site

Excellence abounded — from the quality of the catered food to the handsome display of the historic architecture, from the dynamic mix of union, management and government speakers, even to the way the union balloons were placed by the helpers from AFL-CIO Community Services led by Annie Wacker.

It was fitting care, since this United Way Labor Kick-Off Rally arranged by the MCLC was also a spit-and-polish peek at the new home of the Center of Excellence.

It came a week before classes actually began in what used to be the Advance factory and offices at 3841 W. Wisconsin Ave. and a month or two before the formal opening.

No waiting here. The Center will begin operations with just two floors open while it refurbishes and enhances the remaining sections of the building.

The rally of speeches, video, snacks and schmoozing is annually designed to propel union activity in the United Way community campaign, which cannot achieve its \$40 million goal without dedicated union support in workplace giving and in treasury gifts.

But the choice of setting was apt. It reminded the city that United Way isn't about handouts

but about building and maintaining families.

Good-paying jobs with economic security is the mission of this Center of Excellence, which is also heavily concerned with improving circumstances in Milwaukee's central city, where it is now closely located as it shuts its office on Capitol Drive.

The nonprofit Center is part of a unique combination of businesses, unions, government and philanthropies, all of which operate under the United Way umbrella in Milwaukee. The umbrella is the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP).

When it started in the 1990s WRTP was focused on renewing the industrial base, but it has expanded mightily since then.

BIG STEP, one of its best known programs, prepares its students for apprentice training in the construction and manufacturing fields. Many of its graduates are now at work on the Marquette Interchange or have been scooped up for other union trades jobs.

But BIG STEP will be only one dynamic part of the new Center, which has guaranteed participation from companies and job placement organizations in such fields as the service industry and health care.

BIG STEP's executive

director, Earl Buford, was busy at the rally showing visitors the diagrams for future classrooms and offices, which will allow several trade unions to provide an ongoing presence.

In 2005, with limited facilities, the Center of Excellence's counseling, connections and classes (many taught by experts from organized labor) landed 348 jobs for Milwaukee residents. It is on target for 500 additions to the workforce in 2006 and it will continue to grow, said Phil Neuenfeldt, co-chair of the WRTP board and secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO.

"We not only will succeed, we have to succeed," said Neuenfeldt, citing the challenges of poverty facing the community.

His belief in what the combined power of government, businesses, education and unionism can do was echoed by Roberta Gassman, cabinet secretary for the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development.

Gassman and several labor and community leaders actually had a meeting and a tour last May when the building was still a vacant hope not a full purchase. If anything, her enthusiasm now is even greater and she pledged ongoing support from Gov. Doyle. (Currently, govern-

More photos next page



BIG STEP's Earl Buford explains the future.

ment sources provide nearly half the \$2 million a year funding for WRTP; the rest comes from philanthropies and a growing slice from the private sector.)

Speakers and guests offered another reason for such widespread support for the Center.

It is not about the morally corrupt choice from other entities in the inner city — either low-income dead-end jobs or no jobs. The center's participants are not necessarily union but they buy into the primary goal — a devotion to developing careers, skill sets and family-sustaining incomes and benefits.

The need to respect the workforce, to reduce crime and to believe in Milwaukee was touched on in remarks by Tim Sullivan, CEO of Bucyrus-Erie, which has announced the need for 275 more welders and machinists for its modern new plant in South Milwaukee.

As a CEO, Sullivan said, "I had an obligation" to consider moving the Bucyrus-Erie plant elsewhere, even overseas. "But I'll say again, the reason we stayed here is because of the work ethic of our steelworkers," he said, saluting representatives of USW Local 1343 in the crowd.

Emcee for the event was Sheila Cochran, not only secretary-treasurer for MCLC but also a member of the WRTP and United Way boards. She never let the festivities forget the human element of the city and pointed out that the enlarged photos of blight in the inner city that dotted the rally were taken by Anthony Rainey, a UAW member who chairs the MCLC's

Community Services Committee.

A model of active involvement for all union members was also honored at the event with the most prestigious award the AFL-CIO community services group annually offers. Of course, if he had known in advance he was being honored, Ken Greening would have ducked out. But since he didn't know, he showed up first to help get things ready, just as he typically does.

Greening was the 23rd recipient of the Werner J. Schaefer award given by the United Way and the labor community. This was the second honor in two months to overwhelm Greening — in August, the Faith Community for Worker Justice presented him with the St. Vincent Ferrer award that had previously been accepted by Archbishop Timothy Dolan.

Greening was the first and last volunteer at this year's Laborfest. He has used his own money to help Voces de la Frontera and LCLAA. He is active in WisCOSH, the Faith Community, the Park East coalition, the hygiene drive — in fact, you name a labor charity or cause, and he's always on the scene.

Presented the award by Vince Martin, the retired chairman of Jason, Inc., and a past chairman of United Way, and by a leader of his own union, Scott Redman of Plumbers Local 75 (also an MCLC executive board member), the shy Greening doubled the length of his thanks from a month ago: Two whole sentences. The applause for him lasted 20 times as long.

The party was festive — but the road to the new building was arduous and the full funding is still a coming attraction. Neuenfeldt emphasized both points in his remarks and thanked a procession of law, real-estate, bank and fund-raising experts who made the moment possible.

To tie people who want good jobs and real careers into the range of opportunities, contact WRTP, BIG STEP and the Center of Excellence at (414) 906-4204 or visit the emerging website at www.wrtp.org.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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The future site of classrooms and work study looked like a fancy restaurant thanks to the AFL-CIO Community Services staff and helpers. Two of those mobilizers, Annie Wacker and Mike Balistriere, chatted below with Tim Sullivan (center), CEO of Bucyrus Erie and speaker at the United Way labor event.



Scott Redman of the MCLC board (right) helped present fellow plumber Ken Greening with labor's highest community service award. See story opposite page.

No fair weather friends walking in Labor 2006

As pleasant as the weather made it Sept. 16 for volunteers walking neighborhoods to talk to union families about the upcoming elections, a summery day also meant that a lot of people weren't home.

In the debriefings afterward, munching lunch provided by the state and Milwaukee AFL-CIO labor councils, the volunteers for Labor 2006 were amused. Good weather made the door to door trips quite comfortable for them. But if you're serious about talking issues and influencing the election, pray for bad weather and people staying home.

We can't provide a weather forecast for Oct. 7. That's when the next walk heads out from Yatchak Hall at 633 S. Hawley Rd., starting at 9 a.m. that Saturday.

Labor 2006 is a statewide effort by union members to beat back candidates proven to be anti-worker and support capable candidates serious about real issues. The state has been divided into zones, each having a real shot to change the makeup of the state legislature and in some cases the US Congress.

The Waukesha and Milwaukee labor councils are cooperating in a state senate race (District 7) to help Democrat Jim Sullivan oust the increasingly weird incumbent, Tom Reynolds. The Zone 1 coordinator, Sue Ledbetter, has also set up phone banks for calls to union households about this race and about re-electing Gov Doyle.

Contact Ledbetter, office (414) 476-2896, cell (414) 526-3781, or sledbett@afclcio.org.

Calendar

For updated calendar of rapidly changing and new events, visit

www.milwaukeekeelabor.org

Saturday, September 30

Excellence in Education Dinner
Hosted by AFT Local 212
6-8 p.m. Radisson North Hotel,
7065 N. Port Washington Rd
Tickets \$20, call (414) 765-0910

Wednesday, October 4

Milwaukee County Labor Council
AFL-CIO Delegates
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Saturday, October 7

Labor 2006 Walk
Starts 9 a.m., Yatchak Hall
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