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Business Manager's Report

Last month I hoped for a pleasant Fall due to the poor Spring we had but with snow on the ground while I'm writing this article, it means that Mother Nature isn't in the mood to grant us any reprieve.

Again this month safety is on the top of our agenda. All the work we do is dangerous and not having mind on task is just not an option. From the bottom of my heart more than anything else I want each and every one of you to go home at the end of your shift in as good as shape as you came to work in. We have always fought hard for safer working conditions and bargained for those conditions but each of you holds the key to making our work place safe. With the loss of life in an electrocution on some transmission work in the north last month, we lost an IBEW union brother and the spouse of one of our members. I would ask that every one keep the Rhode family in their thoughts and prayers.

Our contract with Wisconsin Public Service expired on October 17 and many of the members are anxious to get an update on any progress. I wish I could give you some positive news but there isn't any. I hear from the membership that they receive more information from their leaders than they do from the Union so since there is no progress you can disregard what rumors are out there. Over the last two years while working closely with the Company on legislative and other issues that were beneficial to the corporation, I was told that my efforts would not go unnoticed at the bargaining table, but this too seems to have evaporated with the economy and the bottom line.

The Green Bay Press Gazette won an open records suit with the City of Green Bay that revealed what Labor has been saying right along. Line item charges for their outside attorney for 2007 and 2008 have added up to \$317,141 to handle only Labor/Management issues. Billable

hours are much more important than resolution. The lack of leadership in Green Bay shows how important it is to elect competent people to office and be involved within our communities.

Seven months into the one year Lay-off notice and the "purely procedural" part of the press release doesn't appear to be quite factual. Many of the Seasonal members are being laid off and the students won't be back in 2010. Staff at the Public Service Commission working on the MG&E rate case, have offered for Commissioner "consideration" a wage freeze for management and a 2% furlough for utility workers in all rate cases in the state for 2010. IBEW 2304 and 2150 have done a great job of addressing this in direct testimony.

The Brown County United Way and Labor have parted ways. Partnering since the end of World War II, millions of dollars have been raised and our communities have been a much better place to live in. With the parties unable to reach a settlement for the Labor Liaison position and BCUW unable to comprehend the value that Labor brought to the table, we will now see what becomes of the people who receive these services. Labor does support all of the programs that are vital to this community. We are now just asking that you redirect your donation directly to those charities. I will follow up more in the coming months with what actions need to be taken to change your payroll deductions and the Greater Green Bay Labor Council will be working on creating a smooth process for you to donate. I will be resigning from my position from the Board of Directors and the Emerging Needs Committee immediately. This is a very sad day for the needy in this area and they will feel it much more than those who could not see what a great partnership this was.

Work Safe—Today & Everyday !

A History Lesson on Mother Jones

Mary Harris—better known as Mother Jones and often called the “most dangerous woman in America”—was born in Cork, Ireland, August 1, 1837. Her fiery rhetoric and magnetic speaking style belied her modest traditional garb—usually a lace-fringed long black dress and matching bonnet—and her tiny figure, all of 100 pounds. Nevertheless, Mother Jones struck fear in the hearts of many a mine owner and factory manager from the 1890s until her death in 1930.

A familiar presence on picket lines and at union rallies, Mother Jones would pepper her speeches with mild profanity and skewer the rich and comfortable with such lines as: “Pray for the dead but fight like hell for the living!”

Another favorite phrase: “Get it right, I’m no humanitarian. I am a hell raiser!”

The shocking abuses of child labor she saw as she investigated working conditions in southern cotton mills prompted Mother Jones to write: “The children [working in the mills] are half-fed, half-clothed and half-housed, but as they toil on, the poodle dogs of their masters are petted and coddled and sleep on pillows of down.”

During her long career as a union organizer, Mother Jones traveled throughout the U.S. to help workers in trouble—on the railroads, in mines and mills. She organized a caravan of children to march on the home of President Theodore Roosevelt and marshaled an army of wives and mothers armed with mops, brooms and pots to guard mine entrances against scabs.

Drawing strength from her struggle, Mary Harris Jones managed to keep a cheerful, determined demeanor even though her own life was filled with tragedy from early childhood. Her father fled to the U.S. to escape British authorities. She left Ireland at age 8 with her mother and two siblings to reunite the family in America. Earlier, Mary’s grandfather had been hanged by the British.

As a young woman, Mary Harris worked as a seamstress in Chicago where she experienced first hand the wide disparities between the wealthy families that employed her and the city’s dispossessed that lived on the edge.

At age 31, while teaching in Memphis, Mary married an ironworker, George Jones. George and the couple’s four children died in a yellow fever epidemic in Memphis in 1867. Not long after, while living in Chicago, the Widow Jones was one of many victims of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871—losing her home and all her belongings.

While her organizing exploits gained her notoriety throughout the nation and earned her the undying affection of miners and factory workers, Mother Jones was reviled by the establishment and often jailed by authorities. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 1913 in West Virginia, but public outrage forced the governor to release her within the year.

Mother Jones died at age 100 in Silver Spring, Maryland. She is buried in the Union Miner’s Cemetery in Mt. Olive, Illinois, the only union cemetery in the nation.

Mercury Marine Stiffs Shareholders, Employees and Taxpayers

Mercury Marine has been the most dramatic corporate story in Wisconsin in 2009. The corporation pressured workers in Fond du Lac to accept large concessions. In addition, Fond du Lac county and City gave the firm \$53 million in incentive packages—covered by taxpayers. The state is offering more. Why did this crisis occur?

Dr. Jack Norman, Research Director at the Institute for Wisconsin’s Future, released a report on “The Twisted Saga of Mercury Marine” on Tuesday October 13 at a public presentation in Milwaukee. Dr. Norman provided new disclosures about Mercury Marine (aka Brunswick Corporation) and behind the scenes information on why the

corporation threatened to leave the state. In addition, he released previously undisclosed information on Mercury Marine’s tax history in Wisconsin.

The real key player was Illinois-based Brunswick Corporation, which took over Mercury Marine in 1961. Brunswick had been in a financial meltdown since CEO Dustan McCoy became head of the firm in December 2005. Corporate malfunctions resulted in 5,300 U.S. workers losing jobs. Those remaining face reduced pay and benefits. Brunswick shareholders lost over 70% of their stock value. White-collar managers say they have been betrayed by the company.

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Paul Beimborn
P.O. Box 8323
1250 Radisson St.
Green Bay, WI 54308-8323

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Didn't We Win? So Let's Seize Our Moment

Last year we organized the largest, most intense and most effective political mobilization that any of us have ever seen. Labor went all out to communicate to our members and their families about the issues and what was at stake.

And we won!

But we didn't do all that work just for the fun of it: we did it so we could improve the lives of working families. So now we must seize the time and turn America around so that the economy and our political system work for US—not just Wall Street and the corporate elite.

The reality is that we have the best chance in sixty years to make real advances for working people, to guarantee that every American gets quality, affordable health care at a cost they can afford, to change our labor laws so that workers can organize a union if they want one—without harassment, intimidation, or fear of being fired, to re-shape our economy so that it improves our standard of living, our quality of life, and so that it provides security to all in the basics of life.

Those are the opportunities we have today—if we seize the time, if we act to insist that the politicians we elected to office come through in the promises they made.

But as I write this, we face an additional challenge: right-wing, corporate sponsored and financed efforts to sabotage our attempt to improve the lives of Americans. Responsible members of Congress who took their August recess period to hold town hall meetings in order to be accessible to their constituents, to listen to their concerns, to respond, and to let us know what is happening in Washington—these representatives we elected were being shut up and shouted down by people duped into believing the most outrageous lies imaginable.

Take the Democratic health care proposal (which isn't even finished yet): the town hall disrupters are echoing the most ridiculous charges of the Fox right-wing "commentators," anonymous e-mail chain letters, and the likes of Glenn Beck and Rush Limbaugh. These disruptors are shouting lies that the Democrats (and President Obama) are promoting euthanasia

for our senior citizens, requiring forced abortions, giving bureaucrats in Washington the power to make medical decisions for us, and insisting that health care reform is "socialized medicine". All lies. But these lies repeated over and over make other folks wonder if they might be true.

In almost every one of these town hall meetings, someone will yell against a "government takeover" of the health care system—and add, too, that "you better keep your hands off my Medicare!" Medicare, of course, the largest, most successful, and most popular government health care system we have.

Against this ignorance and deliberate sabotage by corporate special interests, we need to stand up and speak up. We must demand that the lying end and that our politicians act in our interests. If they don't act now, both what remains of our health care system and our economy will collapse under the weight of unsustainable increases in the cost of even the most basic health care.

During last year's election campaign we demanded that politicians support OUR issues, union issues, in other words, the issues of the American people.

We demanded, we organized—and we won.

Now it is time for us to make our voices heard that we want action that benefits American working families. We need to make sure that our friends in Congress know they still have our support as long as they support us. We need to make it clear that neither the disrupters nor the corporate manipulators speak for hard-working, ordinary Americans who are fighting for a decent life and guarantees that they and their families will not lack the basic needs of life even in hard times.

Now is the time we must organize and speak up; clearly and loudly and with conviction. We won't have another opportunity for many, many years.

Seize the time.

David Newby

President

Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

Mercury Marine Stiffs Shareholders, Employees and Taxpayers

(Continued from page 2)

Brunswick closed 50% of their factories, in South Carolina, Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, North Carolina, Tennessee and, now, Oklahoma.

The only people protected from loss have been the decision-makers at the very top of the Brunswick hierarchy. CEO McCoy collected over \$10 million in 2006, 2007 and 2008 and his five senior Board members received an average of \$506,000 each during this same time period.

Even as the story was still playing out, some used the Mercury case as yet another excuse to call for cuts in Wisconsin taxes. High taxes, these critics contend, drive firms like Mercury to seek locations outside the state. The data approved, however, that Wisconsin taxes had nothing to do with

Mercury/Brunswick's behavior.

The Mercury Marine/Brunswick Corporation melodrama in Fond du Lac had nothing to do with Wisconsin wage levels, business climate or tax policy. It was just another example of corporate mismanagement causing implosions that leave citizens, workers, taxpayers and other business people to clean up the mess.

To access a copy of the report and the power point, go to www.wisconsinsfuture.org. The web report does not yet have the tax numbers included because state law only allows dissemination of this data following a public presentation.

The Institute for Wisconsin's Future

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President's Report

As I drive through residential neighborhoods I notice that some homes are already adorned with Christmas lights. Being that the holidays are just 9 weeks away, I will grant the benefit of doubt and think those lights are up early. Then again, those same lights seemed to be up late in March. At some point, being up late becomes being up early. It is just a timing thing or a matter of perspective.

Holiday Food Baskets

Speaking of the holidays, it is not too early to start thinking about the holiday gift baskets. Local 310 is proud to once again sponsor the holiday baskets to needy families in our communities. The same expectations and requirements as last year apply. Each Branch is authorized two baskets but additional baskets can be approved by simply contacting the Union office or me as not all sites take part in this program. The office will supply a list of suggested items and a card to include with the basket. The food items should be adjusted based on the ethnic background of the recipient family. The items must be food and food related products and receipts must be submitted for reimbursement. A laundry basket can also be purchased to transport the items while providing a useful gift.

The idea is that members offer a small portion of their time to purchase the items and deliver the basket. Several sites have collected their own money to add gifts for the children. There are many organizations that can provide the name of a needy family. Your church, United Way, or Salvation Army are good places to start.

Many people have found this to be a truly rewarding experience and with the state of our economy, more people are in need of help. We often receive thank-you notes from families even some that refer to our members as angels. Families in our own communities are not as fortunate as us and need help. Our small gesture is often the difference between mere subsistence and a truly memorable holiday meal. I encourage you to participate in this worthy cause. To find a family in need, one need only ask.

Pain Hurts

Speaking of struggling to make ends meet, I am troubled to hear of the economic misfortunes of Integrys. Revenues are down and Local 310 is under a layoff notice. I could be more sympathetic if the pain were distributed equally, but unfortunately it is not. For example, the news release that accompanied the 3.7% GWI (General Wage Increase) for the

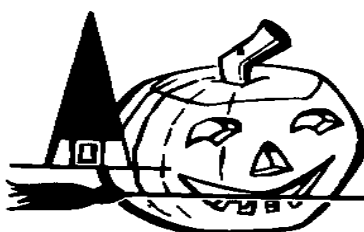
non union employees explained that such an increase would maintain the financial integrity of the business. Yet, Local 310 is told that any GWI greater than 3.0% is beyond the viability of WPSC. When Local 310 is provided information that indicates revenues and new construction are down, I am wondering what all the engineers are designing. I haven't seen reductions in this area. Will there be a proportionate reduction in supervisory, management, support and Human Resources when the workforce is reduced by 25%? It seems that all those people are not needed if there are less employees. And what about the shareholder? I have yet to see or hear anything about the stock dividend. If Integrys is hurting that bad, why has all the focus been on those that are out there making the meters turn? Is the annual dividend increase out of the question? I understand that the economy is causing problems that create difficult decisions, but I question the distribution of the pain.

At the bargaining table, I see a different attitude representing WPSC. In the past, the contract was priced and most improvements were assigned a cost. The size of the pie was established and how it was carved was negotiated. Sometimes, Local 310 had to hold desires for future negotiations because of the cost impact to the total package. Today, WPSC wants concessions but does not want to recognize value and cost. There may be a wish list, but WPSC negotiators should take a note from Local 310's experience and recognize the cost of a proposal may make it unattainable. In other words, you may want it, but can you afford it? Concessionary bargaining may be the current fad, but WPSC is a regulated utility that is guaranteed a rate of return. If that target is not being attained, who is accountable? From my seat it looks like an unfair share is being assigned to the represented employees.

Wrap Up

As the sun rises later and the days become shorter, I find myself driving to work in less light. Temps are lower and hooded sweatshirts are more prevalent. Which brings me to the point of kids, hooded sweatshirts and school buses. The school buses are easily noticeable, but what about the kids waiting for their bus. They are not always as attentive as we would like and those hooded sweatshirts impair their sight that much more. Please be watchful of our kids when out there driving and assume they do not see you. Slowing down for that brief moment is well worth the investment.

Greg Veith



UCS

Happy Halloween!

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GM Paying \$50 Million More to 50,000 Delphi Retirees

General Motors Co. has agreed to pay another \$50 million to fund health benefits to about 40,000 hourly retirees and dependents at Delphi Corp. who were represented by several unions, IUE-CWA announced in September.

GM also agreed to a number of other concessions in the deal, the union said. It said the unions have reached a tentative agreement with GM for the automaker “to provide baseline security for retirees who are facing the loss of health care and pensions.”

GM spokeswoman Susan Garavaglia said in a statement that the “old” and “new” GM companies, which were split in bankruptcy proceedings, “have been in negotiations with the IUE to come to a resolution on retiree health care issues. We are finalizing our discussions and will not be able to provide any additional comments until this has been concluded.”

Under the agreement reported by the union, retirees under age 65 who are covered by GM insurance will be offered an improved package with an extra \$50 million in payments from the automaker to defray the cost of the high-deductible coverage originally offered. The deal will allow GM to end coverage for Medicaid-eligible retirees.

The IUE-CWA said the deal includes a “top-up” from GM for Delphi retirees, whose pensions were terminated and are being assumed by the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., a federal corporation that protects the pensions of American workers. It said some former Delphi workers stood to lose half of their income without this agreement.

IUE-CWA President Jim Clark said the deal was “the best we could get in a dreadful situation.”

UCS News Service

Prospects for EFCA Dwindle as Clock Ticks in Senate

Prospects for Senate action this year on labor’s top legislative priority, the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), are looking more and more bleak. Observers say a vote in by the end of 2009 is a long shot.

A spokesman for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said the body hopes to deal with health care reform, energy and financial regulatory reform before the end of the year, and each of those bills easily could consume weeks of the Senate’s time, leaving none for EFCA.

“Senator Reid has never stated a specific date or set a deadline for bringing EFCA to the floor,” Reid’s spokesman, Jim Manley, told the Bureau of National Affairs publication Labor Relations Week.

Timing is just one of EFCA’s roadblocks. It would take the

vote of 60 senators to win approval. While there are 60 Democrats in the Senate—assuming the governor of Massachusetts appoints a Democrat to fill the seat of the late Sen. Edward M. Kennedy—several have said they will not support the bill as written.

Not a single Republican is expected to vote for it in its current shape, and maybe not even if it is watered down.

The House has approved the measure and President Obama has said he will sign it if it is sent up Pennsylvania Avenue. But, with all its problems in the Senate, it is a trip EFCA may not be taking anytime soon.

New AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka indicated to reporters shortly after his election that the labor movement might

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Western District Director’s Report

Greetings brothers and sisters

I wish I could tell you how well contract negotiations are going however that is not the case. The Union Bargaining team is trying their best but it is extremely difficult when only one side of the table is willing to make proposals. I remember that in past negotiations that if there was an issue the Company did not want to address they just said, “No.” They were not interested in talking about it. We are at least trying to address their issues but again, they don’t seem interested in talking to us unless we would be willing to take their proposal as written.

Now with that being said we are at least still talking and that is important. Maybe by the time you read this we will have made some actual progress.

On another note, I have just returned from the Inter-union Gas Conference. This is a good conference to attend because you get to hear what a lot of gas workers throughout North

America are doing as far as work practices and their own contracts.

I find it amazing that with all the different unions that were represented at this conference, none of them had or were facing layoffs.

In fact, there was a fair amount of them that were starting to do their own installs as opposed to having a contractor do them. Some have gone so far as to actually show their company that they could do it cheaper. If memory serves me correctly, we did that very same thing with a couple of pilots back in the 90’s. Who knows, maybe we will be trusted enough to do that kind of work in the future.

Let me close by saying good luck to anyone hunting and do not forget to sign up for the Big Buck Contest and try to find your way to Rhinelander for the wild game feed.

Mark Kopetzky

a **\$3 Billion for Jobless Insurance Programs Goes Unused in 23 States**

Labor Department records show that more than \$3 billion in stimulus money for state unemployment insurance programs lies unused in a federal trust fund because 23 states haven't expanded their jobless benefits.

A report in USA Today cited estimates from the National Employment Law Project (NELP), a workers' advocacy group, saying nearly 350,000 out-of-work Americans could get benefits if all those states revamp their unemployment systems to qualify for federal money.

In all, the stimulus package offers \$7 billion to states that make changes, which can include offering benefits to part-time workers.

Some Republicans have criticized the program, complaining that expanding benefits would force their states to raise taxes on employers once the stimulus money runs out. Republican leaders in 11 states have declined to change their systems to qualify for about \$1.7 billion in stimulus funding.

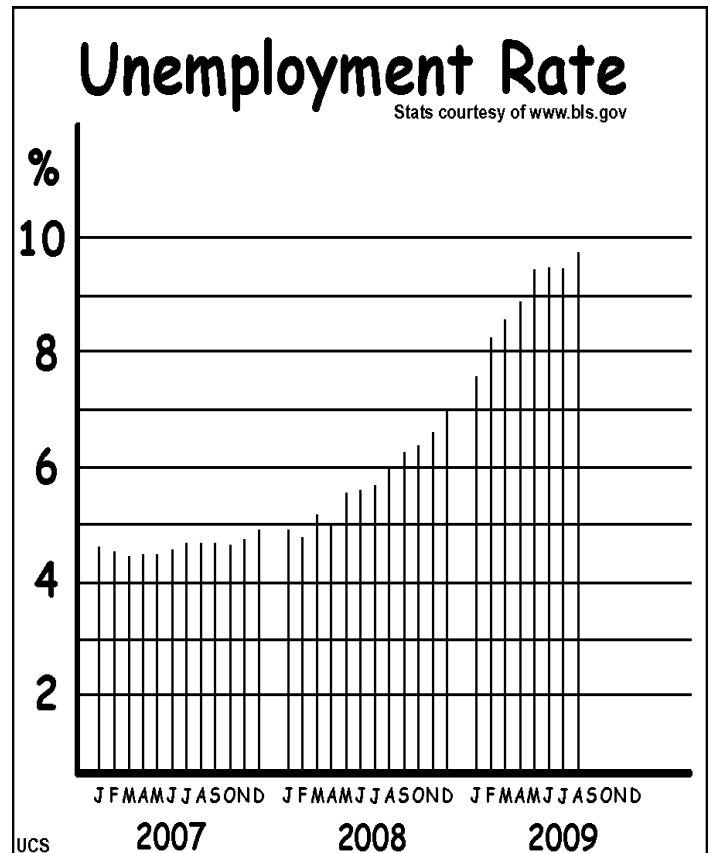
Another 12 states have either made only some of the changes, not applied for the funds or not taken legislative votes on the changes.

The federal funds are enough to cover an average of about seven years of expanded benefits and could forestall tax hikes in some states, Maurice Emsellem of the NELP told USA Today. That's because taxes on employers in most states automatically go up when their unemployment insurance trust funds are depleted. Unemployment taxes will go up in Indiana, Alabama and Florida and are likely to rise in Texas, all states that declined to seek the money.

"This little increase in benefits is not going to be the straw that breaks the camel's back to determine whether taxes are going up," Emsellem told the newspaper.

States can get a third of the money by relaxing their rules on the length of employment needed to qualify for jobless benefits.

They can get the rest by providing two of four kinds of unemployment benefits: Extra money for the worker's dependents, for part-time workers, for those in training programs or for those who quit because of "compelling family circumstances"—such as fleeing domestic violence or caring for a sick relative.



Prospects for EFCA Dwindle As Clock Ticks in Senate

(Continued from page 5)

accept a version of the bill that does not include the card-check provision—the right of employees in a workplace to gain union representation by having a majority of them sign cards.

But, he said, three elements must survive the legislative process: workers who organize into unions should be free of employer harassment; there should be stronger penalties for labor law violations, and contract negotiations should be expedited.

"I feel certain those three goals will be met and I feel certain this president will help pass that bill," Trumka said.

Speaking to the AFL-CIO convention, Pres. Obama reaffirmed his support for the measure, declaring he wants America to "build a future where the success of all of us is built on the success of each of us," and a key to this is passage of EFCA... I stand behind the Employee Free Choice Act."

UCS News Service

Friends are those rare people who ask how we are and then wait to hear the answer.

Unknown

Appreciation is like an insurance policy. It has to be renewed every now and then.

Dave McIntyre

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Eastern District Director's Report

Hello from the Eastern District.

Cooler weather has arrived! Hopefully the deer will be active and the water will quickly turn over for the best fishing of the year! Walleyes, walleyes and more walleyes. I just love 'em.

I was able to attend the Municipal Lineman's Rodeo in Sturgeon bay this month with Pat Kelly and Steve McFarlane. We all had a real good time. My hat goes off to the men from Sturgeon bay Utilities! You guys did a great job setting up a great pole yard and also with competing. It was the first time I ever attended a lineman's rodeo and it won't be the last.

Sounds like we are still waiting for a date to be scheduled for mediation on the Algoma contract.

We had our District meeting at Klemme's Wagon Wheel in Howards Grove and I'd like to thank all those that attended and a special thanks to Steve Arenz for setting it up. We had several good topics come up and appreciate all the input. If you're in the area of Klemme's and are in the mood for chicken, it's excellent.

Obama, Obama, Ooooo Obama. What are you up to these days? Well? The United States of America has a citizen that just asked you a question. Are you working on health care reform? Are you trying to get the Olympics in Chicago? Are you watching the video of the children singing a song called

"Jesus Loves the Little Children", but instead of saying Jesus, they are saying who? You? Hmm. Isn't that nice? Are you still upset with the guy who called you a liar as you addressed this great nation?

Obama, you remember the Declaration of Independence, right? You're all about change, right? Still thinking or pondering the idea of changing that? Remember when you said, "we live in the greatest nation of the world, help me change it."? Can you say that again because I think I'm missing something. The greatest needs a lot of change. Is that what you're saying? I have to tell you something. I've been trying to keep an open mind, trying to understand, trying to find a bit of change in me to maybe support you in your escapade for change. But I haven't found it yet.

Safety. It's a word we are hearing a lot lately. Let's keep doing everything we can to remember what it means. Sounds like a ton of crews were working the wind the other night. Good work guys. Were you counting all your hours? LOL

Sounds like bargaining may still be a bit tough right now. I'd like to thank all the members on the Bargaining team for all their efforts so far. We appreciate your hard work.

Take care and hope you get outdoors this October.

Chris Satterburg

Central District Director's Report

Fall officially arrived last night with the first below freezing weather of the season. So much for global warming, two hard frosts and a freeze and it's not even the middle of October. Although we've had one of the coolest summers on record, the health care reform debate and the town hall forum added some much needed heat to the months of August and September.

Unfortunately, I was not able to attend either of the town hall meetings held by Steve Kagen and am very disappointed that I missed him.

I have, however, gotten a general idea of the passion held by the participants in these town hall meetings through that wonder of the internet...YouTube!

I need to take moment to extend my sincere thanks to the inventor of the internet, for without him I would not have access to all this wonderful information. Al Gore...thank you. I hope you use some of the \$ you made from inventing the internet to help fight global warming! (I realize that my thanks is no where near as meaningful as a Nobel prize...hmmm...maybe I need to rethink that considering how little it apparently takes to win one of those).

I can tell you in most of the video that I watched, I did not get overly educated on health care reform. Not many questions were asked and even less answered. And in all fairness to the representatives involved, they were playing to a very tough crowd regarding a very impassioned subject.

After filtering through the rhetoric spewed by the media pundits and the conservative radio people, I believe what some

of you may have been part of, or at the very least very interested observers in, is a demonstration of the very real frustration felt by middle class America.

There may have been some instigators involved as the summer progressed, from both sides. But for the most part what I saw was moms and dads, grandmas and grandpas and very heavy on the grandparents, voicing their frustrations.

Americans have good reason to be frustrated. As a nation we continue to take on huge amounts of debt enacted in huge pieces of legislation, legislation so complex and overwhelming that the people charged to vote, only understand those sections that benefit themselves.

Months after the first bailout, the public found out about the bonuses being given to bank executives courtesy of the House, Senate (including Senator McCain and then Senator Obama) and President Bush. And oh, the outrage of our congressmen who voted in favor of it!

What hidden taxpayer debt are our congressmen voting for in the health care reform bill? What earmarks, credits or grants are hidden in the legal mumbo-jumbo of this next thousand plus monstrosity that working Americans will be on the hook for?

I have recently contacted Senators Kohl and Feingold regarding how they will vote on the health care reform bill, my only request being that they not vote yes on a bill unless it can be read and understood by anyone with a public education.

Watch for a push in new nationalized education standards in the near future.

Patrick Kelly

Trumka Takes Top AFL-CIO Post, Pledges Aggressive Movement

One-time coal miner Richard Trumka, secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO since 1995, was elected its president at the union federation's September convention. A powerful speaker and strong personality, he promised a more aggressive style than his predecessor, John Sweeney, and pledged to reach out to younger workers.

"We need a unionism that makes sense to the next generation—young women and men who either don't have the money to go to college or are almost penniless by the time they come out," Trumka told hundreds of cheering delegates.

He said he would meet head-on the challenge of rebuilding a labor movement that once represented 35 percent of American workers but is down to just 12.4 percent today.

He told delegates that the labor movement would lead the nation out of its economic mess, where millions work as temps, contractors and home workers for low wages, no health care and no job security.

"Even though it wasn't the labor movement that got us into this, we are the people who are going to lead America out of it," he declared.

"The American labor movement can turn our country around," Trumka said, "and together that's exactly what we're going to do! We need a new kind of labor movement—one shaped to meet the needs of Americans in a changing economy.

"We need a labor movement that's not afraid of new ideas—and understands that nostalgia for the past is no strategy for the future," he said

Elected along with Trumka were two women, Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker. Baker had served in the same position during the Sweeney administration. Shuler, 39, the youngest person ever to become an officer of the AFL-CIO, had been serving as the executive assistant to Electrical Workers President Edwin Hill.

All three were elected by acclamation.

AFL-CIO: Young Workers Face Uncertain Future

Young workers today are significantly less likely to have health care or economic security than they were ten years ago, and an amazing one-third of them live in their parents' home, according to a new national survey, *Young Workers: A Lost Decade*, released by the AFL-CIO at its annual Labor Day briefing, September 1.

The new leadership team of the 11.5 million-member union federation said they will make an unprecedented effort to reach out to young workers.

"Young workers are facing the worst kind of insecurity—struggling to find good jobs and hold down debt while trying to grow into adulthood," said incoming AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka. "We owe them better. Unless we change it, their economic standards are going to define a new norm—a norm of lower job and living standards. Their future is our country's future and we must commit to creating an economy that provides a strong economic future for all."

In mid-September, the AFL-CIO convention approved plans for broad recruitment of young workers, as well as plans for training and leadership development of young workers who are currently union members. Trumka said unions play a unique role in engaging young workers around economic and political issues.

According to AFL-CIO estimates, 18-to-35-year-olds make up a quarter of current union membership.

Some of the key findings of the report:

- For 31 percent of young workers, Labor Day is not a paid holiday.
- 31 percent of young workers report being uninsured, up from 24 percent ten years ago, and 79 percent of they uninsured say they don't have coverage because they can't afford it or their employer doesn't offer it.

- One in three young workers are currently living at home with their parents.

- Only 31 percent say they make enough money to cover their bills and put some money aside—22 percentage points fewer than in 1999—while 24 percent cannot even pay their monthly bills. Fifty-eight percent do not have savings that would cover two months of living expenses.

- Only 58 percent receive paid sick days, only 66 percent receive paid vacation, and only 41 percent are offered paid family leave.

- More than half of young workers earn less than \$30,000 and this struggling majority has been the most severely impacted. A third cannot pay their bills and seven in 10 do not have enough saved to cover two months of living expenses. These workers are just as likely to live with their parents as to live on their own.

- 37 percent have put off education or professional development because they can't afford it.

- Jobs, health care and education top the economic agenda for young workers.

Young Workers Do Have a Clue

- When asked who is most responsible for the country's economic woes, close to 50 percent of young workers place the blame on Wall Street and banks or corporate CEOs. And young workers say greed by corporations and CEOs is the factor most to blame for the current financial downturn.

- By a 22-point margin, young workers favor expanding public investment over reducing the budget deficit. Young workers rank conservative economic approaches such as reducing taxes, government spending and regulation on

(Continued on page 9)

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Two Unions Leave Change to Win

Two of the seven unions that created the Change to Win labor federation in 2005 have ended their relationship with the rebel group, with one of the two returning to the AFL-CIO.

UNITE HERE announced at the AFL-CIO convention in September that it was abandoning CTW to rejoin the AFL-CIO.

The Carpenters union, once an affiliate of the AFL-CIO but not at the time it joined with CTW in 2005, formally left CTW in August. It had not been participating financially since last November, when it reportedly signed a “separation agreement” with CTW. Both sides described the split as “amicable.”

The two unions, plus the Teamsters, Service Employees, Food and Commercial Workers, Laborers and Farm Workers, formed Change to Win in a dispute over how the AFL-CIO was focusing its energies and resources. The new group said staff

and money should be focused more on organizing new members and less on politics.

However, since the split, Change to Win unions—and especially the Service Employees—have invested heavily in electoral politics, while not having a substantial impact on the organizing front. All of the unions have fared pretty much as they did before the split.

Former Rep. David Bonior has been working with the two federations to try and work out their differences. It had been hoped reunification could take place at the September AFL-CIO convention, but too many differences remained on the table for that to happen.

As did his predecessor, John Sweeney, new AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said he will work to bring all the unions back into a single federation.

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Young Workers Falling Behind

(Continued from page 8)

business among the five lowest of 16 long-term priorities for Congress and the president.

- Thirty-five percent say they voted for the first time in 2008, and nearly three-quarters now keep tabs on government and public affairs, even when there's not an election going on.

- The majority of young workers and nearly 70 percent of first-time voters are confident that Obama will take the country in the right direction.

- More than half of young workers say employees are more successful getting problems resolved as a group rather than as individuals, and employees who have a union are better off than employees in similar jobs who do not.

Nate Scherer, a 31-year-old from Columbus, Ohio, who shares a home with his wife and parents, said at the briefing: “While in college, I racked up a lot of credit card debt...there's no financial responsibility class in high school. After getting married, my wife and I decided to move in with my parents in order to pay off our bills. And I don't think my situation is that unique.”

The national survey of 1,156 workers, including 602 young workers, conducted by Hart Research Associates in late July, was commissioned by the AFL-CIO and its 3-million member community affiliate, Working America. The survey results have a +/- 3.5 percent margin of error.

Union Labor News
October 2009

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Obey Warns U.S. Has to Get a Handle on Health Care

At the Wisconsin Rapids Labor Day Picnic Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) warned that the insurance industry and other special interests that have blocked health care reform for more than 60 years are trying to block it again; “and we simply can’t afford to let that happen,” he said. “Things will only get worse if we don’t act now.”

In 1948, when healthcare costs were 4% of our economy and President Truman began pushing for health care reform, the insurance industry and other special interests in the healthcare establishment frightened people into opposing Truman’s efforts, and nothing happened.

In the 70’s, when healthcare costs had doubled—to 8%—of our economy, President Nixon pushed for reform; he was caught in the same insurance industry and special interest propaganda crossfire, and again nothing happened.

In the 90’s, healthcare costs continued to skyrocket and President Clinton pushed for reform. Again the insurance industry and other special interests’ propaganda machine scared the American people, and again nothing happened.

“Now, there are over 46 million Americans without health insurance, healthcare costs are four times where they were in ‘48—at over 16% of our economy—and it’s predicted that family insurance costs will continue to rise by \$1800 a year, if we don’t act,” Obey added. “But the insurance industry and other special interests are at it again, trying to keep reform from happening. But, after 60 years of half truths and misleading information, I don’t think Americans are going to be scared or misled into opposing major reform.”

“The only way that we are going to keep the insurance companies honest,” Obey said, “is to have a strong public option.”

“I’ve received letter after letter from people telling me about their inability to pay for health care; about insurance companies cancelling their policies or jacking up their rates; about small businesses being charged more for coverage, and about people being denied coverage they’ve paid for because of the ‘pre-existing conditions’ gimmick. We all know that the system we have is broken. The only question is whether we

will all stand up and demand reform—or if we will let the insurance industry and other special interests win again,” said Obey.

Noting that the package will probably be significantly modified before it’s in its final form, Obey said “what we do know is that we want to reform the current health insurance system,” in the following ways:

- Give those who already have coverage more stability and security;
- Put patients and doctors in charge of medical decisions, instead of insurance companies;
- Prevent insurance companies from denying coverage or charging more because of diabetes, heart disease or any other pre-existing condition;
- Limit out-of-pocket expenses to make sure no American family risks bankruptcy or financial ruin because a loved one gets sick;
- Enable those who don’t have insurance to choose a quality, affordable plan through a new health insurance exchange;
- Help American businesses compete by protecting them from the growing cost of health care;
- Make sure that providers begin to be reimbursed based on the quality of medical outcomes, rather than the volume of procedures they perform;
- Expand consumer choices to keep the insurance companies honest by creating a strong public option.

“For those who say we should slow down on healthcare, I say, we’ve been waiting for sixty years! The time to act is now! For those who say we can’t afford it, I say, we can’t afford *not* to reform our health care system. Without reform, it’s predicted that in just a few years, the average healthcare deductible will be \$2,700 and co-payments will continue to go up too,” Obey concluded. “The choice is not between this health care bill and perfection—it’s between reform and the status quo. And the cost of inaction is unbelievable; family budgets will be crippled, American businesses will fall behind, and the federal government will go broke.”

When a man tells you that he got rich through hard work, ask him whose.

Donald Robert Perry Marquis

If hard work were such a wonderful thing, surely the rich would have kept it all to themselves.

Lane Joseph Kirkland

Fatal Work Injuries Decline: BLS

Ten percent fewer workers suffered fatal work injuries last year than the year before, according to a preliminary report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The report said 5,071 fatal work injuries occurred in 2008, down from 5,657 recorded in 2007.

“While the decrease in the number... represents change in the right direction, it does not lessen the need for strong enforcement to ensure that safety is a top priority in every workplace,” said Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. “In fact, (the) report prompts us to step up our vigilance, particularly as the

economy regains momentum.”

BLS said economic factors may have played a role in the decrease. Average hours worked at the national level fell by 1 percent last year, and some industries that historically accounted for a significant share of fatalities, such as construction, experienced larger declines in employment or hours worked.

There also were questions about whether staffing shortages caused by budget cuts had interfered with proper data collection.

UCS News Service

a **Eight Years Later, 9/11 Still Claiming Victims**

New York state officials say 817 workers and volunteers who helped in the 9/11 attack on Manhattan by assisting at toxic Ground Zero or the Fresh Kills landfill, where rubble was sifted, have died since the attack.

More than 270 of the victims died from cancer, according to new data, while 33 have committed suicide.

Cancers killing the most World Trade Center workers include those hitting the stomach, liver, colon and other digestive organs (80), lung and throat (69), and blood cells, such as leukemia (37).

In addition, another 149 people suffered “traumatic

deaths” in such incidents as drug overdoses, car crashes, fires and assaults—including 27 who died in the line of duty. Another 12 died while serving in the military in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Just last September researchers listed 664 fatalities and confirmed 224, including 94 cancer cases. The rise since then is largely due to city agencies and WTC medical programs sharing more records, officials said.

An estimated 50,000 firefighters, police, emergency medical technicians and other workers and volunteers joined in the 9/11 rescue and recovery in lower Manhattan.

Airline Exec. Arrested for Failure To Pay Health Insurance Premiums

Pace Airlines chief executive officer William C. Rogers, 59, was arrested in at Piedmont Triad International Airport in Greensboro, NC in late September, charged with willfully failing to pay group health insurance premiums for his 337 workers.

In August the North Carolina Department of Labor began investigating claims that employees of the charter carrier were not being paid. Nonpayment of wages for a month or more put those employees in difficult limbo: they weren’t getting their paychecks, but if they quit they would not be eligible to file for

unemployment benefits.

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Wayne Goodwin said it was illegal to terminate the insurance without a minimum 45-day notice to the workers.

Adding to Rogers’ problems: a day after his arrest, U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission said it was suing Pace on behalf of a fired Asian flight attendant who complained only white workers were being promoted.

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Local 310 AFL-CIO
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P.O. Box 8323
Green Bay, WI 54308-8323



Local 310 Executive Board

E-mail us at local310@local310.org or visit our website at www.local310.org

Business Manager	Steve McFarlane	1699-6719
920-437-2750	1-800-636-8480	Cell 920-621-2064
Fax 920-437-3122	E-mail address	steve@local310.org
President	Greg Veith	1699-6782
920-793-3808	E-mail address:	greg@local310.org
Vice President	Paul Beimborn	1699-5149
920-491-0394		Cell 920-660-2294
	E-mail address:	paul@local310.org
Recording Secretary	Lori Wunsch	1699-7909
920-889-1538	E-mail address:	lori@local310.org
Financial Secretary	Roger Zimmerman	1699-6708
920-255-1128	E-mail address:	roger@local310.org
Treasurer	Rob Harteau	1699-6788
920-680-4468	E-mail address:	rob@local310.org
Central Director	Patrick Kelly	1699-6781
920-327-2624	E-mail Address	pat@local310.org
Eastern Director	Chris Satterburg	1699-6742
920-684-3485		Cell 920-323-7685
	E-mail address	chris@local310.org
Power Plant Director	Todd Kufahl	1699-6789
	E-mail address	todd@local310.org
Western Director	Mark Kopetzky	1699-6813
715-581-2114	E-mail address	mark@local310.org

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