



# The Chisholm trail

**The lawman keeps riding while Internet conspiracy theorists persist in their potshots**

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

**M**aster of the stonewall. Serially close-mouthed. All those describe Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm who has successfully blocked media leaks out of his prosecutions, let pass without comment misleading remarks by such targets of inquiry as Gov. Scott Walker and generally held his fire in the face of partisan onslaughts. He just pursues evidence and goes to court, as responsible reporters unhappily concede.

But the hot chatter surrounding his cases ignite Water Street. pubs, phone calls and particularly wherever you tweet or play politics on the Internet, making accuracy tough and balance near impossible. Seasoned journalists can still work the edges and produce thoughtful reports but they are falsely accused of using leakers inside Chisholm's office. (Would it were so.)

Wild swinging speculations are particularly appealing when they come from the unknowing and the wishful thinking. That inflates what the DA is pursuing and paradoxically conflates his dissimilar John Doe probes into tentacles of the same giant squid, like a Jules Verne fantasy run amuck.

Normally Scott Walker, Johnny Thomas, Spencer Coggs and the man in the moon shouldn't even be in the same constellation, but those warped Internet telescopes put them there and require reports like this to correct things.

All this chatter may be giving a pass to the only probable giant squid - the Walker investigation. Despite right-wing disclaimers, and despite responsible caution, that probe is clearly circling in on an orchestrated, sophisticated system of corrupt power dealing and unlawful fundraising conducted by multiple hires and cronies of Walker, not just as county executive but leading into his campaign for governor and who knows how long afterward.



Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm. Reporters have already noticed how the current games in Madison bear disturbing echoes to the secretive Walker machinery at the Milwaukee Courthouse.

The frustrated left keeps pressing the DA to reveal a smoking gun in time to influence the recall, seizing on how members of his team have worked on various corruption probes. Truth be told, that is more about limited manpower and the nature of expertise in the DA's office. Chisholm is simply working at his own pace and for his own purposes, though many commentators would like it to be all about their politics.

The Thomas probe was clearly more a "what was he thinking?" expose of a solidarity bungler. On Feb. 8 in a court appearance, County Board Supervisor Thomas reminded the world that he is innocent until proven guilty and denied all charges, saying there was a different story to be told than the damning (if fascinating) narrative in the John Doe criminal indictment. But the tale is sure worth recounting - it has created a widespread courthouse joke: "Don't ever take a meeting at Dunkin' Donuts!"

There, with investigators watching and at the behest of the DA's office, the new county director of administrative services, Patrick Farley, wore a wire as Thomas munched goodies and mumbled about well-heeled Illinois contractors who always ran over costs (even though they had legitimately submitted the low bid). Later, he took \$500 in cash that he assumed was a campaign gift from the Illinois company, according to reports, swore Farley to secrecy and only then put the bid in question on the agenda of his finance committee, which allowed it to proceed to a timely vote.

At that point, Dec. 12, Thomas was quietly arrested and led the DA to the marked money at his home.

Some pundits instantly fabricated that the case against Thomas was concocted by Chris Abele, Walker's heir as county exec who had hired Farley and given him permission to talk with the DA. Well, hardly. Abele routinely approved one administrator working with another county official, the DA and knew nothing more until the John Doe details came out in February. Only then did Abele stop backing Thomas for city comptroller and call for his resignation from County Board power positions, which has now happened.

Thomas, in fact, continued to enjoy the support of Democratic Party leaders (but not the Milwaukee Area

**Chisholm** continued Page 8

## Bringing facts to light at GE

**C**lint Eastwood and the Chrysler commercial ("It's halftime in America," applauding the path forward in jobs and resurgence of the US auto industry) drew the most talk after the Super Bowl and some shockingly close-minded criticisms from the right-wing given Clint's staunch independence and conservative credentials).

But the second most talked about a commercial was GE promoting the rebirth of manufacturing and the effort to bring such jobs to America. It produced no right-wing backlash and was also pretty darn clever counter programming, since the unhappy national headlines GE had been making was how as corporation it had long used loopholes to avoid paying any income tax - a statistic that was making the sort of waves any corporation must hate.

Now GE has to own up to similar behavior in Wisconsin, thanks to a detailed analysis in the "Who Does Not Pay Taxes" newsletter from the Institute for Wisconsin's Future. The institute is a fair player, pointing out that, much like the sales pitch in its commercials, this major Wisconsin manufacturer of medical-imaging equipment is "a good employer for an estimated 3,000 state workers, a boon to many communities and a stimulus for high-tech development/"

And then IWF laid down the hard news -- zeroes. That's what GE

**GE** continued Page 4

## Labor tactics turning Apple sour

**M**ore horrors keeping coming out to upset users of Apple products and admirers of the late Steve Jobs, certainly one of the most creative entrepreneurs of new technology but also a master manipulator of American consumers. All who enjoy iPhones, iPads and the like now realize Apple marketed them by emphasizing lowball costs as well as attractive design and intuitive technology, quietly imposing repressive and dangerous systems on foreign workers that no American citizen with a conscience can countenance.

Few of his right-wing admirers now recount how back in 2009 President Obama met with Jobs, praised Apple's innovations and lobbied him hard to bring Apple jobs back to America from China and other overseas factories. Jobs blew him off.

Now, nearly three years later, the truth about his operations are pouring out -- a Chinese serf-labor system (so acknowledged by liberal and conservative investigators) involved in creating Apple products like iPads, iPhones and Kindles.

It turns out many of the workers churning out millions of the devices in unendurable conditions at Foxconn and other factories are also forced laborers as young as 16.

The Hong Kong-based Students and Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior (SACOM) says, "Legions of vocational and university students, some as young as 16, are forced to take months-long 'internships' in Foxconn's mainland China factories assembling Apple products." China Business News found that in some Foxconn factories, which employ

1.3 million people in China, up to 50% of the workforce were students.

Alternet and others report that schools teaching journalism, hotel management and nursing threatened students with failure if they did not take a factory position.

(Such outcries forced Apple on Feb. 12 to announce a reversal of its years of resistance to outside inspections, saying it would hire an outside company to look into its methods in China. Critics are not satisfied with this delayed promise.)

Apple's formula for mammoth profits, which topped \$13 billion last quarter, depends upon a steady supply of forced laborers who are put through a torturous training to accustom them to the factory working conditions. The system of assembling and polishing Apple devices has also produced injuries and even death.

To meet production goals, Foxconn relies on "military-style management...on the shop floor," according to more reports. Workers say "military training" starts during the recruitment phase, such as being forced to stand in the sun for hours with no water. In Chengdu, some workers claimed that for up to one month before work began they had to line up in formation and "stand still as a soldier for hours." Even the China Daily reported that the state-controlled Shenzhen Federation of Trade Unions said Foxconn has a "quasi-military management system." According to scholars as well as business pub-

**Apple** continued Page 4

# IAM gala haunted by unhappy Cranes

On the surface it was a gala celebration of union survival as hundreds crowded into the Wyndham Hotel ballroom January 28 for dinner, dancing and induction of all top officers of lodges affiliated with the District 10 of IAM (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers).

General Vice President Richard Michalski was on hand to induct strings of new members, applaud the unions on their recall campaigning and speak glowingly about the future of new technology jobs after his meetings in Washington with leaders of both parties.

But around the fringes of the festive event was anxiety and even anger. Clusters of diners and drinkers chattered about the recent losses for the 200 or so machinists at Manitowoc Cranes, who had partly but notably capitulated to company demands and ended a widely applauded 10-week strike.

The overwhelming strike vote (180 to 12) late last year

was not over the financial accord in the new IAM contract - everyone accepted those stringencies -- but over the company's insistence on creating an open shop, playing up to a tiny minority of its workers by demanding an annual 30 day opening each year to decertify the union.

On December 10 a thousand sympathetic workers flooded to Manitowoc to support the strike.

The Milwaukee Area Labor Council passed the hat several times raising more than \$1,400. Thousands of more dollars came pouring in from similar impromptu events by other unions, including machinist colleagues. All recognized the hardships and how the company was staying in business by bringing in temporary workers to keep the plant going. The strike could be a long hard haul for families facing a cold rural winter.

Family hunger and the corporate intransigence took their toll by late January. The IAM workers agreed - in a difficult 112-59 vote- to end the strike by



Diners pause to listen as International IAM Vice President Richard Michalski swears in new lodge inductees during the installation fete at the Wyndham Hotel.



**TOP:** Being served dinner and sharing a laugh are AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale and International IAM guest, VP Richard Michalski.

**BELOW:** At a nearby table were business representative Benito Elizondo (left) and District 10 host Scott Parr.

**BOTTOM:** Packed serving bars gave way to raffles and dancing.



accepting an only slightly better deal. The company sweetened the offer with a \$250 signing bonus and reduced the recertification time frame to an unlikely seven day opt-out.

The dispute and the outcome held foreboding lessons for all private sector unions, which interpreted it as part of a concerted attack on organized labor that leaders at the Wyndham were prepared for and determined to keep from spreading to other manufacturing workforces.

The Manitowoc machinists had already agreed to the financial terms in the deal. The company was holding out for an item aimed at breaking the union though only less than 2% of the workers wanted to bust the IAM. Glen Tellock, CEO of parent corporation Manitowoc Co. -- as did the previous CEO, Terry Growcock -- sits on the board of directors of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, so it no stretch that the union regards this as a harbinger of difficult days ahead in private manufacturing.

That is why, while there is human sympathy with the workers' families, the decertification clause still hurts.

"A window is still a window," lamented one machinist. "Big business wins because we won't let children starve."

"They catered to the Walker philosophy and the wishes of less than 2% of the workforce," said another worker. "I think we just decided we're dealing with a bad company and they won't gain a conscience because we're suffering."

Machinists' leaders point out what the company calls symbolic is also a rather hollow victory for big business. "When you look at the size of the resistance, a seven-day window to opt out

won't change things," said Scott Parr, the new IAM representative on the labor council board. "But still, you hate to see any opening."

It was also clear from conversations at the Wyndham that the machinists are more than ready for another fight should companies try to impose the open shop concept on any number of its strongly union supporting workforces.

"There is no financial benefit for them even when they win," noted one District 10 leader. "All they reinforce is media focus on their personal profits not their workforce growth."

-- Dominique Paul Noth



GE Medical Systems union leader and MALC board member Larry Nunley at the event.

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# Despite year of harsh attacks unions hold or increase members

Union leaders predicted losses in membership in 2011 based on the savage corporate attacks on union representation, Republican stubbornness in Congress to any worker supportive legislation that might aid the re-election of President Obama and the broad decimation of public worker employment that has taken hundreds of thousands of jobs across the company and in Wisconsin eliminated thousands of jobs while forcing early retirement throughout the public workforce.

Yet in the face of all that came surprising official statistics from the US Department of Labor that unions had maintained their membership levels in 2011 and in some categories even grown slightly.

A deeper analysis by the AFL-CIO revealed that 14.8 million people were in unions in 2012. Overall union membership increased by 49,000, including 15,000 new 16- to 24-year-old members. But an increase of 110,000 in the private sector was partially offset by a decline of 61,000 in the public sector.

The Department of Labor itself determined that the unionization rate of employed wage and salary workers was 11.8%, essentially unchanged from 11.9% in 2010. It also confirmed that among private sector employees, the rate remained at 6.9% despite the corporate pressures for decertification.

Several things are clear, noted AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. "Despite an unprecedented volley of partisan political attacks on workers' rights and the continuing insecurity of our economic crisis, it is telling that union membership increased slightly last year," he



Labor Secretary Hilda Solis, whose US department is responsible for gathering and reporting the statistics on union membership.

said.

"As our country begins to recover the jobs lost during the Great Recession, good union jobs are beginning to come back.

"The ability to come together for a voice on the job gives working people the power to solve workplace problems, to innovate on the job, and to improve their working conditions. Working men and women want to come together to improve their lives: That's the message."

The Department of Labor provides some detailed analysis that is also quite revealing.

"The data also show that among full-time wage and salary workers, the median weekly earnings of union members were \$938, compared to \$729 for non-union workers," its analysis reported. "Union women earned median weekly earnings of \$879, an amount 34.6% higher than their nonunion counterparts, who earned just \$653 by comparison.

"Prior reporting shows that union members have greater

access to health care, retirement and leave benefits. Today's numbers make it clear that union jobs are critical to a strong economy."

Noted Labor Secretary Hilda Solis in releasing the report on union membership:

"Ensuring that all people have a voice at work and protecting their right to organize and bargain collectively are essential for an America that's built to last, where everyone gets a fair shot, everyone pays his or her fair share and everyone plays by the same rules."

Related news material from the US Department of Labor is accessible at [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

Further breakdowns of the numbers reveal:

Public sector union density actually increased from 36.2% in 2010 to 37.0% in 2011 despite the assaults on public sector jobs.

The largest increases in union membership were in construction, health care services, retail trade, primary metals and fabricated metal products, hospitals, transportation and warehousing.

## Calendar

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

### Wednesday, February 29

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

### Wednesday, March 7

**Monthly Delegate Meeting**  
**Post-Primary COPE Additions**  
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

### Thursday to Saturday, March 29-31

**Art in Protest**  
Workshops, performances inspired by Madison at Pyle Center, 702 Langdon St.

### Tuesday, April 3

**General Election**  
Polls open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

### Wednesday, April 4

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



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## Apple From Page 1

lications, managers concede their management style is militaristic. Vocational schools force their students into Apple slavery because they get a huge cut: While students receive less than \$80 a month for working 11 hours a day, seven days a week, "over the course of a year, 500 students could net a school more than a million US dollars in income."

Other reports have uncovered the rules at factories such as Foxconn. Employees live in dormitories eight to a room. Often roommates won't know each other's names. One worker described assembling a part 5,200 times a day. Employees can work 35 hours straight and until recent publicity were paid 31 cents an hour - terrible even by Chinese wage standards.

A growing number of workers are killing themselves, or trying to. The company installed nets around buildings to try and

catch "jumpers." And, if Foxconn workers try to improve their dire working and living conditions by seeking to join a union, they get 12-year prison sentence.

Often, corporate apologists in industrialized nations will counter that low wages paid to workers in developing nations are justifiable because cost of living is lower. But another study, also in the Alternet report, refutes that claim. Migrant workers at the "iFactories" in the Shenzhen Province, even with overtime, are paid 47% of what city residents earned and that amounted to only two-thirds of the living wage calculated by studies.

Alternet writer Aryn Gupta also makes the connection that a nation whose political policy endorses low-wage labor is one that also seeks to cut off workers' voices by choking their unions.

The use of hundreds of thousands of students is one way that

China regulates labor in the interests of Foxconn and Apple. Other measures include banning independent unions and enforcing a household registration system that denies migrants social services and many political rights once they leave their home region, ensuring they can be easily exploited.

Just because success has exposed Apple's foreign methods does not mean that other major technological manufacturers don't have similar problems.

But none of this is easy to uncover. Even if you want to pick up your iPhone and call Apple to complain about this outsourcing and treatment of workers, reporters say, it is hard to find anyone who admits it's happening or accepts the authority to step in.

-- Labor Press using material from Tula Connell, AFL-CIO blog editor.



IWF's Jack Norman (left, with Sen. Chris Larson) listens to fellow economist Dean Baker at a recent event.

## GE From Page 1

has paid in state corporate income tax back to 2003, at a time when a smidgen of revenue sure would have helped citizens out. The parent conglomerate - General Electric Corporation - made \$109 billion in profits during the period when it paid \$0 of Wisconsin corporate income tax.

Suspicious fiscal analysts who don't know the care of IWF's financial reporting might wonder if at least some GE subsidiaries kicked in to the state coffers. Research maven Jack Norman, who directs research for IWF and often speaks publicly about Wisconsin's economic issues at forums, checked it all out -- and sure enough:

Not one penny from its Medical Systems to its huge financial business, GE Capital Services, to its media darling NBC Universal. And now, thanks to new legislation signed into law by Gov. Walker in 2011, the official 7.9% income tax rate on corporations is in effect being slashed to 0.4% by 2017, allowing GE unless it grows a conscience to face a tax free future in the state.

The conscience wars are getting pretty hot. On one side GE has a lot of money to lavish on expensive and convincing commercials. But now those have to compete with grassroots innovation. That hit GE in late January when a large delegation of unemployed and underemployed people, military veterans, and those facing the loss of

healthcare descended on the GE Medical Systems plant in Wauwatosa demanding the company pay its fair share.

GE was also a targeted as thousands marched to D.C. to speak out in the "Take Back the Capitol" action. "I didn't fight for my country so GE and the rest of the 1% could avoid taxes," said one D.C. traveler, Wayne Olson of Wausau.

The Wauwatosa rally to the ironically named company headquarters at 9900 W. Innovation Drive was organized by Wisconsin Jobs Now.

Unions, whose members are employed by GE, admitted sympathy with the protest but did not help organize it because of contractual obligations, said one leader. They have their own fights with GE on benefit cuts and employment levels.

Labor Press has a deal with the IWF to early publish its news-breaking newsletters online, where you will find the GE information with art in the Take Action section of milwaukeekeelabor.org. There are not only absorbing facts but a Q&A that explores how GE can do this, with some interesting commentary:

"GE says it's doing nothing illegal, that it's merely obeying existing tax laws. But the company is known as a tenacious lobbyist working hard to create the tax laws needed to avoid paying its fair share. If the laws of Wisconsin allow GE to legally avoid a significant obligation, then the tax laws should be changed."

-- Dominique Paul Noth

## Official Notice

Nominations for executive board and committee positions for United Steelworkers Local 2-232 will be held at a membership meeting 9:30 a.m. Sunday, March 18, in Yatchak Hall, the building that also houses the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Positions up for nomination are president, vice president, recording secretary, financial secretary treasurer; Also guide, sergeant at arms, trustee at large, Briggs trustee, Strattec trustee; Grievance committee repre-

sentative, Briggs bargaining committee (2 positions), Strattec grievance representative, and Strattec bargaining committee (2 positions).

This busy slate will lead to final elections for three-year terms in April.

Ralph Schwieger,  
Financial Secretary  
Treasurer

## More IWF research available

IWF continues to produce lastounding and important information.

One new full color six page report is called "The Price of Extremism: Wisconsin's economy under the Walker administration," which summarizes how much money is now out of circulation because of state policies and provides breakdowns for each community.

The IWF is making copies available at low cost (covering printing and postage) for groups. Simply email [iwf@wisconsinfuture.org](mailto:iwf@wisconsinfuture.org) or call (414) 967-1682.

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# Rep. Toles reveals departure to delegates

Highs and lows filled the February 1 monthly delegate meeting. A number of supported candidates stopped by to provide eloquent and brief thank-yous and calls for support from the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, which that weekend launched its door to door campaign on behalf of the chosen.

But the moment was preceded by an emotional and sad announcement from state Rep. Barbara Toles, a Milwaukee Democrat and proud member of AFT Local 212, who came to Serb Hall to first announce some important news to "the people who have had my back."

Toles described the personal reasons why she has decided, after completing her term (until the end of this year), not to run for re-election in the November contest. To the groans of dismay from the crowd, and from her own constituents in the room, including Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Cochran, she fought down her own emotions to describe how much she had enjoyed standing up for the working roots from which she came but realized, in her mid fifties, it was time to move on to new challenges.

Toles never mentioned what few in the crowd actually knew.

**RIGHT:** A leader of worker issues in the Assembly, Barbara Toles explained her departure and her feelings for unions as MALC President Willie D. Ellis smiled in the background.

A noted teacher at MATC she had actually taken a major pay cut to serve in the Assembly. While her focus on specific bills --- such as eliminating special rights for police officers under criminal charge -- drew applause (but bizarre reversal by the GOP majority), Toles has also walked through media attacks no one understood and stuck to her guns, at considerable personal pain.

There were also powerful spontaneous speeches from candidates. Hannah Dugan, running for judge and having just participated in a judicial forum at the downtown Milwaukee Bar Association, gave a brief impressive chat about her surprise and honor at the endorsement, particularly since, as she emphasized, judges don't cater to any side but just go honestly after the issues. But she recalled her experience working on labor issues and as a mediator in urging community support in the April 3 election for Branch 23 of the Milwaukee County Circuit Court.

Dugan was judiciously diplomatic compared to laser elo-



quent anger of Eyon Biddle, who explained why he was abandoning a completely safe supervisor seat and \$50,000 in salary to run uphill against "the second most powerful man in the city," Willie Hines, alderman in District 15 and also Common Council president.

Pounding away at the high unemployment in Hines' district, the conditions of the neighbor-

hoods and homes, the current alderman's "status as absentee landlord" hanging out with developers lining their own pockets, Biddle said it was "past time" to take action.

"You can't care about these people and stand by," he said. "Someone has to have the testicular fortitude to get involved."

At least half the room got his meaning.

Other candidates facing opponents April 3 but armed with labor backing were supervisors Peggy Romo West and Theo Lipscomb, who also expressed their thanks and desire for mobilization in neighborhoods.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



Candidate Theo Lipscomb described the difficulties he expects in a new district now encompassing River Hills.



Candidates provided stylistic contrasts suitable to their contests -- Eyon Biddle, feisty in an underdog campaign, Hannah Dugan direct and thoughtful in her April 3 run for circuit judge.



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# Unions fight ugly corporate weapon – the lockout

As you read this, locked out workers from across America have begun a thousand mile march through several states, including Wisconsin, to call attention to a revitalized tactic in the corporate armament to break unions and increase personal profits, though not corporation ability to add family supporting jobs.

More than six months ago, American Crystal Sugar Co. locked out more than 1,300 sugar beet workers in the Red River Valley of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Two months ago, Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. locked out more than 1,000 workers in Findlay, Ohio.

In February, Caterpillar - yes, now a major Milwaukee employer with the takeover of Bucyrus International -- announced it would shut down a plant in Ontario, just over one month after locking out 500 workers there. Rio Tinto Alcan locked out 750 workers in Quebec Jan. 1. HealthBridge locked out 800 nursing home workers in Connecticut in December.

As Laura Clawson at the Daily Kos notes, "For evidence of a war on workers, look no further than the rise of the lockout."

The noted veteran labor reporter for the New York Times, Steven Greenhouse, provided a detailed analysis of this trend recently, noting that the number of strikes has dropped precipitously in the past two decades while lockouts now "represent a record percentage of the nation's work stoppages."

Greenhouse quotes Professor Gary Chaison of Clark University, who said: "This is a sign of increased employer militancy. Lockouts were once so rare they were almost unheard of. Now, not only are employers increasingly on the offensive and trying to call the shots in bargaining, but they're backing that up with action in the form of lockouts."

Even the threat of the lockout tactic works. Manitowoc Cranes did not throw the big bomb of lockout with permanent replacement workers when the machinists went on strike, but they stayed in operation by hiring temporary workers, holding out the carrot that when the strike was settled, the temps would depart and 200 jobs would return. The looming concept of lockout worked and the strike was settled in January.

But now unions and allies are fighting back against this war on workers - and sympathet-

ic union and non-union people dismayed by the trend are being asked to join.

That's why, launched Feb. 22, locked-out workers from American Crystal Sugar Co. and Cooper Tire & Rubber Co. will start a 1,000-mile journey across America's heartland. They expect to be joined by sympathizers.

They will visit six states in six days, taking part in rallies, fundraisers and other actions with local union members and allies. Locked-out workers will take their message to supporters -- and call out the perpetrators of the war on workers.

Called "From Fargo to Findlay: A Journey for Justice" this is a joint project of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) and the United Steelworkers (USW), whose Milwaukee members are leading the defense of their members at Cooper Tires.

It starts with a rally in Fargo, N.D., and will make stops in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana, before concluding in Findlay, Ohio.

For workers making the Journey, the message is simple: They want to keep their union, and they want to go back to work.



USW locals around the nation, including Milwaukee, have been holding rallies and roadside displays supporting locked out workers at Cooper Tires.

As Paul Woinarowicz, a BCTGM member who has worked for Crystal Sugar for 34 years, told Greenhouse, the lockout was "just another way of trying to break the union . . . It was

just like a knife stuck in your heart."

USW in Milwaukee is organizing a rally in support of the Cooper workers and the journey.

## Bowling

### Milwaukee Area Labor Council

#### Mixed Senior Bowling

#### JANUARY 2012 RESULTS

#### TEAM WINS

#### LOSSES

ONE BOARD OVER 80  
60

8 BALLS	76	64
SLAMMERS	69	71
GUTTER RATS	66	74
PIN PALS	65	75
CRAZY 8'S	64	76

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 470

DAN LAACK	610
DON WIEDMANN	588
DEL GROSS	532

JOHN PADRON	471
WALLY GEISE	471
GREG MARTIN	471
<u>IND. HIGH GAME OVER 160</u>	
DAN LAACK	217
DON WIEDMANN	208
DEL GROSS	200
JOHN PADRON	193
EUGENE HERRICK	169
GREG MARTIN	166

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400

EEILEEN WESTERFIELD	518
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	506
JOYCE KNIPPEL	462
RAE MATOWSKI	446

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 140

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	194
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	193
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# Recalls are far from only about Scott Walker

Scott Walker is hardly the only recall game in Wisconsin. In fact, there is pressure to move the races involving four Senate seats along faster, since far less petitions were required and it is becoming ever more clear that the margin of "throw the rascals out" is unassailable. The state Democratic Party, for one, is urging speedy elections.

Thousands of extra signatures were turned in and most observers concede that in three races the GOP incumbents have become desperate, trying to challenge signatures by asking the courts to accept new redistricting maps. Such maps would bring in GOP leaning voters who had never been part of these contests before. The courts have already rejected the idea, and even the US Supreme Court has handed down a decision against the concept. It is also a sign that the incumbents know that thousands of extra valid signatures were submitted in each case.

Sen. Scott Fitzgerald is trying the same thing in the fourth race, District 13 in the Dodge and Jefferson counties. That is the only seat that previously was held by a Republican and no known politician has announced in opposition. While Fitzgerald is also arguing for redistricted votes, he has a heftier war chest and deep-bench legal team questioning the thousands of extra signatures for little slipups more than serious violations. The Democratic Party examining the same signatures suggests he simply doesn't know the election law, but it goes deeper. As senate majority leader, as reports out of Madison keep making clear, Fitzgerald thought he and his lawyers could write election law on the fly, and may be trying to again.

The Walker race is statewide, so district boundaries play no part, and another part of the process is different as well. Walker is banking on the glitch in the election law that allows him to raise unlimited corporate

contributions until a finale is upon him -- and already most of the money is coming from outside the state via networks of right-wing corporate giving.

The Government Accountability Board, mainly for issues of cost and convenience, would like all these recalls to be coordinated around the same dates, but Walker's money fever raises the likelihood of delays and legal challenges that may prove an unconscionable running out the clock on justice, which could also cause unseemly stalls in the district senate races on the books.

In three of the four races as we went to press, strong seasoned opponents of the Republican incumbents have been announced, and all these districts were, before the blitzkrieg of 2010, in Democratic hands.

Rep. Donna Seidel (D-Wausau) - a personable leader in the Assembly -- will challenge incumbent Pam Galloway, also of Wausau. A former Democratic member of the Assembly, Kristen Dexter, is already opening offices to take on Terry Moulton of Chippewa

**RIGHT:** It might look like Madison a year ago but no, this was January 2012 when one million recall signatures were turned in against the governor and nearly a million more against the lieutenant governor and four GOP state senators.

- Photo by Ken Greening

Falls;. And in the senate race closest to Milwaukee, a veteran and former senators John Lehman, (D-Racine) will seek a rematch of his 2010 race against Van Wanggaard, which he only lost by a few thousand votes.

Though no one has announced against Fitzgerald, Lori Compas is fielding a lot of pressure to announce by the end of February. She is the political novice who without Democratic Party help organized the recall drive against Fitzgerald and won a lot of fans with her determination and spontaneity. Many in the region think that a political unknown who speaks for the people is precisely the quantity Fitzgerald is not prepared for, which may also explain the rumors that she is the union choice, a viewpoint that flabbergasted her and the area's few union locals.

-- D.P.N.



Rep. Donna Seidel (shown at a Milwaukee convention) is definitely running for state senate, as is Kristen Dexter (top right), a former Democratic representative. Now fans are trying to recruit Lori Compas (bottom right), a political novice whose ideas and energy inspired sufficient recall signatures against Scott Fitzgerald.



Apparently some wishful thinking going on in Madison on January 17.



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# Chisholm

From Page 1

Labor Council, which refused to endorse him -- another pointed difference with Democratic establishment decisions). He rather bizarrely continued to collect nomination signatures and participate in candidate events after his first secret arrest, only withdrawing in February. In effect the field is left to his opponent, the current assistant city comptroller, Marty Matson.

All of which demonstrates that Chisholm knows how to keep everyone's mouth shut when he wants to.

But the Internet was still abuzz over why Thomas would behave so naively. Supporters insist it is a sign of his innocence. Others see it as belief in how his own low-level invisibility was small potatoes compared to the bigger game under investigation. It is a weird view to expect the public to put a payday price on corruption - \$500 a pittance not to be bothered with compared to the thousands involved in other cases. But has



Logically, candidate for elected county comptroller Scott Manske outlines the strict existing rules that were avoided in the Thomas incident.



Curiously, Thomas (top right) was collecting nomination signatures at union gatherings and participating in candidate events after the first secret arrest by the DA's office.

the concept of personal integrity fallen that far?

As an aside, Farley surely knows the John Doe ropes. His friends include DA aides since he once was one. He also worked for Gov. Doyle and was caught up in the Travelgate probe when Bush's US attorney convicted Georgia Thompson, only Steve Biskupic got slapped down for prosecutorial excess by a federal appeals court that exonerated Thompson, Doyle and company.

A further aside. The only rough connection to the Walker incident is that the prosecutor who tried to get Thompson and interviewed Farley back then - Biskupic - is one of the three expert grand jury criminal lawyers Walker has hired to defend him in the John

Doe probe. (Ah, the wheels within wheels that fuel the Internet!)

This report mentions Coggs reluctantly since Chisholm was not involved, it was the state Equal Rights Division that routinely fielded the campaign corruption complaint and the media was caught in a conundrum when that story got the same size headlines as the John Doe cases. Which is quite absurd.

In fact, the accusation against Coggs was quickly refuted, dismissed a day after it was reported. Everyone knew from the start that it stemmed from an employee fired in downsizing who had also had a soured romantic affair with a longtime Coggs aide (who has now resigned, probably in embarrass-

ment).

Given the known background story and the source, veteran reporters wondered why this ever got play in the first place. But Coggs is a state senator who once ran for lieutenant governor and is now one of four candidates for city treasurer in the Feb. 21 primary.

He is certainly an ambitious figure from a known political family with strong roots in the African American community, but in 20 years of covering him I had never heard a breath of scandal, nor had his neighbors or even his opponents.

An angry politically savvy Coggs went on the attack, saying on talk radio that the timing of the stories combined with the Thomas coverage, whether inadvertent, smelled of suppressing the black votes and indirectly benefited those defending Walker who see corruption in every black candidates running.

I question the respected Coggs ever linking in the public's mind his case with l'affaire Thomas, because I think the voters can make the distinction.

But I also sympathize with Coggs' anger. Corruption is a nasty word. How do you ever un-ring this bell?

But let's unring another fabrication making the rounds from the right wing, apparently determined to deflect attention from Walker, from the secret legal deals in Madison around redistricting and make it seem that Milwaukee (not Madison) is the seat of corruption. It does feel like they are pounding on this with jackboots. Their leaders are now saying that it was careless fiscal rules in Milwaukee that allowed the Thomas case to happen and that they "fixed things" by imposing a new independently elected county comptroller to take over after April 3.

That's balderdash, even to those who support the new position. The leading candidate for the job, the current appointed county comptroller, Scott Manske, agrees that nothing in the regulation can impose integrity on those willing to be corrupted. That was true when Walker was in charge and is true from Madison to Sheboygan.

Milwaukee county already has a scrupulous fiscal process, Manske noted, requiring every bid over \$50,000 to be approved by the full County Board after moving through the appropriate committee, such as finance. The Thomas case if it is proven was a criminal act to goose campaign contributions outside an already tough procedure.

All of this is a reminder that corruption always claws back to the character and integrity of those the public elects and whether the elected officials, despite glib words and noble statements, are truly guarding the henhouse rather than finding ways to steal the eggs.

The real issue is abuse of power, and it does seem the very wildness of the Internet speculation serves as a distraction from the patient, rigorous step by step process and devices the prosecutors must employ. The public may be eager for exposure, but the path is shrewd and steady.

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Angrily, state Sen. Spencer Coggs has spoken out about the media's timing in linking a complaint from a former employee with the DA's indictment of Thomas.



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AFTIAPSCME

## Influential labor leader Cavanaugh retiring

A powerful but quiet player in Wisconsin's progressive labor movement is stepping down after decades of turning the Madison area into a dynamo for Wisconsin workers.

Jim Cavanaugh is hanging up active leadership after 25 years. His most famous roles were as president of the South Central Federation of Labor. Along with the Milwaukee Area Labor Council it is the state's most effective AFL-CIO federation and similarly noted for inviting all unions and affiliates to climb



Jim Cavanaugh

aboard, AFL-CIO or not.

Cavanaugh has also served as editor of Union Labor News, the influential monthly whose contents can also be found at [www.scfl.org](http://www.scfl.org)

Quietly he has also been a voice in national union politics and reorganization, inspired many people rallying in Madison last winter in the outrage over Gov. Scott Walker and has been a

driving force in strengthening the working class movement.

Cavanaugh has seen many union victories and bitter defeats in his long career, but admirers point to how his perseverance again and again led to success. He will be succeeded as president of the federation by a longtime activist for AFSCME Local 75, Kevin Gundlach, who was elected to a two-year term by the delegates to the federation, which represents some 59 unions and 27,000 area members.

Feisty even into his well-earned retirement, Cavanaugh left with a final editorial about the next step after 1 million signatures to recall Walker.

"Labor cannot afford to pursue an 'anybody but Walker' strategy. If we do and we wind up with a wimpy replacement, all the energy of last winter's Uprising and this fall and winter's petition signing will have been for naught."

## Accidental impresario

Like a Diaghilev, Walker inspires creative rebellion

Never forget the successes of Scott Walker's reign as governor of Wisconsin. His extreme attack on union bargaining rights, his refusal to let citizens partner with him on intelligent solutions to more jobs and targeted government expenditures, his defiant stubbornness in the face of common sense compromise -- all that has fueled something he never anticipated.

It is evident in the people's art, the sudden choruses, the unplanned dancing groups, flash gatherings, the theatrics, the banners and the spontaneous reaction to his edicts.

It is an outpouring of creativity from the streets that puts to shame the timid culture of the establishment and has stirred the hearts and minds of millions of citizens. Songwriters set to work, plays are being produced. There is nothing like repression to make the creative juices flow.

So Walker's success, however unintentional, is about to be celebrated in the city that became the centerpiece of the creative outrage against him: Madison.

There March 29-31 two days of exhibit, presentations and workshops will revive and celebrate the energy and impact created by Wisconsinites themselves.

"Anyone at the Capitol last year saw an amazing outpouring of emotion which people expressed through an array of art, music, crafts, even costumes," says Corliss Olson, director of the School for Workers, a division of UW-Extension, Continuing Education and Outreach E-Learning. "In a culture of consumerism that often feels everything needs to be bought, it was amazing to witness this

creativity. More importantly, this creativity needs to be celebrated, together."

Thus the school is helping organize "Art in Protest," an exchange of music, images, spoken words and art that grew out of individuals' response to what has happened to our state. Modeled after the famed Arts Exchanges held annually on the East and West coasts, artists, musicians, cinematographers, actors, poets, and others will gather each day to share their art, their craft, and their vision.

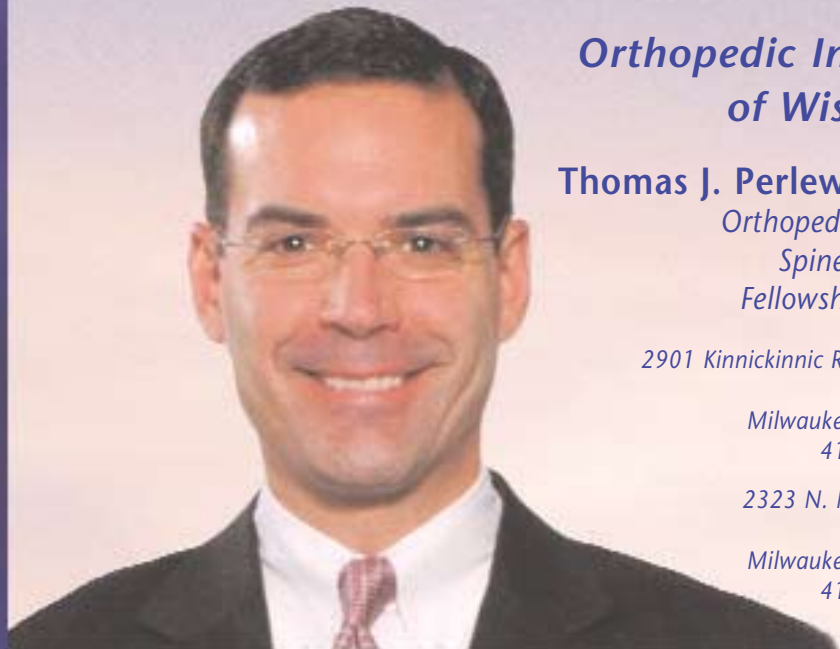
The event at the Madison Pyle Center is open to all. Registrants will be able to select from 10 workshops, including print making, theater, spoken word, film, social media and more. Each workshop will be led by a highly-skilled artist who uses that particular medium to convey a message.

Each evening's Exchanges will be the highlights. Poets, quilters, songwriters, puppeteers, sign makers and others will share their vision and inspiration behind their project.

"I've attended the Labor Arts Exchanges on both coasts," says Mike Konopacki, a nationally syndicated cartoonist and graphic artist. "This will be a great gathering of our own Midwest artists, sharing their work and their creativity."

Konopacki, is helping promote the event. In fact, the School for Workers is joined by the Labor & Working Class Studies Project, Wisconsin Labor History Society, Havens Center, Huck/Konopacki Labor Cartoons and many others in sponsoring "Art in Protest."

For information or to register, contact [schoolforworkers@uwex.edu](mailto:schoolforworkers@uwex.edu) or call (608) 262-2112.



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# Walker's own actions open past whispers to probe

By **Dominique Paul Noth**  
Labor Press Editor

**B**ig money will buy big fibs and there is no bigger making the rounds in 49 states than Scott Walker pitching fibbery to right-wing donors, such as the ones about how only the unions are against him and that the Milwaukee investigations have nothing to do with him. (49 states because Walker would not dare to pull this line in Wisconsin. Badgers know the stench of snake oil.)

Now let's try to be more responsible than Walker has been in his PR tour. There are no-no areas for journalists in attacking the governor and his minions. Judging by other blogs and pundits pursuing the hidden stories in the John Doe probe slowly encircling the governor, it is a caution routinely violated.

But it is still a fine line this columnist adheres to. It recognizes how often people rise above quitting college or being charged with a crime - and how often and too easily the public and the media ridicule people for something that is normally not our business unless it breaks the law, such as private sexual behavior.

**S**o the normal no-nos in this story about Scott Walker ought to be: He is a college dropout, he often hires homosexuals and sometimes that includes people who previously ran afoul of the law. None by themselves a cause for condemnation. If only they were by themselves -- and that is the problem.

The pundits have noted, and I will not dwell, on the fact that a longtime Walker aide and a key name in a series of criminal charges, Tim Russell, has a male domestic and business partner also indicted -- with Russell

connected in the tale -- on charges of child enticement involving a 17 year old youth and an email roundelay around the screen name "Walker 04." Strange, yes, but clearly a John Doe sideshow. Corruption, not sex, is the main target.

Several names in the John Doe probe are or were Walker's key staff and administrative appointments to campaign, county and state government duties and have homosexual lifestyles. The numbers are far beyond average and way beyond typical Republican policy. (Have you been paying attention to the virulently anti-gay Republican presidential debates?) But I will not spell out who if they are not so identified in official documents.

The hiring of people for ability not sexual preference is not only required under law but also could be regarded as commendable for a Republican leader.

**B**ut is that what was going on? Or did their lifestyles in a conservative environment make them particularly vulnerable or overly grateful and loyal to Walker? Were they prone to do his bidding? Given the combination of questionable ability and dubious treatment of the law involved, this has now become fair game for inquiry.

Citizens know case after case of people who dropped out of college for all sorts of reasons, from Bill Gates to union presidents, and went on to good careers, so it is ridiculous to attack that. Unless later behavior reflects disturbing patterns.

Ditto people who broke the law or even went to prison. So many have found the way out of drugs, bad environment or other issues to rehabilitate and redeem. In fact, unions are famous for giving people a second chance,

## Comment

so don't look for criticism here of the basic concept -- unless subsequent behavior or the reasons for the hiring in the first place open the door.

**B**lutly put, these are the doubts that now surround the governor, creating the moniker Walkergate and opening up to legitimate journalistic and judicial speculation the suasions we now gingerly step into.

Walker's college behavior has become a legitimate issue based on patterns and motivations. I have written about Walker dropping out of Marquette University as a senior, but only in the context of what his behavior then reveals about his practices now. The John Doe deepens the connection.

One example stems from charges when he ran for student council president and the campus newspaper eventually wrote an editorial headlined "Walker Unfit to Govern" based on his attacking an opponent in private that he treated well in public and blaming violations of campaign rules on uncontrollable followers who he said ignored his instructions as opposed to carrying them out. (Sound familiar?)

It's also amusing how he now relies on privacy rules, the sort of imposition by US regulations that he so often attacks. But these are his lone shield from press inquiries into his school record. I've never thought it was the grades he was hiding but the disciplinary records from some of his antics.

**A**s to hiring people with past brushes with the law, the way Walker did it smacks of waving a flag in front of a bull.

Unions generally support the existing law that gives corporations a pass on accusations of employment discrimination if they refuse to hire an ex-felon for a job similar to the original offense (the classic example being a pedophile applying to drive a school bus). That reflects common sense. Walker clearly discounted all that in the duties assigned his hires. He apparently

chose some because of those past failures.

But unions and principled religious leaders fiercely oppose the repugnant SB 207 floating around the legislature that would let companies refuse to hire any former felon for any job. (The right-wing philosophy behind this bill is falsely justified by arguing that former felons can claim discrimination when denied a job they are not qualified for. There is little proof this happens but SB 207 sure would take fairness out of the thinking of corporations.)

But the basic existing rule is a good one - to not tempt people with duties similar to what got them into trouble in the first place.

**S**o what did Walker do? Kelly Rindfleisch, now facing multiple charges in the John Doe for illegally blending campaign work on county time, using a secret private email network just feet from Walker's inner sanctum at the Courthouse, was similarly a target in the infamous GOP caucus scandal years ago in Madison. Walker knew all about that; he was then in the Assembly.

Russell apparently set up the email network and hired her. Rindfleisch just showed up in Walker's suite without the knowledge of the chief of staff. All that raises several questions. How could Walker not know and who else was similarly hired? Indicted Russell, the longtime Walker friend and factotum, was also the front man in Walker's Harley "tourism" tours and his 2004 promotion of the Bush

### No Waiting for Exposés

The timelines and players of the John Doe probe into Walker's operations are already detailed on the Net and despite their partisan nature surprisingly thorough.

**One Wisconsin Now** has launched a slide show and stories at part of [www.WalkergateFiles.com](http://www.WalkergateFiles.com). Even bolder graphics and commentary are part of the **Wisconsin Democrats'** [walkerinvestigation.com](http://walkerinvestigation.com),

presidential campaign disguised as a veterans' event.

Stranger, in an uncovered John Doe email, Walker orders Russell - now in a different building and not connected officially to the campaign - to end the use of illegal laptops and websites (that's when [scottforgov.com](http://scottforgov.com) and its comments disappeared) after a fired and now convicted aide confessed to the practice.

Russell is also accused of stealing funds from political candidates but a recent news story revealed that back in 1993 he was similarly accused of taking money from WHED, a state related organization.

**T**hese John Does always operate by reeling in small fish first allowing the whales in their sights to pretend surprise. These anecdotes are becoming the smoking guns that wrap Walker up among the smoked fishes.

Some pretty big names along with Walker could be exposed in the still unfolding questions. Was Rindfleisch expected to emulate her Madison behavior? Who told Russell to set up the email network? Who paid for it? What county business was intermingled with campaign business on the secret network, and how many money and land deals were involved? How close was this county operation to his state government?

**W**as Walker simply duped as he is likely to claim in interviews with the DA or was he looking for some sort of edge with people whose word would always be questioned because of their private or past proclivities?

His supporters expect the accused to stonewall knowing the GOP will never again hire snitches. But if they don't talk, they could face years in prison. So the squeeze is on.

Since we are in the realm of speculation, some care should be taken and ethics should not be parked in a corner. But neither should the human brain be parked in the corner and thinkers can't avoid how the logical connections just keep crowding in on the governor.

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# Twinkies trouble

By Mark Gruenberg  
Press Associates Inc.

**K**ensington, Md. -- The Bakery Workers (BCTGM), the Teamsters and other unions representing Hostess Foods employees scrambled to protect their members as the snack food company filed for bankruptcy in January.

It was the company's second bankruptcy filing in the 21st century. The recent filing, like that in 2004, could affect some 5,500 BCTGM workers at 34 Hostess plants nationwide, union president Frank Hurt said. The Teamsters represent 7,500 Hostess drivers and merchandisers. Several other unions have smaller contingents at Hostess.

Hurt predicted his members would be harmed by whatever the federal bankruptcy judge in New York City permits the firm's owners - mostly a group of venture capitalists - to do. "Those with the gold make the rules," he said. "And hourly workers are left holding the bag."

The big question, Hurt said, will be if the bankruptcy court gives the reorganizers of Hostess too much leeway in cutting workers' pay, pensions and benefits and tearing up union contracts.

"I haven't heard from our attorneys to what extent the law will let them (the company's bankruptcy overseers) gut our contracts," he added. "I'm telling our members we want to keep the company in business."

(A secondary issue for consumers is the fate and possible modernization of the iconic Twinkies from the 82 year old company. But many advertisers still see a strong future in the brand and the spongy treats filled with high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, cellulose gum, polysorbate artificial flavors, preservatives and saturated fats.)

Hurt instructed his union's attorneys to get the court to order company officials "to tell us the bottom line you need to keep it in business - and let us decide whether we will work under those conditions or not."

Hostess first flagged the unions that it was headed for the financial rocks last summer, Hurt recalled. It approached the unions and told them it would stop paying the firm's share of pension plan contributions. It also wanted to cut costs by proposing "a lousy-ass" health insurance plan for the workers, he added.

**T**he Teamsters and Hurt agreed that workers' sacrifices helped Hostess emerge in 2009 from its first bankruptcy. Teamsters bakery conference director Dennis Raymond said his union "remains committed to working with all stakeholders during the bankruptcy to find a mutually agreeable solution, if possible." Hurt claims Hostess' financial problems - which have prompted the firm to stop its payment into the jointly run union-management multi-employer plan covering the industry - were the result of mismanagement.

Hostess claims its pension obligation of \$ 1 billion is too much.

"I find it deeply offensive and highly disingenuous for the company to claim its financial woes are the result of its union contracts and pension and health benefits obligations," Hurt's statement said. "We contend the company is in dire financial shape because of a string of failed business decisions made by a series of ineffective executives who have been running this company for the past decade."

"BCTGM has contracts with dozens of baking companies across the country, including Bimbo Bakeries USA, the nation's largest and most successful. The vast majority of those companies are doing just fine because they have experienced baking industry professionals managing them," he added.

BCTGM called Hostess "a longstanding participant" in the Taft-Hartley created pension fund. It said the \$1 billion simply represents Hostess' "withdrawal liability" -- the cumulative amount it would have to pay present retirees and workers when they retire if Hostess dropped out of the multi-employer plan.

Both big unions hope Hostess gets back on its feet and members retain their jobs, and will fight for that.

## Boot camp for IBEW organizers draws more than 40 to Madison

**S**ixth District members of the IBEW invaded Madison January 23 for the annual 5-day "Organizer Boot Camp," conducted by the School for Workers. About 40 business managers, organizers, and union leaders from Canada and the Midwest region focused on critical issues to strengthen and lead their locals.

IBEW International staff Jim Dahlberg, CJ King, Jeff Radjewski, and Terry Roovers joined School for Workers faculty Don Taylor to plan the class and deliver comprehensive instruction. The program also involved a number of guest presenters, including the National Labor Relations Board.

Madison-based School for Workers, a part of University of Wisconsin-Extension, is the longest-running university-based labor education program in the country. Faculty offer expert training and consulting in all areas of labor-management relations.

# Trash bags pack point for SEIU

**B**ags of labeled trash communicated the feelings of downtown Milwaukee janitors February 9 in a protest outside 789 N. Water St, the downtown office building that had refused to work with union employees and hired a clearing firm that refused to consider SEIU workers and undermined the wages and benefits they had received there and do receive at other downtown office buildings.

This fight is still in negotiations but isn't going way, vows SEIU Local 1, the union for the janitors, though less than a dozen of its workers are involved in the case. But that could be the real meaning of "an injury to one is an injury to all," the union motto.

789 N. Water is managed by Fiduciary Real Estate Development (FRED-INC.). Tenants include Cousins Subs, Heartland Advisors and the city of Milwaukee pension fund managers, all of whom are hearing from union supporters. Local 1 reported as we went to the press that it is working with the managers to solve the situation.

Solution is vital. Over the last 20 years, Milwaukee janitors have worked with building owners and cleaning companies to establish a system of fair and decent wages and health benefits. It's been a hard-fought battle that



The bags and the banners sent a message to downtown janitors.

has taken years for SEIU to raise the pay and establish health care and a safer environment. In one swoop, the hired cleaning company, Purity, is accused of trashing the system and threatening the entire Downtown market.

Local 1 member Hermalinda Quiej joined the crowd of picketers Feb. 9, which also stacked bags of trash with placards outside the building as part of the "Take Out the Trash" protest. Dozens of supporters participated in this event, which followed other rallies calling attention to the concern.

Purity Service Group, LLC, recently took over the 789 N. Water janitorial services contract paying poverty wages with no

affordable health benefits.

In contrast, union janitors make \$11 an hour with health insurance.

"It's a sad day when building owners and contractors have to undermine the modest wages and benefits package we've worked hard to get Downtown," said Pete Hanrahan, vice president of Local 1. "How cheap can you get?"

Local 1 represents over 1,000 janitors and other service workers in Milwaukee.

Nearly all major office buildings downtown are cleaned by companies that recognize SEIU Local 1 and work with the union to maintain a comfortable and safe environment.



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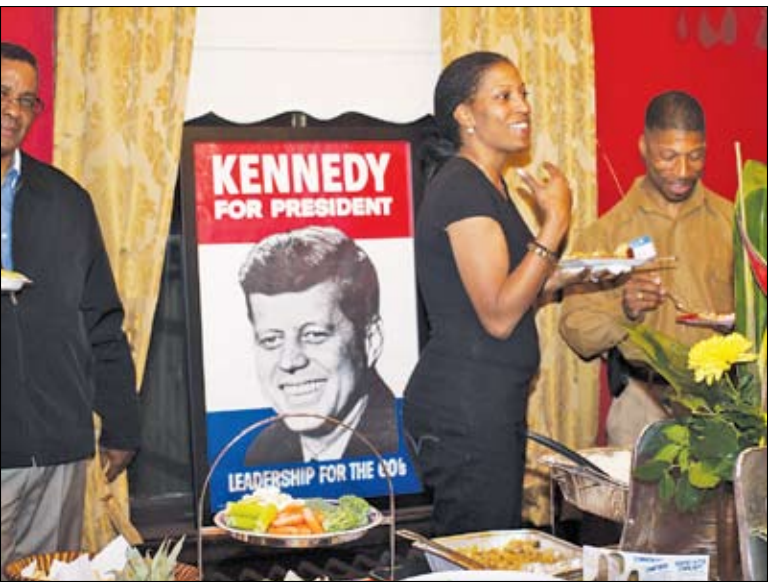
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Our February newspaper went to press after the Feb. 21 primary election. While few contests were involved, the results might affect the standings of some discussed in these articles.



## Politics on Parade

Recent months have been dominated by fund-raisers and chances to meet political candidates. Selecting from varied events caught by Labor Press camera:

**TOP LEFT:** A combination birthday party and fund raiser for David Bowen, at a home in the county District 10 where he is running for supervisor, found an original JFK 1960s poster hovering over the crowded buffet table.

**TOP RIGHT:** Flowing crowds packed Garfield 502 bar fund-raiser for Eyon Biddle as new city alderman April 3 in Willie Hines' district. Chatting at the bar (right) is Supervisor Nikiya Harris next to Bowen, labor choice to replace Biddle on the County Board.

**LEFT:** A Riverwest pub crush heard another candidate for supervisor, Tracy Corder, speaker for Emerge Wisconsin, whose women leaders encouraged her to run in District 18.



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## Facts belie Walker claims on property tax

**P**oor Scott Walker. Even the hard numbers from a nonpartisan fiscal watchdog, WISTAX, put the lie to his TV claims that his ferocious political activity had prevented higher property tax levies in Wisconsin.

Actually it hasn't, as more than a glance at most tax bills reveals. Several counties were able to freeze the school property tax levies because of Walker's legislation on both schoolteacher pay and what communities can raise in levies, but an analysis of county property tax levies around the state showed a 1.1% rise in county property tax levies. The year before Walker the rise had similarly dropped so all that fury had little impact on state taxpayers.

About one in three counties froze their levy at last year's level or reduced it, while five counties -- Bayfield, Winnebago, Marathon, Washington, and Brown -- cut taxes by 1% or more, the WISTAX press release revealed. But 14 counties raised their levy by 2% or more, while five (Crawford, Columbia, Kewaunee, Dane, and Calumet) increased taxes by more than 4% this year.

Property tax growth has moderated over the past three decades - in fact, it was cut in half, another statistical reality that underlies the lie that the state is a tax hell that needed the governor's excessive attack on what turned out to be a routine financial problem.