

The Newsette

Local 310

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IUOE

Business Manager's Report

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This year spring has brought us a large number of retirements from the severance offerings. We have many of our friends/co-workers that are moving into hopefully a period of great enjoyment. Employment does all those things like putting food on the table, buying toys and sending the kids off to college, but working towards a long and healthy post career is the best part. To those members that represent roughly 1400 years of service we wish you the best in your new adventures in life.

I would like to acknowledge two of those retiring who between them have been Branch Chairmen for a longer period of time than the 10 members of the Executive Board together. Al Janquart and Bruce Bangert have both been the wisdom and stability of running their respective Branch's. These gentlemen have lead by example in everything they have done. We will truly miss their leadership but knowing that they will be enjoying life to its fullest will soften our loss.

At this time last year we were looking at layoffs and some rough road ahead. We had just completed our first contract with Dominion and we had the WPS, Algoma, Green Bay and Sturgeon Bay contracts due all at the worst economic time in most of our lives. By the time this goes to print, I hope to have the Green Bay contract completed and the last of the Job Abandonments completed. Emotions were

running high then and now as the landscape changed on first how many and later who's life would be affected. Furloughs have accomplished the predicted outcome in stability to the workforce and yet they remain very controversial. For those members that are in Job Abandonment we will continue to work for the softest landing possible. The road is looking a little smoother ahead but there are still several pot holes we need to work on.

National health care has been front and center recently with a large number believing this is bad legislation. We need to look at the effects on us and continue to be educated on this subject. We as a nation could not continue on the path we were on. For the Local 310 WPS members, I will remind you that just over two years ago we accepted major concessions in health care to raise our Lifetime cap by \$650,000. We all know that the new 1.15 million dollar cap was still not going to cut it long term. As of March 23, 2010 we no longer have a Lifetime Cap, pre-existing conditions are gone and millions of Americans now or will have coverage since these people were always cared for but who was paying is where we were affected. Insurance companies are now limited on how much administrative costs can be charged.

(See **Business Manager's Report** on page 2)



"I wonder what 'U-Scan' registers think about."

A History Lesson on Workers' Memorial Day

Workers' Memorial Day or International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured takes place annually around the world on April 28, an international day of remembrance and action for workers killed, disabled, injured or made unwell by their work.

According to the International Labor Organization, across the world:

- Each year, more than two million women and men die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases
- Workers suffer approximately 270 million occupational accidents each year, and fall victim to some 160 million incidents of work-related illnesses
- Hazardous substances kill 440,000 workers annually—asbestos claims 100,000 lives
- One worker dies every 15 seconds worldwide, 6,000 workers die every day. Work kills more people than wars.

In a world where, on occasion, death, injury, and illness at work are hidden away and taken for granted, Workers' Memorial Day is an opportunity to highlight the preventable nature of most workplace accidents and ill health and to promote campaigns and union organization in the fight for improvements in workplace safety. The slogan for the day is: *Remember the dead. Fight for the living.*

Workers' Memorial Day was started by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) in 1984. The Canadian Labour Congress declared an annual day of remembrance in 1985 on April 28, which is the anniversary of a comprehensive Workers Compensation Act passed in 1914. In 1991, the Canadian Parliament passed an Act respecting a National Day of Mourning for persons killed or injured in the workplace.

Workers' Memorial Day events are held throughout the world and some activities include: active campaigning, workplace awareness events, public events including speeches, multi-faith religious services, laying wreaths, planting trees, unveiling monuments, balloon releases, raising public awareness of issues and laying out empty shoes to symbolize those who have died at work.

For years, Workers' Memorial Day events have been organized in Canada and the U.S. and then worldwide. It is recognized as a national holiday in many countries including: Argentina, Belgium, Bermuda, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Luxembourg, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Thailand, Taiwan and the United States. Trade Unions in other countries including Benin, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary, Malta, Nepal, New Zealand, Romania, Singapore and the United Kingdom are pursuing government recognition.

Business Manager's Report

(Continued from page 1)

This law is far from perfect with tort reform missing and the tax implications on WPS may be negative, but when the insurance companies and the talking heads are totally against this, I feel a little bit better because we know how their always looking out for the working women and men.

Please consider using your furlough time to make your community a better place to live. Many volunteer situations are available in our communities and giving back is something many of you excel at. We have Rebuilding Together coming up in a couple weeks and this project should be fun and easy with the many hands of good people.

Our membership is usually a mirror of society and this is sometimes good and sometimes bad. Recently across the United States people and groups have decided that by being loud they represent the majority. We also have some members

that feel that if they are loud they will be speaking for everyone. Tough times bring out the best in us but for some it brings out the worst and as I have been witnessing some of the worst as some work groups have been going at it. Many of these heated issues are not based in fact and if you decide that you are going to attack a fellow member or even management, you better understand that being less than honest can get you in a lot of trouble. Our Constitution and Bylaws, as well as managements policy manuals protect people from false allegations and harassment. This Union is as good as its members and as is proof from the furlough vote we do take care of our own. Please look out for each other and make our work place a union work place.

In Solidarity
Steve McFarlane

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The editor reserves the right to reject or edit any article. Articles containing vulgarity, slanderous statements or do not conform to normal ethical and moral standards will not be printed. Articles may be typed or written legibly with the senders name, phone number and signature. Names may be withheld upon request.

**Member of the Midwest
Labor Press Association**

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Mark Your Calendar

Wisconsin Public Service and Local 310 will again be teaming up to sponsor a home for this spring's Rebuilding Together of Greater Green Bay project. Rebuilding Together is a volunteer organization whose mission is to provide home repairs at no charge to low-income elderly or handicapped homeowners that will allow them to remain in their homes in comfort, warmth and safety.

Like last year, our main objective will be to tear off and reside a small ranch home in Ashwaubenon. In addition, we will be doing some landscaping, exterior painting and some general clean-up.

The project will begin on Saturday May 8, 2010 and conclude by Saturday, May 15th.

Should you be interested in volunteering your talents, even for an hour or two, please contact Roger Van Lanen for more details at 920-433-1067 or e-mail him at rmvanlanen@integrysgroup.com OR contact Business Manager Steve Mc Farlane at 920-437-2750... steve@local310.org

Spouses, friends and high school students needing to fulfill volunteer hours are always welcome!

Thanks!

Drowning Democracy in \$\$\$

Can five votes make a difference in America's democratic elections? You betcha, as Sarah Palin might say. Especially when those five voters are Supreme Court justices hell bent on allowing the unlimited money power of corporate giants to drown out the people's democratic voice.

But wait, say apologists for the five Supreme voters who hung this plutocratic albatross around the neck of our democracy: it's not just corporations who were freed by the Court to spend billions to elect or defeat candidates. They smugly point out that labor unions, too, can now take their members' dues money and dump as much of it as they want into their campaigns. So, see, the ruling justices took care to be "fair and balanced."

Where've we heard that phrase before?

Balanced? Even if every union were to liquidate all of their assets and set aside every dime they have for elections, their total war chest would be \$6 billion. Just one Wall Street firm, Goldman Sachs, doled out three times more than that in bonus payments to its bankers this year alone. Indeed, the combined

union assets of \$6 billion adds up to a mere one-tenth of one percent of the assets held by only the four largest banks in our country.

Yet, the Court's corporate supremists have now equated the freedom to spend money on elections with our people's freedom of speech. This means that those with the most money get the most speech. What's fair about that?

As an indicator of how imbalanced our brave new world of money-based elections will be, check this out: the 100 largest American corporations have annual incomes totaling \$13 trillion. Henceforth, they can tap this ocean of political clout to elect policymakers who will do their bidding—not ours.

To help undo the Court's coup against us, connect with freespeechforpeople.org.

Jim Hightower

For more information visit
www.jimhightower.com

Higher Costs for Higher Learning

As a parent or grandparent, have you thought about how to help pay for school? Did you know that the costs are increasing significantly faster than inflation? There are many programs available for education planning, each with its own tax and control benefits. Let us help you discover which are best for your situation. For over five years, we have been helping many of our Union Brothers and Sisters understand how these types of opportunities could benefit them. Call us at the number below to schedule a no cost, no obligation meeting.

Joe Fenlon
Senior Financial
Services Representative
District Vice-President



Rich Kreitz
Financial Advisor
Senior Financial
Services Representative

1-800-323-5506 Ext 122

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President's Report

I finally put the battery back in the bike, checked the oil and tire pressure, and went out for a ride. It was not the warmest on lake shore, but it was still good to feel the wind on my face and smell the different odors in the air. When it comes to riding, the weather in Arizona is much more conducive, but I still struggle with the vision of riding a bike wearing sandals and shorts. Come on warmer temps.

Voluntary Severance

Many of our friends at work accepted the voluntary severance and have retired. I am pleased that these individuals were able to make the offer work and have moved on to an easier life of retirement. We all work very hard in our life and we sometimes overlook the goal of retirement. Rather than working towards that milestone, it can often be something that happens to us. I find it interesting that every retiree I talk to encourages one to retire as soon as they can. They will tell you that it not as financially challenging as they thought and that being retired is truly enjoyable. There is also data that suggests retirement age and life expectancy are related. Not surprising, the findings indicate that individuals that retire earlier live longer!

The earliest retirement age at WPS and Dominion is 58 years. Considering only the deduction for retiring at that age, one is facing an 18% reduction in benefits. On the surface that reduction may appear unacceptable, but remember that if you continue to work, you are not collecting retirement benefits while working. Even at 18% less, how long will it take to make up the loss of not collecting retirement if one works longer? Now think about quality of life. Usually, younger goes hand in hand with healthier. That should support what the retirees are telling us. Retire as soon as possible and enjoy the benefit we have worked towards. For those that were able to make the voluntary severance work, thank-you for the years of service and I wish you all only the best!

Life's Lessons

One thing my father taught me was to consider what must be expended for what can be gained. Another way to look at this is in poker. The bet, the odds of winning and the size of the pot must all be considered when the time comes to hold or fold. You might have heard this referred to as the risk reward

factor. Some people have the knack for calculating these odds quickly and unemotionally. They make decisions and move on. As expected, sometimes they miss the target, but more often than not, they make the right choice. We see this process at work on the television show "Pawn Stars" or when lottery pots reach triple digits. The lesson here is to consider what can be gained and lost when taking a position. Avoid gambles that present large risks while offering little return.

Another lesson from the school of hard knocks is to be careful what you ask for. Sometimes the focus on a goal can be so focused that other possibilities are overlooked. Think of the game of chess. Those individuals that can explore more possibilities and combinations of moves often play a more challenging game. Getting too wrapped up in a quest can sometimes lead to disastrous results. This is one reason more eyes on an idea improves the odds of a better end product. It is also why some things are purposely difficult to change or amend.

When these two simple lessons are combined, I am sometimes amazed at decisions that are reached and wonder if either thought were even considered. As the technological age progresses, changes seem to occur faster. Flexibility and the ability to respond quickly is paramount in today's world and that increases the need for leaders to possess the ability to make correct decisions quicker and with less input. Today's leaders want that authority, but have they truly considered what they are asking for and have they examined what can be lost for what is wagered?

A final thought on this subject is that a smart person realizes and admits their mistake. A wise person learns from their mistake and quickly recovers often putting something in place to ensure it does not repeat. We are all human which means we will make mistakes. Hopefully, we can recover from those mistakes and change our actions to prevent a repeat occurrence. I have to believe that you will only touch a hot stove once in your life.

The same rule should apply for decisions in the business world. If a decision is made that is subsequently shown to be incorrect, it should be pulled back and reexamined. Unfortunately, I have witnessed bad decisions followed by more bad decisions. It reminds me of throwing money after

(Continued on page 5)

Workers Group Honors Company

Among a handful of U.S. companies honored for "Partnerships That Work" by American Rights at Work at its awards presentation in D.C. was New Berlin based Wisconsin Vision.

The optical eye care company with 130 union employees at 27 Midwest outlets was honored as part of a coalition of entrepreneurs and business owners working for meaningful labor law reform.

D.C. honorees included Wisconsin Vision's president and

CEO, Darren Horndasch, who has also represented business industries in panels supporting the Employee Free Choice Act. Wisconsin residents have long known of the company's commitment to the community since its founding in 1978. For the last 15 years it has provided free eyeglasses to displaced families.

Partnerships That Work is a project of the American Rights at Work Education Fund to select companies that play by the rules and support workers rights.

a **'Hill' Offices Violate OSHA Standards, But Show Improvement**

More than 70 percent of congressional offices have violated worker safety standards over the past year, according to a Washington, D.C. newspaper specializing in the workings of Congress.

But Jordy Yeager, writing for The Hill, found that while a majority of all lawmaker offices on Capitol Hill have at least one health or safety hazard violation, this year's inspection data from the Office of Compliance inspections is an improvement over last year's.

In fact, says Yeager, the number of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) violations found in each office has significantly decreased over the years—from an average of about 8.15 violations per office in 2007 to an average of 1.75 hazards in each office this year.

The type of violations is also shifting, from what used to be gross safety risks to what are now relatively minor infractions, like lengths of electric cord strung together or a

blocked electrical outlet, Yeager wrote.

"In the past, we've found serious fire hazards such as blocked sprinkler heads, stacks of paper on heaters, fire doors obstructed by furniture and outlets with exposed live wires," said Peter Ames Eveleth, general counsel of the Office of Compliance.

"We are talking about serious hazards that have plagued congressional offices for years."

Of the 541 offices in Congress, 154 were found to be completely in compliance with OSHA standards—those of 64 senators and 90 House lawmakers—leaving 387 offices that had at least one violation. This is a marked increase from 2008, when only 37 offices were found to be in complete accordance, or in 2006, when only seven offices were in compliance.

UCS News Service

Letter Carriers Denounce Plan To Cut Saturday Deliveries

The president of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) union says Congress should reject a Postal Service proposal to eliminate Saturday mail delivery.

Postmaster General John E. Potter says discontinuing weekend delivery and collections would save billions of dollars, but NALC President Fredric V. Rolando said a better way to balance the books would be to return to the Postal Service the \$75 billion it has been overcharged for prefunding civil service pension costs.

Rolando told a congressional panel that "action on the pre-funding requirement is the best starting point for a long-term strategy to preserve affordable universal service, a strategy that

must include product innovation and revenue generation as well as efficiency improvements developed in negotiations for new employee contracts."

The postal Inspector General (IG) has found that the Postal Service had been overcharged by \$75 billion going back to 1971, when the USPS was created, for pension costs associated with pre-1971 service by employees of the taxpayer-funded Post Office Department.

The IG recommended that the accurately measured "postal surplus" in the Civil Service Retirement Fund be transferred to the Postal Service Retiree Health Benefits Fund, which would

(See Saturday Deliveries on page 8)

President's Report

money hoping something good will happen rather than accepting the bad choice and cutting one's losses. Often we see that the longer it takes to reach that conclusion, the higher the cost. The conundrum is that some people view the reversal of a decision as an affront to them personally. In reality, most people respect an admittance of an error and the sooner the better. The longer the bad decision is allowed to fester, the less the person that made it is respected. Mistakes are inevitable. Accept them, recover, change the behavior and move on. We are spending too much time and resources trying to adjust bad decisions.

Incident Pyramid

There is an industry recognized safety tool called the Incident Pyramid. It is a correlation between at-risk behaviors and fatalities and is used to predict accidents. The base of the pyramid houses at-risk behaviors and conditions. Moving up the pyramid displays near misses, minor injuries, serious injuries

and fatalities at the top. The ratio of one level to the next is a factor of 10. As an example, the pyramid predicts that for every 10,000 at risk behaviors, there will be 1,000 near misses, 100 minor injuries, 10 serious injuries and 1 fatality.

Armed with this knowledge, one only needs to know the number of at-risk behaviors or near misses to predict the possibility of more serious incidents. The problem arises when discipline is injected in the accident process. If employees sense that reporting at-risk behaviors or near misses might result in discipline, a chilling effect is promoted and individuals become reluctant to report errors. Excluding this base information from the data skews the prediction and might present a false sense of security. Safety is everyone's business and safe behavior cannot be banked to be offset a lapse in safety. Stay vigilant and watch out for each other. Please ensure you correct at-risk behaviors and share all near misses.

Greg Veith

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Obama Signs \$18 Billion Jobs Bill

President Obama signed an \$18 billion jobs bill into law in a Rose Garden ceremony in mid-March, providing tax breaks for businesses that hire previously unemployed workers and extending funding for infrastructure and transportation projects.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said it was “a good start” in helping the nation’s millions of unemployed get back on the job following the Wall Street-generated financial collapse.

But, Trumka added, the bill must be the first step of a broad and intensive effort to rebuild the economy.

The centerpiece of the bill is a new program giving companies a break from paying Social Security taxes for the remainder of 2010 on any new workers they hire who had been unemployed for at least 60 days. Employers would also get a \$1,000 tax credit for each of those workers who stays on the payroll for at least one year.

Aside from that program, the measure includes a one-year extension of the law governing federal transportation funding, and would transfer \$20 billion into the highway trust fund. The bill also extends a tax break allowing companies to write off equipment purchases, and expands the Build America Bonds program, which helps state and local governments secure financing for infrastructure projects.

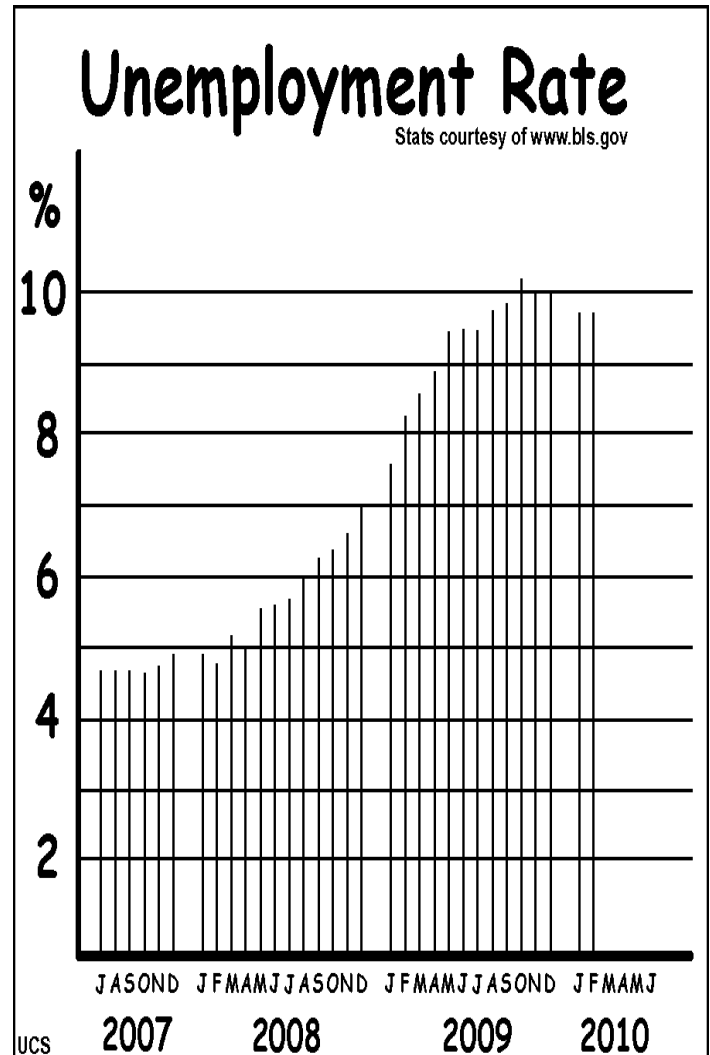
The speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), said the bill will support small businesses and create 300,000 jobs. Some 8.4 million jobs have been lost since the start of the recession.

In signing the bill Obama declared: “I hope it is a prelude to further cooperation (with Republicans) in the days and months to come, as we continue the work of digging out of this recession and rebuilding our economy in a way that works for all Americans.” Only a handful of Republicans supported the bill.

Trumka said that “much more needs to be done. We need to restore the jobs that were lost to the financial debacle, and Wall Street should pay to create them. We must invest in rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure and in the green jobs of the future. We have to maintain funding for vital services by state and local governments and prevent destructive cuts in education, police and fire protection and more.”

The “official” unemployment rate stayed level at 9.7 percent

in March, unchanged from February, leading some to believe the worst of the recession has passed. While that may be the fact, as Spring began some 25 million people were still jobless or working part-time because they couldn’t find anything else.



Layoffs Spur Health Problems, Several Recent Studies Find

A growing body of research suggests that layoffs can have profound health consequences, according to a New York Times report by Michael Luo.

A 2006 study at Yale found that layoffs more than doubled the risk of heart attack and stroke among older workers.

Another study, by Kate W. Strully, at the State University of New York at Albany, found that a person who lost a job had an 83 percent greater chance of developing a stress-related health problem, like diabetes, arthritis or psychiatric issues.

“In perhaps the most sobering finding,” Luo wrote, “a study published last year found that layoffs can affect life expectancy.”

The paper, by economists Till von Wachter and Daniel G. Sullivan, examined death records and earnings data in Pennsylvania during the recession of the early 1980s and concluded that death rates among high-seniority male workers jumped by 50 percent to 100 percent in the year after a job loss, depending on the worker’s age.

Even 20 years later, deaths were 10 percent to 15 percent higher. That meant a worker who lost his job at age 40 had his life expectancy cut by a year to a year and half.

UCS News Service

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Central District Director's Report

Many locals and their memberships go through phases that are directly linked to age demographics. When a membership is young there tends to be more of a focus on wages; middle of the career, benefits like insurance and vacation; and as they get older, retirement. These are generalities, but very typical "guidelines" as to how a local thinks and performs in aggregate. When I use the word "perform" I am referring to how we handle the situations that come before us, i.e. negotiating contracts, handling grievances or dealing with job losses.

Since I've been with Local 310 I have already been through the first phase, I'm almost finished with the second and looking forward to the last.

Regardless of demographics, the individuals elected to represent the membership have to make decisions based on the interests of the entire local, and they have to make these decisions not as individuals, but collectively. In doing so, the goal is that the entire membership is represented as equally as possible.

Local 310 not only has age demographics to contend with in the decision making processes, but also added hurdles created by geography and more significantly by the extreme differences in the job duties and skill sets we represent.

This is our membership: Line Electricians to Customer Service Reps, Bus Mechanics to Senior Reactor Operators, Lab Technicians to Office Cleaners and dozens of other job titles.

A young man who was an avid golfer found himself with a few hours to spare one afternoon. He headed to the links to play a very fast nine holes before going home. Just as he was about to tee off, an old gentleman shuffled onto the tee and asked if he could join the young man. Not being able to say no, he allowed the old man to join him.

To his surprise, the old man played fairly quickly. He didn't hit the ball far, but plodded along consistently and didn't waste much time. Finally, they reached the 9th fairway and the young man found himself with a tough shot. There was a large

All with different skill sets and job duties, and the differences can be extreme.

How does a membership adjust to the demands of a changing work environment, layoffs, health care changes or a myriad of other stresses and demands? And how does a membership as diverse as ours, with all the differences in our jobs, our locations and our ages, handle these demands? And at the same time, recognize seniority?!!

There are no fixes for the issues we are faced with that will satisfy everyone in our membership. There are some of our members who are very happy with the job abandonment and some very angry, some satisfied with the furlough vote and some not.

Do they balance out? Are we represented equally? Given the diverse nature of our membership are these things possible? These are tough but very realistic questions that do not have easy or obvious answers.

I always close my articles "In solidarity", and I am sincere, by being "solid" **WE** will meet the challenges that we will continue to be faced with. Survive then thrive!

Central District meeting May 27th @ Railhouse Brewing Co., Marinette @ 6:30 P.M.

In solidarity,
Patrick Kelly

pine tree right in front of his ball and directly between his ball and the green. After several minutes of debating how to hit the shot, the old man finally said, "You know, when I was your age, I'd hit the ball right over that tree."

With that challenge before him, the youngster swung hard, hit the ball up, right smack into the top of the tree trunk. It thudded back to the ground not a foot from where it had originally lay.

The old man offered one more comment, "Of course, when I was your age, that pine tree was only 3 feet tall."

Labor Urges New Protections On Workers Memorial Day

Unions across the country were expected to observe Workers Memorial Day, April 28, with a variety of rallies, vigils, news conferences and other events to draw attention to the thousands of workplace deaths and millions more injuries or illnesses every year.

Workers Memorial Day has been marked for more than 20 years on April 28, always with the goal of focusing the public eye—and that of politicians—on the need to take action. This year sponsors are hoping to put pressure on Congress to pass the Protecting America's Workers Act (PAWA).

The measure would strengthen the Occupational Safety and Health Act and provide workers stronger job safety rights and protections.

Key elements of the law would:

- Provide coverage under OSHA to state and local public

sector workers, federal workers and others who lack full OSHA protection.

- Increase OSHA civil and criminal penalties for job safety violations.
- Prohibit the use of "unclassified" violations and require corrections of hazards while employer appeals of violations are pending.
- Improve whistleblower protections for workers who raise job safety concerns and report injuries or illnesses.
- Expand worker and union rights in OSHA inspections and enforcement cases.
- Provide victims of job injuries and illnesses, and their family members, the right to be heard in OSHA investigations.

UCS News Service

2.4 Million Jobs Lost to Trade Deficit With China

Some 2.4 million U.S. jobs have been eliminated or displaced in recent years because of the growing trade deficit between the U.S. and China, according to a new report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI).

In the report, *Unfair China Trade Costs Local Jobs*, EPI says that every state in the country, as well as Washington, D.C. and Puerto Rico, suffered jobs lost or displaced because of the trade imbalance. The deficit grew by an average of \$26.6 billion each year between 2001 and 2008; Chinese exports to the United States in 2008 were more than five times greater than U.S. exports to China.

A surge in imports of Chinese computer and electronic products accounted for more than 40 percent of the \$186 billion increase in the U.S. trade deficit with China between 2001 and 2008, with these industries experiencing the largest trade-related job losses of any sector—627,700 jobs, or 26 percent of all jobs lost or displaced between 2001 and 2008.

The hardest hit areas of the country are those where high-tech industries are concentrated, like California and Texas.

EPI says a major reason for the trade imbalance is China's artificially low currency value. While the value of its currency should have increased as China exported more and more goods, it has instead remained artificially low, a result of China's aggressive efforts to manipulate the currency by acquiring more than two trillion dollars in foreign exchange reserves since 2001. This currency manipulation gives China an unfair advantage in global trade.

"We have allowed the Chinese government to game the system for far too long, with serious consequences for the U.S. economy," said the report's author, EPI economist Robert Scott. "The Treasury Department should publicly declare China to be a currency manipulator, and Congress should authorize tariffs of at least 25 percent if China doesn't start playing by fair rules."

UCS News Service

Saturday Deliveries

(Continued from page 5)

allow Congress to repeal the crushing pre-funding payments for retiree health now required by law.

In a statement submitted to a hearing of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Federal Service and General Government, Rolando said the U.S. Postal Service "is too important to the country to make rash decisions in an environment of financial distress." NALC represents some 200,000 postal carriers.

American Postal Workers Union (APWU) President

William Burrus made many of the same points before the committee, adding: "The rush to five-day mail delivery is an ill-conceived reaction to declining mail volume during an economic slowdown. While volume may never return to 2006 levels, even a modest return, coupled with repeal of the requirement to pre-fund retiree health benefits, would go a long way toward sustaining the Postal Service for many years into the future."

APWU represents about 300,000 postal clerks and other USPS employees.

UCS News Service

UAW Loses Fight at NUMMI, Plant Closing Takes 4,700 Jobs

Some 4,700 United Auto Workers members have ratified a closing agreement for the Fremont, Calif., plant with New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. (NUMMI). Workers okayed the deal by a margin of 90 percent, the UAW said.

NUMMI was set to close the facility on April 1, 2010.

Established as a joint venture between General Motors and Toyota Motors in 1984, the plant most recently built the Pontiac Vibe, Toyota Corolla and Tacoma pickup. As part of a structured bankruptcy, GM eliminated its Pontiac brand in 2009. Shortly after, Toyota announced its intention to close the facility.

The union and community groups pressed Toyota to keep the plant operating, noting that only a small percentage of its capacity was being used for non-Toyota products, but to no avail.

UAW Vice President Jimmy Settles praised members of the

Local 2244 bargaining committee for their hard work and solidarity. "We are all deeply saddened to see these operations come to an end. While this is not the outcome we had hoped for, the terms of this agreement will certainly help cushion the impact for our members."

Depending on how long they've worked at the factory, a negotiated severance package offers the union workers anywhere from \$20,000 to \$70,000 per person.

Statewide, NUMMI generated 25,000 support jobs at other suppliers and companies with a \$1.4 billion annual payroll. It would cost taxpayers \$2.3 billion to replace those jobs.

"All of the people that work here spend money here. Some of those people have homes that they are in danger of losing," said Nina Moore of the Fremont Chamber of Commerce.

UCS News Service

Everybody needs one essential friend.

William Glasser

Our first teacher is our own heart.

Cheyenne Proverb

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35,000 Southeast AT&T Workers Approve New Union Contract

After sending their negotiators back to the bargaining table in January, Communications Workers of America (CWA) members working in AT&T's Southeast Region approved a new offer in March that somewhat lessens the pain on health care premiums for current employees.

The agreement, covering 35,000 workers, ultimately won the approval of 65 percent of the members who voted. Some 60 percent had earlier voted to reject the initial offer.

The contract calls for first-year wage increases retroactive to last August. On average, full-time employees will get \$860, with overtime and differential pay on top of that. Raises of 3 percent and 2.75 percent will come in the second and third years respectively.

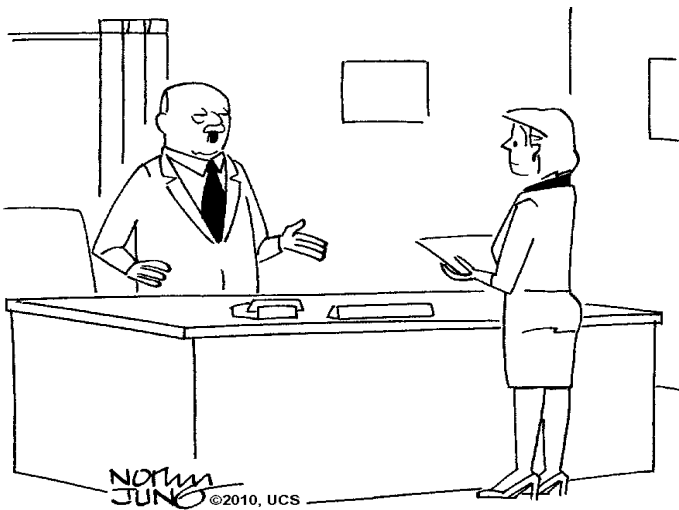
On the down side, current employees will be required for the first time to contribute to monthly health care premiums:

\$15 for single coverage and \$30 for families beginning January 2012; the following year it will increase to \$35 for single coverage and \$75 for families. AT&T had wanted the third-year higher increases to take effect in 2011.

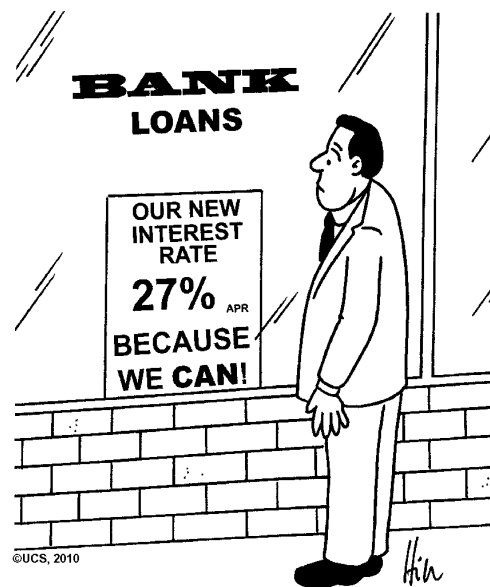
Many of the contract provisions are similar to those bargained in recent months with other AT&T divisions employing some 120,000 workers.

"In these very tough economic times, our bargaining team did an exceptional job in improving wages and benefits and making real gains for workers in job security, including new transfer rights and other job rights covering customer service and sales workers," CWA VP Judy Dennis said in a statement.

AT&T's Southeast Region contract covers workers in its landline business as well as advertising and publishing, billing and utilities workers in nine states.



"We need more productivity if I'm going to get my bonus. Spread a rumor that there may be layoffs."



IBEW Local Trains "Green Techs" In New Apprenticeship Program

The first 14 "green technicians" have graduated from the Electrical Training Institute, a joint partnership between International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 481 and the National Electrical Contractors Assn. of Central Indiana.

The union, looking to grow job opportunities in wind, solar and other renewable energy products, has integrated clean energy skills into its apprenticeship program.

The new graduates showed off a variety of solar panels and a wind turbine they recently installed at the institute as examples of how they will put their new skills to work in advancing the development of a clean energy economy.

Jim Patterson, director of the institute, said each graduate of the program will be an industry certified technician, capable of

working on anything from windmills to retrofits of existing buildings that need to become more energy efficient.

Speaking at the graduation ceremony, AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler declared:

"It's important that American workers stay at the cutting edge of green technology so they can access the high-quality jobs that are being created in the global clean energy economy. The race is on to build a 21st century clean energy infrastructure and the AFL-CIO continues to push for it to be nurtured here in the U.S. and built by American workers."

The green technician training program includes classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprentices are paid during the course of their training.

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The Health of Our Economy

Our whole economy has been in trouble for a long time. We can no longer look at foreclosure rates but ignore our trade deficit, or discuss high gas prices without mentioning the billions spent on Wall Street and the growing U.S. debt that results from an economy not in charge of itself.

Trade Deficit

At three quarters of a trillion dollars, our trade deficit has been driven up to nearly 5 percent of the gross domestic product—a shocking number by any measure—by our growing dependence on foreign goods starting with oil, which consumes over half of this deficit, and bad trade deals. In fact, almost half a trillion dollars of the deficit is related to imports of energy.

With high gas prices and bad trade deals have come growing legions of the unemployed with climbing rates higher and higher. There's been a steady pattern of this deepening crisis over the last several years. The relationship between unemployment and rising oil prices is evident as far back as the 1970s. With the first embargo of oil from the Middle East, we saw a huge peak in price and then a huge peak in unemployment. And the same is true in every succeeding decade in the 1980s, in the 1990s, and certainly now. There has been a steady pattern of this deepening crisis over the last 20 years.

In 1993, when NAFTA was rammed through this Congress, they said it would create jobs. It did just the reverse. There's been a huge net job loss for our country.

In the late 1990s, when they passed PNTR for China, they said, "Oh, that will create more jobs here." Well, no. It did the exactly the reverse; more jobs were outsourced.

In places like Toledo, Ohio, 15.6 percent of our people are officially unemployed as foreclosures continue, huge payouts to Wall Street continue, and now 12 percent of our housing stock foreclosed. The gap between the super-super rich and the

rest of us is getting wider all the time, and those numbers threaten the future of our Republic.

At a recent job fair in Toledo, unemployed workers were able to post video resumes courtesy of local television stations. One man, a CVL licensed truck driver in his early sixties, said he was looking for anything, "even something in fast food."

We don't lack for work ethic in our area, we lack for jobs. But with so many outsourced jobs, from televisions to clothing to automotive to call centers, for heaven's sake. American consumers are abdicating their buying power abroad and losing millions of jobs. Unemployment benefits are starting to run out. Food pantries are seeing record increases, and people are getting desperate. The wealth disparity grows larger every day.

In 2005, the top 1 percent claimed a quarter of our national income and the top 10 percent of earners in this country took fully half of the entire national income. It's even worse now. The super rich are taking the largest share of our national income—are you ready for this?—since 1928, the year before the Great Depression started.

The Wealth Gap

And yet we're listening to the super-super rich whining because they're going to be asked to help pay for a health care system that will help make our nation competitive in the global marketplace so we can recapture some of the lost jobs.

We can't fix our country by simply fixing things on Wall Street for those who are super rich or pandering to the complaints of the richest of the rich or the Wall Street bankers that have outsourced so many of our jobs.

We need to fix this country by reducing our trade deficit, cutting our dependence on foreign oil, helping hardworking Americans who are doing their best to make ends meet and who want to work and putting our accounts back in order.

*Rep. Marcy Kaptur
D-Ohio*

Unions Charge CVS Drug Chain With Overcharging State Workers

The Change to Win union federation is pushing Kansas to dump the company that manages the prescription plan for 25,000 state employees, saying it has failed to offer the lowest possible prices on many drugs. There may be similar issues in other states, the group says, including Illinois and Maryland.

The federation is comprised of five unions including the Teamsters and Service Employees. It contends CVS Caremark Corp. has not offered Kansas government employees the best deal in many cases.

CVS maintains the unions are waging a campaign against the company with "misleading or outright false information."

Kansas spent \$61 million last year on CVS-provided prescriptions for its 24,700 employees and paid the company \$1.6 million in administrative fees. The state's three-year

contract with CVS will end Dec. 31, and Kansas has sought proposals for a new contract from potential managers.

The unions say the prices paid by state employees for 269 generic drugs is higher than the prices those employees would pay with a discount card at a CVS retail pharmacy.

"I think we'll try to have some hearings and find out if there is any substance to this," said a key state legislator. "If what is alleged is true, we're getting charged a bunch more than we should be."

CVS is putting up roadblocks to union organizing among its employees, a factor the drugstore chain says is spurring labor action against the company. CVS operates 6,800 stores and fills 30 percent of the nation's prescriptions.

UCS News Service

a **Power Plant District Director’s Report**

Hello Power Plant People!

Here we are again, facing another springtime and looking at change. Old Man Winter gets kicked back to wherever it is he came from and we get to see the onset of Ma Nature’s restarts.

Changes in our work seem to be never ending. The Layoff Notice is behind us, Job Abandonment is in full swing, Furlough is closely monitored as I feared it would have to be, and staffing reductions and restructuring are, and will continue to be, one of the major issues for the present and near future.

The issue of staffing and restructuring at Pulliam has brought forth many more changes and challenges. Though we may be losing five Screen Operators, the duties that the position has fulfilled probably forever, need to be reassigned to others within their craft and possibly other crafts in the plant because the fact is, the work did not go away!

This brings me to my point for this month. With all this change, let us take the opportunity to back up, open our eyes and ears and redefine a perspective of what is truly our work as IUOE Local 310 Members. Over time (the last twenty-three

years) we have seen fluctuations in staffing levels and the shifting of duties. Some of these duties have been reprioritized and even shifted to other crafts. Now I feel may be the right time to “right the ship” so to speak. Let us make right, some of these degradations to the Crafts and get these duties within the jurisdictions where they belong. Also, if indeed it is 310 work, a 310 member might be better doing that work! If not, we are willing to negotiate. A friendly reminder I offer is this, we are an Operating and Maintenance Local. What is our work has been established and most times there is little choice of who is going to do these duties.

Changes that we as a Membership have and continue to endure must be guarded and sometimes corrected either by way of negotiations or grievance. No longer can we stand by and watch our work methods, practices or duties be divested or changed with apathy or due to convenience.

In Solidarity,
Kevin Dessell

Anyone can be polite to a king, but it takes a civilized person to be polite to a beggar.

Unknown

You draw nothing out of the bank of life except what you deposit in it.

Unknown

If you were arrested for being kind, would there be enough evidence to convict you?

Unknown

Resentment is an extremely bitter diet, and eventually poisonous. I have no desire to make my own toxins.

Neil Kinnock

Have the guts to change things if you find that necessary.

Emory Bullard

If you’re looking back, you’re in trouble.

Charlie McClendon



Complete care for every one of your smiles.

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Membership Anniversaries

25 YEARS

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David Weeks

Dominion
Sheboygan

“Labor should reward it's friends and punish it's enemies.”

Samuel Gompers

Welcome New Member

Karen Jossart

Green Bay Transit