



# The audacity of change

State defines how nation will confront its future

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

Seesaw races among bickering partisans. Exhausting contests and tight scrambles that a few weeks later no one remembers. Wisconsin has had those in abundance.

But who would have thought a blowout would qualify as a political thriller?

That was Feb. 19 on the Democratic side. It provided textbook lessons on modern campaigning. It engaged citizens in a record turnout. It was an impressive clash of wills, styles, ideas and even ad techniques.

It became dominated by the thought and raw ferocity of one candidate, whose belief in his own vision transcended name recognition, resume and other factors treated as essential.

Sen. Hillary Clinton had collided with -- and not found an answer for -- an audacious force of nature that echoed the mood of the country. The lopsided final results reflect that she -- once considered inevitable -- is now caught in a tide of someone else's inevitability.

Her campaign "wrote off Wisconsin too early," one strategist said. Of course, she was not alone. In January most pundits thought our primary was

See Page 2 for local election results.

of little significance.

Sen. Barack Obama didn't forget. With rallies around the state to draw thousands, with enormous money raised in small clumps on the Internet, he outhustled, out-hungered and outspent his opponent four to one - never looking like he was hustling or hungry.

Clinton was outmaneuvered and outguessed as she had been in so many states.

It was not by mere charisma as she continued to try to complain. It was guts, strategy and shrewdness.

This newspaper went to press only hours after the polls closed and the state was abandoned by the traveling media and the candidates. But even at that point it became clear that Wisconsin was much more than the ninth straight win for Obama, more than keeping his mojo going.

Wisconsin emerged as the pivot, even the catalyst that leaves Clinton with little hope and under great pressure to concede (while she still has a technical chance on paper).

The Clinton mystique and



Back to back, strong speech to strong speech, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama were at the top of their game, providing the state Democrats with the biggest Founders' Gala in memory at Midwest Airlines Center. Three days later, despite predictions, Obama took the primary by an amazing 17%, putting Clinton's back to the wall. She has to run the table in Ohio, Texas and Pennsylvania just to stay statistically even.

- Labor Press photos

skill keep her in the game, combined with the possibility of backroom deals among the fifth of delegates, known as "superdelegates," who are free to vote as they will.

But it will take big wins in Texas and Ohio on March 4 and Pennsylvania in April to keep

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## This 'economic stimulus' requires an amnesia pill

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

As much as low income and middle class workers deserve the attention and finally get some money, it's misleading to call this a "stimulus." That implies moving in the right direction -- even artificially. Something like caffeine for late-night studying or adrenaline for your race horse.

But calling what Congress passed and President Bush signed an "economic stimulus" is wrongheaded. This is no tweak along the right path. This is flat-out a long-overdue reversal, and probably an insufficient one.

It's a short-term rescue that at least gives the lie to trickle down theories of economics.

Only in an election year could this be hailed as an "unusual cooperation" among warring branches of government. The unusual cooperation simply puts money in the hands of those likely to spend it as opposed to

### Comment

those who find ways to move their corporations to Dubai.

The press releases gloss over how one more vote (Sen. John McCain refused to cast it) would have overturned a GOP filibuster and created a larger stimulus that might actually succeed.

But success -- which would have cost only a fourth of what we will spend on Iraq -- was beaten down.

Cynically, Republicans in Congress figure citizens will be so happy to see \$600 from government that they will forget how the middle and lower classes have been ignored and abused for seven years.

So let's not kid ourselves that some newfound compassion for the workers has motivated the White House. Bush was scared into action by his economists and the Federal Reserve,

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## Change? She was labor's bridge

What a year to be a black man and watch barriers fall.

What a year to be a woman and see myths crumble.

But what if you are an African American AND a woman?

As those barriers and biases also fall, it is because of quiet, dignified pioneers such as Mrs. Nellie Wilson.

She inspired two generations of union workers at A.O. Smith to fight for their rights. She found jobs for thousands more in larger statewide roles. She was inspired to even broader action when she heard Martin Luther King's dream in person in D.C., confirming civil rights as a natural outgrowth of her trade unionism.

On January 23 at age 91, "God closed her eyes," as her loving family phrased it. The two daughters she first raised alone in poverty had become a minister and a teacher. She left devoted grandchildren and even great-



Nellie Wilson belied her years at the 2006 labor open house.

grandchildren, and a church congregation — Calvary Baptist Church — that relied on her advice and example.

It was a life more productive and positive than mere longevity reflects. Wilson overcame set-

backs and blatant discrimination that the women and African Americans of today can barely contemplate.

In later life, awards and recognition flooded her way from

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# Election

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close in elected delegates. Hope stirs because she is up big in all three states -- as big as she was up in Kansas and Connecticut, also states she wound up losing.

Clinton demonstrated here that she is a dynamic, assured candidate. It's no act -- she ardently wants to be president (and sounds like she'd be good at it).

Whatever derision she throws at her opponent's "words," she knows how to deliver her speechwriter's punchlines. And they have now familiar punch: Don't voters long for the best of the 1990s? Or do they want to step off a cliff with Obama?

But that warning didn't take because people were not embracing some blind vague hope but a hope embodied in a relaxed, unflappable Obama.

"Who is this whippersnapper?" -- Clinton seemed to be asking in the debates -- to question her experience and accomplishments and to interrupt the coronation expected by Super Tuesday (Feb. 5)? Was he ready to be president from "day one" (her favorite line)? The audiences took one look, heard his responses and saw that he was.

Details? Obama outlined as many programs as she did. His campaign counterpunched every move.

And she made a bad misstep -- or allowed her supporters to -- in trying to minimize or marginalize Obama's surge as a minority tempest in the Jesse Jackson mode.

That angered a number of blacks who had been in the Clinton camp because of concerns about Obama's experience. "That's not right. That could be my son," one African



American woman told me. Once they turned, there was no way she was turning them back.

At the Founders Gala Feb. 16 at Midwest Airlines Center - the biggest in the state Democrats' history -- the crowd was friendly but clearly more on her side in expectations and

T-shirts. Yet this crowd of hardly political novices cheered and applauded more for her opponent's speech.

Pollsters said her efforts had tightened up the Wisconsin race. Instead, Obama put her away with an astounding 17% margin out of more than a 1.1 million

## APRIL 1 GENERAL ELECTION

### Wisconsin Supreme Court

Incumbent **Louis Butler**

### Milwaukee County

County Executive: **Lena Taylor**.

### Circuit Court Branch 40 (open seat)

Dual Endorsement: **Rebecca Dallet** and **Jeffrey Norman**.

### Milwaukee County Board

**District 9** (opposing incumbent Paul Cesarz): **Jan Balistreri**.

**District 14** (an open seat caused by the resignation of Richard Nyklewicz): **Christopher Larson**

**District 18** (unopposed): **Johnny Thomas**

### City of Milwaukee

Mayor: **Tom Barrett** (incumbent)

Treasurer: **Wayne Whittow** (incumbent)

### Common Council

**2nd District** (unopposed): **Joe Davis** (incumbent)

**3rd District** (open seat): **Patrick Flaherty**

**4th District**: **Bob Baumann** (incumbent)

**5th District**: **Jim Bohl** (incumbent)

**7th District**: **Willie Wade** (incumbent)

**10th District**: **Michael Murphy** (incumbent)

**11th District**: **Joe Dudzik** (incumbent)

**13th District**: **Terry Witkowski** (incumbent)

**14th District**: **T. Anthony Zielinski** (incumbent)

votes.

The margins were devastating -- two to one in Dane County and Milwaukee County, more than 5% even in Waukesha.

In every state, Obama was cutting into her demographics. Journal Sentinel's Craig Gilbert summed up: Obama grabbed "more than half of all voters without a college degree - about 60% of the Democratic electorate. He won more than half of those with family incomes under \$50,000. He dominated among white men - 63% to 34%. He won union households by 9 percentage points. And he battled Clinton to a draw among women."

Wisconsin tested a new wrinkle in negative ads -- Obama was guilty of stolen ideas and borrowed words, not as good or original as people thought.

All this still seemed old school desperate. Obama, who can subtly turn the knife when he needs to, simply decided to

pleasantly dismiss Clinton's new attacks. His attitude that she was inconsequential may have angered the Clintons more.

Wisconsin had seemed ideal for Clinton's demographics. She was bolstered by powerful political machinery (Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton, Rep. Tammy Baldwin) and some tireless union grassroots support (AFSCME with machinists and teachers).

Obama had some pretty formidable backers as well (Gov. Doyle, Rep. Gwen Moore, Mayor Tom Barrett) and in the last weeks before Feb. 19 both SEIU and UFCW.

All this should have allowed Clinton to stay close enough to herald a turn in momentum. Now Wisconsin means she can't lose anywhere else.

Before Wisconsin the question was whether Obama could stand up to the campaign pressure, setbacks and personal attacks. After Wisconsin, the question has shifted to whether she can.

## Labor good for local candidates

Daniel Cody, hoping to unseat Supervisor Lynne De Bruin in District 15, didn't even make it to April 1. He was in third place as De Bruin dominated the Feb. 19 primary with 6,207 votes. Dan Wycklendt's 3,827 votes comfortably beat out Cody.

In other Milwaukee primary races, labor supported candidates were the top vote-getters going into April 1.

County Board District 14, where Richard Nyklewicz decided not to run again, strong support of **Christopher Larson** provided nearly double the votes ( 4,540) over Steven Kraeger.

There was one open seat on the Milwaukee Common Council, after Mike D'Amato's surprising decision not to run in the 3rd District. The crowded field of eight made for a busy, nerve-racking contest but labor's endorsed **Patrick Flaherty** had the best campaign.

It paid off with 4,167 votes over Nik Kovac with 3,406 votes, which easily knocked out of the contest D'Amato's legislative assistant, Sam McGovern-Rowen, who garnered 2,091 votes.

Labor also endorsed several incumbents who had primaries. Each moved comfortably through to April 1 by 62% to 84% margins.

These are **Willie Wade**, 7th District, who will face Anntoinette McKee; **Joe Dudzik**, 11th District, who will face Dennis Bach; **Terry Witkowski**, 13th District, who will face Bradley DeBraska; and **T. Anthony Zielinski**, 14th District, who will face Andy Reid.

The MALC Committee on Political Education will return to interviews in March for other April 1 decisions.

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



THE MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS (USPS 350-360) is published once a month by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53214, and is also available by subscription for \$12 a year. Periodical postage paid at Milwaukee, WI.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the AFL-CIO MILWAUKEE LABOR PRESS, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Suite 110, Milwaukee, WI 53214.  
The Publisher reserves the right to refuse or discontinue any advertisement which is deemed objectionable. Publication of advertisements is not to be construed as a personal endorsement nor are all ads necessarily from unionized companies or services of the Milwaukee County Labor Council or any of its affiliates.  
COPY DEADLINE: Usually by noon 3rd Monday of each month except December (2nd Monday).

# Capital Returns fighting USW union election

Capital Returns, whose uncaring treatment of workers was the subject of a Labor Press expose in December, is now facing a formal unionizing effort brought by workers concerned about conditions, safety and pay.

Already the company is pulling workers into captive meetings and even bringing in officials, who are either bamboozled or really buy the company line that it will close its doors rather than unionize.

But Capital Returns also has received government money based on expansion of its workforce, so pulling out could be a most uncomfortable option, aside from being a standard ploy of companies that don't like collective bargaining.

The election will be overseen by the National Labor Relations Board and is producing a strong campaign on behalf of the workers by United Steelworkers, which is providing international support and a roving pool of organizers led by

veteran Larry Goodman.

A rally Feb. 20 supported the campaign and so does a video on YouTube in which a worker describes the anti-union tactics and intimidation by the company.

The video can be seen at [www.youtube.com/workerjust](http://www.youtube.com/workerjust).

An election has been scheduled by the NLRB March 6 for the two shifts of workers at the plant, 6101 N. 64th St. Behind the scenes there is a battle to define just who is in this workforce (the numbers keep changing).

Such confusion has added to the USW's concerns about explaining the purpose and federal rules of an NLRB election in comfortable meetings. That would counter some of the strange rumors that managers have encircled the plant with.

What outsiders can do at this point is assure the workers they are not alone and that hundreds of union members care and will help push for their safety and improvement.



"That's what they need," said USW organizer Goodman who anticipates more rallies after Feb. 20. For those he wants hundreds if not thousands of union sympathizers to show up in advance of what he knows could be a tough election. The Faith Community for Worker Justice is helping organize the events and can be contacted at [mclcfath@ameritech.net](mailto:mclcfath@ameritech.net) or 414-771-7541.

Goodman turned into the NLRB about 155 cards of workers who want a union, easily reaching the legal plateau (a third of the bargaining unit must want a union). Actually his cards likely represent a majority. The actual size of the bargaining unit was discussed at an NLRB meeting February 8 and was still in some dispute.

The company at first talked about 415 workers in the central function of receiving, counting and shipping out discarded drugs or medical waste. (That's less than what the city and state thought had been pledged in an

expansion heralded back in 2005 that produced low-interest funds to the company from the city and state governments.)

But that was soon discounted as being too high and actually adding in non-affected positions – guards, managers and office employees.

Goodman and his associates were waiting as we went to press for the company's required list of actual names and addresses.

But USW agreed to set the election after a company spokesman gave harder numbers for the two shifts – 290 workers.

That means USW already has support of unionizing from more than half.

"I think there are a lot more who would have signed the cards," said Goodman, who has been speaking to the workers and has experience assessing these plant circumstances.

"I think these are the ones who feel intimidated or worry about losing their jobs," he said. "That's why I want a big turnout of support at any rallies from other unions, many of whom went through the same kinds of difficulties. These workers feel alone and the community can change that attitude."

Workers in the plant indicate the company has now stepped up its campaign, "trying to sway workers by that usual stuff about all we want is dues," said Goodman.

Several workers supporting the USW effort are mystified about "where the company is pulling their numbers of workers from," noted one.

The NLRB is required to watch out for shenanigans. It will have probably two officials at the election, while each side in the dispute is also allowed two monitors.

## Bowling

### MILWAUKEE AREA LABOR COUNCIL MALC MIXED SENIOR BOWLING

#### JANUARY 2008 RESULTS

| TEAM         | WINS | LOSSES |
|--------------|------|--------|
| GUTTER RATS  | 68   | 51     |
| SLAMMERS     | 67   | 52     |
| PIN PALS     | 64   | 55     |
| 1 BOARD OVER | 57   | 62     |
| CRAZY 8'S    | 52   | 67     |
| 8 BALLS      | 49   | 70     |

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 475

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| DAN LAACK      | 604 |
| BOB WAGNER     | 596 |
| DON WIEDMANN   | 589 |
| DEL GROSS      | 580 |
| EUGENE HERRICK | 502 |
| JOHN PADRON    | 481 |

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| DAN LAACK      | 243 |
| DEL GROSS      | 243 |
| BOB WAGNER     | 226 |
| DON WIEDMANN   | 216 |
| DON PHILLIPS   | 209 |
| EUGENE HERRICK | 180 |

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| JOYCE KNIPPEL     | 453 |
| RAE MATOWSKI      | 446 |
| PHYLISS NAVARRETE | 444 |
| MARLENE CORTEZ    | 413 |

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 150

|                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| PHYLISS NAVARRETE | 180 |
| JOYCE KNIPPEL     | 174 |
| MARLENE CORTEZ    | 154 |
| RAE MATOWSKI      | 152 |

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# Money

From Page 1

which has just about exhausted its own remedies against recession and fading public confidence.

I'm not even sure Bush has yet noticed the real saviors of the economy for the last seven years - the American consumer, mainly the middle and lower class, certainly the families.

Look at the accompanying chart - how in one year inflation has overwhelmed basic goods and even health costs while wages have flattened like the heart rate of a guest star on "Gray's Anatomy."

What really triggered the White House panic was the melting of home values. Working people had relied on that to continually spend, take the easy credit of subprime rates and stack up more debt - but now the economic dangers extend beyond neighborhood foreclosures and risky mortgages.

Now the big boys are in trouble. So are everyday people with good credit and basic common sense, who are nevertheless being driven to the edge. "This collapse in housing value is sucking in all borrowers," Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's, told the New York Times.

Hedge funds are going bust, major banks are losing billions,

## Basic goods cost more

*The U.S inflation rate in 2007 was 4.1%. The annual increase for common consumer items looked something like this:*

| Food             |       | Fuel, insurance, education |       |
|------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| Eggs             | 29.2% | Health Insurance           | 10.1% |
| Fresh whole milk | 13.1% | Gasoline                   | 8.2%  |
| Citrus fruit     | 10.1% | Fuel oil                   | 7.4%  |
| Bread            | 7.4%  | College tuition            | 6.2%  |
| Coffee           | 6.3%  |                            |       |
| Cheese           | 5.9%  | Weekly pay                 |       |
| Chicken          | 5.8%  | Earnings                   | 0.9%  |

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Wall Street firms expect more bailouts, all are turning to overseas money -- and quietly selling off more of America.

All this forced the president to turn to a Democratic Congress even as he continues to fear doing what's enough or what's right.

But never forget what brought us to this economic precipice is a series of right wing philosophies (they don't deserve the term policies) that started with Bush tax cuts for the very rich, which even today he and McCain, the likely GOP presidential candidate, want to make a permanent stain on our economy.

With few exceptions, the rewarded rich are the leg that buckled. Nothing trickled down, but it sure trickled away. These so-called creators of wealth did not create new jobs to replace

the 1.3 million lost by 2006 in manufacturing alone. They used the tax goodies to create more financial shelters or export more work to overseas partnerships.

Job creation? Pitiful. Their only solution was to cut living standards for employees, or eliminate employees. You'll look hard to find investment in green economy or in better methods, though you find a lot of corruption. The truest entrepreneurs emerged from the middle class (including plenty who started as immigrants).

The American public, economists suspect, would not have had much patience with such results and would have dumped Bush far faster. Except for 9/11.

That shattered Bush's dream of lazing away four years at his Crawford ranch. He became instead the "wartime

president" to embrace or at least tolerate.

Americans, right and left, invested the occupant of the greatest office in the land with a competency and wisdom never demonstrated. (Yes, that statement would have been dismissed as partisan excess a few years ago -- except that in 2008 many Republicans apparently concur.)

So Americans did as they were told - stay on the alert but keep shopping.

One bad moral result was a nation prone to fear, xenophobic, scared of shadows, willing to suspend the constitutional balance that brought the country this far. (Perhaps in some ways, the presence of a black man or a white woman as our most likely next president serves as a conscience corrective, trying to find a way back to a more accepting, less selfish America.)

But unquestionably, the economy was kept alive by the misplaced faith of the middle class, the working poor, the job holder and job hunter. They were not asked for sacrifice but they were turned into the sacrificial lamb on the economic altar.

In looking over the final stimulus package as it went to the president's desk in mid-February, a warning came from Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. It's a "first step," he pointed out, but it doesn't address underlying weaknesses in the US economy, particularly those affecting lower and middle class taxpayers.

But it is not the bold attempt at rescue called for by AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

It's "not enough to make a real difference for America's working families," Sweeney pointed out, even as the Democrats pushed "to extend unemployment benefits and increase food stamps to get money into the hands of those who will spend it quickest and need it most."

Most economists agreed that would be the way to get things moving. About 200,000 unemployed workers run out of benefits each month and need immediate assistance for basic needs.

The Democrats also sought in vain to add energy tax credits and federally backed bonds for

home construction.

To all this the GOP said no -- while keeping in the package their earmarks for businesses, such as speeding the write-offs for capital depreciation.

Democrats did succeed in some vital areas, adding seniors and veterans to the bill, but acknowledge that it will take a new president and a new direction to claw out of this.

But here in simple terms are the basics of what has been approved in the stimulus package.

It aims far lower than previous Bush tax cuts as a one-time incentive to spend.

The stimulus starts phasing out for individuals who have \$75,000 adjusted gross income - or a couple at \$150,000. Beneath that it still benefits 100 million households.

Once determined, the eligible will receive \$600 for an individual, \$1,200 for a couple. Having children under 17 who lived with the family for at least half a year is also a benefit -- \$300 for each child.

Workers who can show \$3,000 in earned income in 2007 -- too little on which to pay income taxes -- would be eligible for payments of \$300. In provisions added by the Senate Democrats and agreed to across the board, seniors and veterans who live almost entirely off Social Security and disability benefits would get \$300 checks.

The final bill will also give businesses generous incentives to invest in new plants and equipment. The Federal Housing Administration and the federally backed mortgage consolidators Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac would be allowed to insure larger home mortgages.

Cost to the Treasury is estimated at \$168 billion, all of which would be added to the budget deficit.

While the government wants the rebates to start going out in May and spent quickly, an Associate Press poll of 1,000 people found that most wouldn't go on a shopping spree.

More than three-quarters would pay bills or put the money in savings.

And most people in the survey wondered if there wasn't a much simpler way to stave off recession:

Get out of Iraq.

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# Listening to our future



Sheila Cochran and Willie Wade (center) share an intense discussion with Sen. Mark Miller in a roomful of local officials.

From left, Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, Shirley Ellis and Rep. Pedro Colon. Below, Rep. Barbara Toles (left) and MALC Vice-President Annie Wacker.



It's difficult to get Madison legislators who don't live here to listen to Milwaukee's woes, much less look them over. It's difficult, frankly, to believe they even hear or see anymore.

But Milwaukee County, city and union leaders leaped at the opportunity January 25, informal and off the cuff, to share candid and perceptive observations with a newly influential leader in the legislature, who clearly does look and listen.

The labor council was asked to host this sweeping discussion January 25 with Sen. Mark Miller, a Monona resident, Dane County veteran and now co-chair of the joint finance committee of the legislature. Miller served in the Assembly for four years and was elected to the Senate in 2004. But he has a reputation for listening and creating dialog around progressive ideas.

Miller also knew how much Milwaukee was bleeding after Gov. Doyle's unique effort to recognize Milwaukee's special value in the state budget was shot down, to the tune of \$19 million, by Assembly Republicans. So he wanted to push for the city by seeing it firsthand. He also got an earful.

One issue the meeting kept coming back to was how false impressions were shaping the city's future. The participants took on the urban-rural fight for understanding, and funds, often portrayed in the media as those stubborn, city-hating people way out there in the corners of the state looking to beat up on the people in the big cities.

Not so, argued the participants — the simplicities of that myth were often perpetuated by so-called urban progressives as well as by so-called rural conservatives, along with talk radio.

In truth, noted Shirley Ellis of US Rep. Gwen Moore's office, and several others agreed, that's not the center of opposition.

Milwaukee has the worst problem in resistance or plain obduracy from suburban or very close rural citizenry, the speakers conceded. The ones who encircle Milwaukee County — and are actually most likely to benefit from improved transit, public health and safety — have been duped into putting up the big-

gest squawks.

Farther out in the state are families suffering similar problems or able to empathize with working families. "Those folks do seem to get it better than the folks around us," noted Sheila Cochran, chief operating office of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. She was asked to arrange the meeting, and got great response not just from unions but public officials.



Lee Holloway may seldom look happy, but spoke passionately.

Since so few legislators not based in Milwaukee make the trip or dig into the problems, local officials told Miller, they feel even more isolated — and uncertain how to react to even more bills from Madison that aren't based in reality and lead to unfunded mandates or dismissal of thoughtful solutions.

"Not that we're perfect," mumbled one member from the back of the room, "but we've been set up for rejection."

Similar sentiments and candor dominated Milwaukee County Board Chairman Lee Holloway's remarks. He personalized the County Board's place in protecting citizens and discussed in detail the need for state support of transit, parks and other services. Milwaukee Ald. Willie Wade, equally ad lib, shared his own analysis, bringing the needs down again and again to jobs and mass transit for the people in his district.

"I'm one vote," Miller noted, "but it's obvious we have to be talking and helping each other."

That alone would represent a major change.

--Dominique Paul Noth

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# Calendar

For updated master list of events,  
visit [www.milwaukeeelabor.org](http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org)

## Wednesday, March 5

Open House and Delegate Meeting

Welcome to Public Officials,

Endorsed Candidates and New Affiliates

Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

Appetizers and Cash Bar

## Thursday, March 6

Interfaith Prayer Breakfast for Human Rights

Speaker: The Rev. Jessica Vasquez Torres of the Chicago

Interfaith Worker Justice

Free but RSVP to 414-771-7441

9 to 11 a.m., Greenfield Memorial Church, 3450 S. 52nd St.

## Wednesday, March 26

Executive Board, 2 p.m.

Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

## Tuesday, April 1

General Election, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Find your polling place

and MAKE SURE TO VOTE

## Wednesday, April 2

Delegate Meeting

Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO

6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

## Wilson

From Page 1

the APRI, consumer groups, the Black Women's Network, the NAACP and advocacy for the aging coalitions.

Her life story became an inspiration for dozens of events.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO's Joanne Ricca recalls a 1992 women's conference at UW-Madison which took its title from one of Wilson's favorite sayings about the true role of people: "Bridges That Carry Us Over." The conference highlighted the key leadership role of Midwestern women in building the modern feminist movement, and Wilson was one

of the featured guests.

What first lifted her to "carry us over" was organized labor. It became intertwined with the other two great motivators of her life — a powerful faith and a fierce devotion to her family.

Her mother died when she was an infant. She was raised on a Texas farm, mostly by grandparents who were born into slavery, as her father pursued work that eventually wound up in Milwaukee.

This bright student was told bluntly at Lincoln High School to



Wilson in 1989

forget her desire to become a nurse. Blacks weren't hired for that profession. Black women could score high on tests — as young Nellie always did — but there was nothing reputable open to them except cleaning houses.

A young wife with two young daughters in the 1930s, saddled by a husband who would not commit to family, and whom she later divorced, Wilson was rebuffed endlessly on jobs she was clearly qualified for, including at A.O. Smith.

Her unlikely rescuer was a black man 1,000 miles away, A. Philip Randolph, who had organized the sleeping car porters and become a major rights activist.

Randolph confronted the president, FDR, and told him he would take all the workers he could on strike during World War II unless defense contractors

opened their plants to blacks and women. FDR passed an executive order threatening those plants with loss of government contracts.

So a newly converted war contractor, A.O. Smith, put her to work in 1942, using her math proficiency and blueprint-reading skills as a precision inspector of landing gear and other essential aircraft parts.

When the servicemen started returning, Wilson recalls, they "weren't as tough on the women as the men we worked with during the war." In a later reflection on this Rosie the Riveter experience, romanticized in current fiction, the straight-talking Wilson said, "Racism and sexism are as inherent to the American psyche as motherhood and apple pie."

Yet she successfully stood up to management in negotiating equal pay for women. She became the union steward regardless of gender. She became the first black woman on the executive board of Smith Steel Workers Local 19806 — a frighteningly unusual event in the trades after World War II.

She was a delegate to the Milwaukee labor council and a leader of the state civil rights commission. When she left A.O. Smith after a quarter of a century, the state AFL-CIO named her staff representative during LBJ's war on poverty.

With cleverness and persuasion — and insistence on what was right — she found work for many unemployed, boosted apprenticeships and union shops, and led combined programs of the AFL-CIO and the Department of Labor.

Funding was cut during the Reagan years, so she turned full blast to issues facing black women, seniors, consumers and even the Red Cross.

The story goes that, back in the 1960s, when she was hired by the state AFL-CIO, a white union leader looked at her quizzically and asked if she was "one of those women libbers."

One of those "that started the damn thing," she snapped back.

"She was my mentor, my union sister and my friend," recalled Mary Jo Avery, retired from CWA Local 4603 but still a member of the Milwaukee labor council executive board and also president of the Milwaukee chapter of the APRI (named after Randolph).

"She was such a good listener. She exemplified my definition of what made a strong leader of her union era."

Avery recalls a rare combination of values and character that was badly needed when Nelson came along and "my personal feeling is that she was a gift to all of us in the city and the state."

"If I had my choice of who to honor for Black History Month, hands down it would be Nellie."

-- D.P.N.

## Trapshooting organizes

The labor council's summer trapshooting league has set its organizational meeting for 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12 (free beer and snacks), at the Lakeview Trap and Sport Club, located at the north end of Big Muskego Lake.

It's where the trapshooting is done in a handicap league that any team can win. Organizer Roger Schmidt (262-782-0605) is encouraging union locals to get represented with a team of six shooters.

The actual address of the club in Waukesha County is S80 W 14401 Schultz Lane, Muskego, WI 53150. For further directions, call the club at 414-422-9025 or 414-422-1760.



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# Editor Taylor devoted life to labor causes

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

In the mid-1950s when the AFL and the CIO were still separate and frequent rivals, Ray Taylor became editor of the newspaper that bridged the divide — the Milwaukee Labor Press (established 1940).

An enthusiastic and largely self-made journalist, Taylor would remain in charge for 27 years — and then influence union viewpoint and stories for 24 years more as editor for the Wisconsin Teamsters newspaper.

Taylor died at home quietly among his family January 29th, two weeks before his 92nd birthday. He was born in 1916. He and Lila were married for 62 years.

Known for decades in Wisconsin politics, union affairs and Milwaukee culture, Taylor came to work regularly until he was in his late 80s.

When I arrived as editor in 2002 upon the retirement of his longtime friend, Carole Casamento, he actually was working down the hall on the Teamsters newspaper.

Taylor had high grades, good looks and vaudeville panache at Custer High, but no money for college. An early job in a motor plant led to forming a UAW local, he recalled years later, but it also revealed his natural gifts for writing (the local's newsletter) and for public relations.

Such abilities led him more and more into lobbying and journalism — and a reputation as a speaker and man about the town, showing up at public events in a very different era for journalists.

What labor seemed to want at the time was just this sort of PR emphasis to make ideas heard and to gain access to news events and political leaders.

Taylor and his larger than life personality sought to guide both editorial direction and act as ringmaster for the variety of content and shopping services the paper carried, even classified ads. Some of the content was almost self-propelling given the nature of the press back then and the expectations of readers.

There were many advertisers, small and large, who benefited from the Labor Press' reach into



Taylor, still on the job in 1995

100,000 households when the AFL and CIO merged in 1959. These readers, advertisers knew, were workers and retirees with a proven income.

It was an audience other newspapers coveted and it sometimes annoyed Taylor that the established press' response to that reach was to largely ignore him or dismiss him.

In that era, though, union views were honored and the source of national stories. When the organization now known as ILCA was formed (International Labor Communications Association), Taylor was a founding member and first vice president partly in recognition of his deep convictions about the importance of labor journalists and the flat reality that the Labor Press was the nation's largest labor newspaper.

In Milwaukee, it was the third largest home-delivered newspaper behind the then-troubled Sentinel and the large and then-afternoon Journal.

There was also a bit of a corrective going on as monopoly ownership emerged in the 1960s within Milwaukee's other press. Taylor was a bridge. His paper seldom could be confused with a radical viewpoint, but it gave play to various news from a large swath of unions, locals and civic groups. It helped spread labor policies.

It also provided a sympathetic ear to viewpoints and politicians — such as Mayor Henry Maier — who were in a feud with Journal Communications, often serving up just the questions Maier wanted to answer.

He was also proud of having met on the job seven sitting presidents.

The power of labor contributed to the newspaper's size and purposes. Both the printing press and postal labeling machinery for the Labor Press were tucked into rooms around the labor council, even as it changed location to Hawley Rd. in 1965. The space was necessary to handle what was then a more frequently published (weekly or bi-weekly) and much larger newspaper.

When Labor Press settled into a monthly schedule and union publishing moved to Port Washington, Casamento — a national prizewinner for the newspaper in her own right — frequently took Taylor with her to proof the paper on deadline.

His eyesight and editorial speed may not have been what they were in his prime, when he also was noted for his presence around town and his storytelling gifts, but that glint of mischief and that dedication to union issues never went away.

Milwaukee in his heyday bustled with unionized companies and manufacturing, estimated by historians at 30% union density. Even today, at 17% union density in its workforce, Milwaukee tops the odds and average of the nation (as a monthly, Labor Press has about 50,000 households), but the reach, shape and even purpose of the newspaper changed as the city did.

On some things, that is. Taylor won honors from the merged AFL-CIO for the early attention he paid to the high cost and dangerous narrowness of health care. That sure isn't an issue that has gone away. It has even escalated, as have those still perceptive articles on foreign trade and the need for an independent press.

Pick up one of those early newspapers Taylor edited and it will strike you as more like the Journal's old Green Sheet or the Sentinel's Living section — chock full of wire content, national news bits, jokes, union meetings, retirement gatherings, recipes, horoscopes, even cheesecake (thanks to posing females Taylor labeled in the captions as members of the



Sandwiched between Tom Barrett (at left, when our current mayor sported a mustache) and Mike Balistriere, AFL-CIO field organizer, Taylor was still at work in 2002 covering a political rally.

Screen Actors Guild — always a union connection!).

Simultaneously, however, the Labor Press was winning awards for both its advertising volume and its editorial comments and series on labor issues.

Taylor lobbied often for union issues and labor's necessity for social strength, but his community interests extended broadly. He sat on state commissions dealing with legal concerns and the physically disabled. He also served the Easter Seal society, the state association for mental health, Neighborhood House, the United Cerebral Palsy Association and the predecessor of the United Way.

Labor education programs at Marquette, the School for Workers and UWM also sought him as a teacher. A variety of causes drew his support. So did the Milwaukee Boys Club, the MECCA board (the old name for the downtown

convention complex) and the AIDS awareness group.

Taylor was a notable toastmaster and contributor to Milwaukee's civic experience, but less widely known was his devotion to the arts.

A passionate opera fan, Taylor also sat on the Milwaukee Symphony Board and was part of the Milwaukee Motion Picture Commission in an era where its imprimatur could determine whether a commercial film was allowed in the community.

He and Lila were comforted as the years rolled on by two sons and one daughter plus many grandchildren, relatives and in-laws. But never, Taylor admitted, did he lose his love for work and collegial mixing with union people and causes. Only failing health slowed him down.

The family encourages memorials in his name to Trinity Episcopal Church, Planned Parenthood or any charity of choice.

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# Nimble grant helps hundreds from Delphi

There's fresh hope and fast action underway at Milwaukee's HIRE Center. And quite a story behind the \$1.8 million emergency federal grant announced January 23 for the workers affected by Delphi's departure from Oak Creek.

The grant from US Department of Labor (DOL) is awarded to the state, but the HIRE is the main dispenser. It is also the main cause.

It fashioned the special assistance grant to meet the needs of hundreds of Delphi families, mostly United Auto Workers families, whose paychecks dissolved and benefits are running out. They need assessment, job placement advice, education, training and emotional support.

That grant wouldn't have happened if not for astute understanding of the federal and state rules and innovative grant writing by the HIRE experts, who convinced the state's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and finally mutually convinced the DOL.

HIRE — now also a component of the mayor's Milwaukee's Workforce Investment Board, freer to develop its own initiative than under the old Private Industry Council headed by Gerard Randall. — had been suffering shrinking government money and reduced staff even into the takeover.

Now its own innovation has helped it out of a jam. The DOL indicates that \$598,241 of the special grant will arrive quickly, which will allow better staffing



A large meeting of manufacturing representative and training experts discuss needs and job opportunities Feb. 13 as the HIRE Center moved fast to put a \$1.8 million federal grant to work for the workforce departing Delphi. Visible from left laying out the possibilities are John Milward and Sally Marek of Bucyrus International, HIRE director Alba Baltodano and Frank Johnson, UAW leader working for HIRE as outreach expert.

at HIRE to meet the demand. The grant assists some 400 workers, but it may extend to more employees of the company in the last two years. That, according to preliminary surveys, could add hundreds, but there are no promises at this point on how broad the help can be.

"These are complicated rules and definitions," said HIRE's Roger Hinkle. Echoing that view were the center's director, Alba Baltodano, and the DWD coordinator for dislocated workers, Annette Nekola.

But there's no delay in action, putting muscle behind HIRE's reputation for rapid

response. Frank Johnson, president of UAW Local 438 at Delphi, who knows the worker pool intimately and whose opinions are knowledgeable and pull no punches, has been hired as outreach specialist and peer counselor of sorts to ensure good use of the grant.

Milwaukee manufacturers, who meet regularly with HIRE staff, were greeted on Feb. 13 with an extensive survey of 590 Delphi survivors. Responding to HIRE, they supplied detailed history of their education, training, pay, family circumstances, abilities and interests.

Manufacturers gave instant feedback on what they needed and how quickly ("Can you take a tour of our plant this afternoon?" one executive asked Johnson.)

These were both union and non-union companies such as WE Energies, Bucyrus, Harley-Davidson, Astronautics, Advance Hydraulics, Master Lock and Busch Precision (which, incidentally, may be the oldest machine shop in Milwaukee).

Grant writing is, of course, the fine print of seeking government money, a specialized exercise that a lot of workers don't understand. Most of the community instead just saw very large handwriting on the wall in

October of 2005.

That's when Delphi announced nationwide bankruptcy (a week before the bankruptcy rules got tougher) and handed the company's fate to a notorious corporate liquidator and dissembler, Robert (Steve) Miller.

It was clear to many — the unions had been here before — that Delphi was going to dump most of the plants and outsource work — and they would blame unions and "legacy costs," not bad planning or poor management.

The federal government was blithely indifferent — and the Department of Labor under Elaine Chao tied its own hands and turned its back on new financial remedies.

Workers had little choice but to take Delphi's buyouts and early retirement packages even though the Oak Creek divisions had always made money, a model of productivity in the auto parts business.

And Delphi liked making money, it turns out, especially if the executives could drive down wages in the bargain. So Delphi never formally announced a closing in Oak Creek even as it shed veteran workers.

It replaced them — virtually one to one — with \$14 an hour newcomers, playing out the

string while pleading hardship in federal court.

Delphi "was raking in the dough," as one UAW leader put it, and even hiring veterans on a contract basis to train the new workers. And still the government stood silent. As long as Delphi was replacing workers job for job, the emergency assistance rules (for workers affected by trade) didn't kick in.

The stall had to end in Oak Creek. The land was going, the outsourcing was now visible. So the Electrical and Safety division was marked for shutdown in June, and the Powertrain division for September. In November, a full two years after the handwriting on the wall, the DOL confirmed the outsourcing and certified both sets of workers as eligible for trade assistance, known under the law as TAA.

HIRE looked deeper at the language and circumstances and argued that emergency circumstance applied beyond routine TAA (Trade Assistance Agreement), funds allocated to each state for workers hurt by foreign trade but usually in anticipated circumstances.

HIRE was after the NEG (National Emergency Grants), discretionary awards by the DOL. These funds are on top of and separate from what is allocated state by state. The NEGs temporarily expand service at local levels for "significant events" that cannot reasonably be anticipated. Those couldn't kick in until Delphi revealed its plans.

Thanks to HIRE's explanation, this is what Milwaukee workers got.

Now both the DWD and HIRE are encouraging all who worked at Delphi but left for any reason — because of the bankruptcy and related moves — to contact HIRE. The center can then see whether they are eligible in any way for assistance.

Here's how to contact HIRE, which also operates a computerized job services library:

816 W. National Avenue,  
2nd floor  
Milwaukee, WI 53204  
414-385-6920

[http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org/about\\_us/hire\\_center.cfm](http://www.milwaukeeelabor.org/about_us/hire_center.cfm)

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# Master Lock makes knowledge pay workers

Carline Hannah, the human resources manager for Master Lock, believes in hands-on and hates to waste company money, so she took three of the four manufacturing skills certification courses herself to see what was involved.

"Quite a bit," she said, "and boy, they were hard! Of course, I'm not a line person so maybe even harder for me. But what I learned really advanced my abilities, and I know how the courses can improve our workforce."

In fact, 150 production workers at Master Lock have a chance to do more than improve their skills. Each could add \$4,000 a year to their paychecks.

It's a first in Wisconsin — learn this program and be paid by a company — and could be unique in the country, according to Dale Dulberger, who runs the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council (MSSC) programs here, and Bradley Schwanda, president of the United Auto Workers Local 469 at Master Lock. It also promotes the benefits of MSSC to the entire industry.

At Master Lock, every course completed adds 50 cents to the hourly wage of the successful production worker.

"There are four modules, each taking about five weeks," Schwanda explained. "So potentially in a short period time,



UAW's Bradley Schwanda calls the idea a boost for the workers' pay but also their future.

if you complete them all, you can add \$2 an hour to your pay. Production people here are under a five-year contract that tops at \$17 an hour, so this is a considerable boost."

The financial incentive to take the courses is a biggie, but the doors opened by the competence completion may be even broader. The MSSC certification, as it is known, has been developed by educators, labor and business over years as a standard in advance manufacturing.

Nationally more and more companies are recognizing the certification as a driver's license, or a passport, that opens dozens of plants and jobs to workers, signaling them as possessed of the knowledge and

manufacturing skills for high performance and also to adjustability to diverse products.

James McCaslin, Harley-Davidson's CEO, has described the MSSC system as "ensuring a changing industry with . . . easily trainable and high motivated knowledge workers."

Supported by the union and general manager Dan Carey, as well as executives such as Hannah, the program has already trained several workers and is gearing up for many more to go through speedily.

Schwanda is hoping Master Lock can work "something out in-plant" with the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), which handles the MSSC training at its Oak Creek campus, "which is far away for our people." Master Lock's plant is at 2600 N. 32nd St. — 32nd and Center to most folks.

There is another reason why state and industry insiders are getting behind the MSSC program and particularly this sort of financial incentives for less trained workers to advance in manufacturing skills, production schedules, maintenance, programming and more.

Just as other US companies are, Master Lock, as Hannah discussed, is finding resurgence in manufacturing needs, combined with a loss of veterans, but also is a gap in skill interests in the educational pipeline.

Master Lock has brought along production workers (probably relying on the UAW workers in place to guide them),



MSSC project director Dale Dulberger and Master Lock's HR director Carline Hannah at a HIRE Center meeting on jobs.

"but I think what a program like this does is open the door to people not just for better pay," said Schwanda.

"For a plant our size this is a great program. I tell workers it may spark you to go back to school or gain even more skills, and it's exciting to see them become interested in things like skilled production machining or apprenticeships, which lead to skilled trades jobs."

Too little attention has been paid to a slow steady rebirth in American manufacturing. Although rocked by a decade of rapid import growth and job loss, manufacturing remains a bulwark of the US. economy: In Wisconsin, the Department of Workforce Development anticipates thousands of job openings in manufacturing due directly to replacing future retirements of skill technicians.

In fact, manufacturing represented one-tenth of all US jobs in 2007.

In Wisconsin, manufacturing employment is 18% of all jobs and represents 24% of the state's GDP. Associate and other special two-year advance degrees could produce deeply educated workers who will find manufacturing re-emerging as a vital source of highly skilled jobs at solid wages. The hungrier manufacturers become to find these workers, the more they will seek monetary incentives for learning upgrades.

Those interested in the Wisconsin MSSC Initiative can contact Dulberger, project director, at 414-297-7296 or [dulbergd@matc.edu](mailto:dulbergd@matc.edu) or on the web at [www.matc.edu/wisconsinmssc](http://www.matc.edu/wisconsinmssc)

-- Dominique Paul Noth

## Upturn in union membership first in quarter of a century, DOL reveals

The numbers aren't much, the percentage is just a tick upward, but 2007 did bring a surprising and welcome trend for the union movement.

For the first time in the past quarter of a century, US unions increased their share of membership among workers, according to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics. In its annual union membership report, unions added about 310,000 members, raising the unionized share of the workforce to 12.1% from 12% in 2006.

Whether statistical variation or something deeper, the western states such as California showed gains that more than offset some drops in the Midwest.

While rates for men remained largely unchanged, union membership by women rose.

Surveys continually show that a majority of workers would join a union if companies didn't make it so difficult, but the uptick may reflect that economic woes and realization that union workers do better may be breaking through the deception of union busting firms.



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## Home help a hotline away

Many homeowners have adjustable rate mortgages (ARMs) -- but nearly half who have them admit they do not know how their ARMs adjust or reset, and nearly three-quarters do not know how much their monthly mortgage payments will increase when they do reset, a new national survey has revealed.

The survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the AFL-CIO found last September that ARM holders are generally not concerned about mortgage payments -- until their rates reset. Then anxiety sets in as they realize their payments have risen substantially.

The use of ARMs for home financing has grown dramatically over the past few years and particularly among higher-risk sub-prime borrowers. Now the entire country is aware of the danger,

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney and Union Privilege President Leslie Tolf have announced the launch of the Save My Home Hotline.

As part of a model homeowner education program, the hotline will provide information and advice to help union members and their families avoid foreclosure. (The AFL-CIO also sponsors a trust to assist union members with financial hardship due to disability or unemployment.)

The Save My Home Hotline will provide free, confidential advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week from the counselors at Money Management International, a nonprofit, HUD-certified housing counseling agency. Face-to-face counseling is available at more than 100 local offices in 22 states and the District of Columbia.

Union members and their parents and children can call the hotline for advice at 1-866-490-5361.

Asked in the Hart survey if they feel confident or worried about making their monthly mortgage payments over the next few years, 41% of homeowners whose ARMs had reset say they are worried, compared with 18% of those whose ARMs had not reset.

Says AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney: "What we have here is a tale of two communities. The trapdoor between the American Dream and the American Nightmare is the ARM adjustment."

Despite a general lack of understanding about their adjustable rate mortgages, 79% say they believe the information they received from their lenders was mainly accurate and truthful. Sixty percent say they got their ARMs from mortgage brokers, and 39% directly from banks.

Says Tolf: "There is a big disconnect between what people know and what they think they know."

The Save My Home Hotline will provide needed advice to homeowners who are behind in their payments, already in foreclosure or looking for advice in how to budget and restructure their debt.

## Stop murders first, Colombia told

It's not just labor rights and environmental protection. The union movement cannot support any US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement unless real progress is made to protect the lives and rights of trade union members.

That was the unbending message from a major delegation to Colombia Feb. 12-13. The leaders were AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Emerita Linda Chavez-Thompson, Communications Workers of America (CWA) President Larry Cohen and United Steelworkers (USW) counsel Dan Kovalik. They met with Colombian union leaders, International Labor Organization representatives and elected leaders, including President Alvaro Uribe, who had come to Washington earlier to push for the deal and heard similar concerns from members of Congress.

Chavez-Thompson was even blunter in Bogota, discussing the climate of fear that continued among Colombia's labor members, since 38 trade unionists were murdered in 2007 and five so far in 2008. Uribe's insistence that there had been progress compared to the hundreds killed in decades past did little to convince the delegates.

The delegation also ascertained the government has systematically undermined union members'

rights while exerting little effort to address the murders, despite claims of new government initiatives.

Said Chavez-Thompson: "There has been too little real progress in ending the brutality that trade unionists face."

She expressed US labor's strong solidarity with the Colombian unions and emphasized that opposition to the free trade deal was far deeper than some concept of protectionism.

All the Colombian union leaders told the delegation they oppose any free trade deal until the government takes strong action to stop the violence against trade union members and ends the government's assaults on union rights. They also emphasized that the trade agreement in its current form will create more economic insecurity in their countries and hurt workers more.

The Colombian union leaders also detailed a government policy of "busting unions." As an example, they pointed to the Uribe government's refusal to follow a court order to reinstate back pay to members of the oil workers' union who struck recently.

Cohen said the Colombian government is systematically destroying workers' rights: Only about one percent of Colombian workers have union contracts.

## In hard search of the war profiteer

Government corruption, private contractors and military malfeasance made Iraq an almost incomprehensible center of war profiteering. American taxpayers know they've been had. But where was the money spent and why did it do so little? Who can explain it?

You might spend an hour with Father G. Simon Harak, an international authority on the issue and director of Marquette University's Center of Peacemaking, who has given his free lectures exploring "Who Profits From the Iraq War?" On February 11, Harak offered a talk at the MATC sponsored by Local 212, American Federation of Teachers.

Harak can put forward many frightening facts and hard sources, but in some areas of who got what to spend, what mercenaries did and who should be held responsible, Harak is honest

enough to suggest we may never know. The world of these private war profiteers is pretty secret to begin with, but there has been extensive collusion with our government and other governments.

Harak, a professor of theology as well as a Jesuit scholar, knows the government public



Father Harak

relations office had \$200 million to promote the invasion of Iraq, and that several millions went to the Rendon Group, but we don't know just how much or how it was spent.

Harak knows that war profiteering/mercenaries are easily a \$100 billion a year business,

counting all countries and places the private security firms work. But secretive ways also prevent the public from knowing just how much is spent in which countries -- and by whom.

Harak exposed realities, some historical and some unsettlingly current:

There are 180,000 private contractors in Iraq today, actually outnumbering US military forces.

- 50,000 of these private contractors provide security services, meaning "guns for hire."
- 50% of the CIA's functions have been outsourced to private contractors.
- There is no accountability mechanism under US law for private military contractors.
- The US gave private contractors immunity from Iraqi law in 2004, something many lawmakers in Iraq want to reverse after reported rapes, brawls, indiscriminate shootings and killings by private security firms.
- More than 60 military personnel have been prosecuted for Iraqi civilian deaths, but not a single private contractor.
- An Army private makes \$37,000 a year.
- A private security contractor makes \$33,000 a month, which can approach \$400,000 a year.

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# Behind the Scenes



**ABOVE:** The labor council's vice-president, Annie Wacker, got a lot of Valentine's Day teasing for the honor of introducing former President Bill Clinton at both his Italian Community Center and Waukesha Expo rallies in support of his wife. This snapshot was taken by Dane County Exec Kathleen Falk.



**RIGHT and BELOW:** On your local TV set it looked intimate: Michelle Obama sitting down with other working mothers for a roundtable discussion of everyday issues. But at Ma Fischer's on the East Side, half the restaurant had to be cleared out to handle the crush of media, which continued for a week before the primary.

**LEFT:** Sen. Russ Feingold chatted with local and national media before heading for the podium at the Democrats' gala event Feb. 16.



**TOP LEFT:** Overflow press were blocked from personal shots of the candidates and often transcribed the speeches from a remote room.

**LEFT and ABOVE:** A potential future first lady, Michelle Obama, was greeted by Wisconsin's first lady, Jessica Doyle, while Lt. Gov. Barbara Lawton similarly pushed the introductions for a former first lady, Sen. Hillary Clinton.



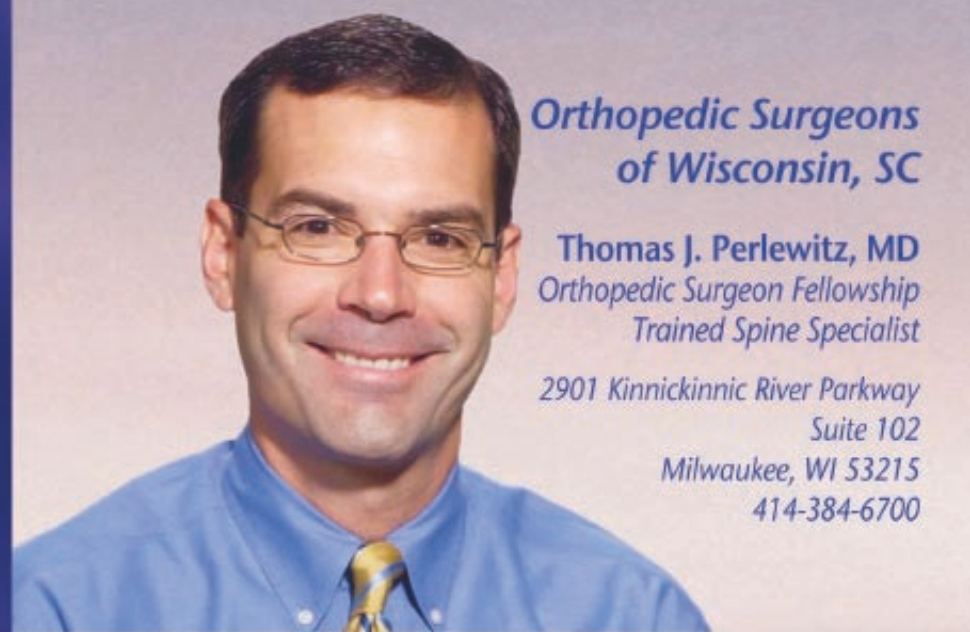
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