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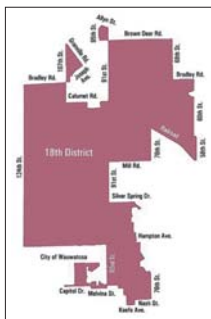
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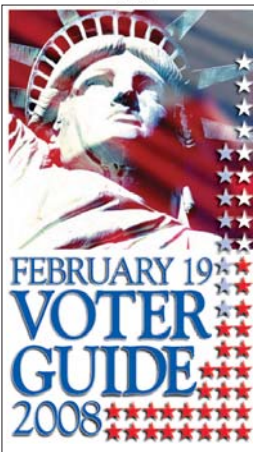
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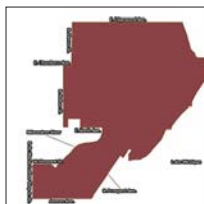
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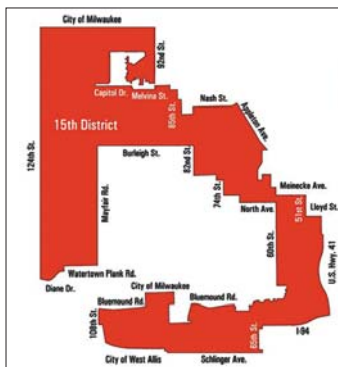
**MEET YOUR NEWEST MILWAUKEE COUNTY BOARD SUPERVISOR. NO KIDDING.** An astonished Johnny Thomas (center below) broke the news at his labor council interview, causing delighted union leaders to flock around with congratulations on his "victory" in the open 18th District (small map at left). Here he is warmly greeted by COPE members of the AFT nurses, Stephanie Bloomingdale (left) and President Candice Owley. **FOR HOW THIS ALL HAPPENED, see the Story on Page 10.**



Endorsements, backstage stories, photos and more prepare you for the primary, which involves every contest with more than two candidates. The winners will then square off on Tuesday, April 1. Feb. 19 is also Wisconsin's presidential primary.



Pat Flaherty emerged as easy best choice for the city's East Side 3rd District. **Story Page 4.**



Dan Cody's credentials time with the need to oust Supervisor Lynne De Bruin in District 15. **Story Page 11.**

## Labor helps public cope

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

The political hurricane was expected in November but a blizzard is engulfing the February 19 primary and the April 1 general election.

Labor seemed more prepared for winter politics than many of the candidates.

It suspected early on that Feb. 19 would grow in importance as a Wisconsin presidential primary -- especially with all the AFL-CIO unions turned loose to express fervor for a full range of candidates -- and it saw a gathering snowball of Milwaukee candidates.

Just the city and county races alone, largely district by district, were drawing some 96 candidates in December, many headed for Feb. 19 decisions.

This would require considerable planning for labor and ruthlessly stubborn deadlines to wrestle these numbers to the ground for interviews.

Led by council Vice President Annie Wacker, the Committee on Political Education

State and city colleagues are supporting Lena Taylor's bid to become Milwaukee county executive. Happy to pose with her are Ald. Michael Murphy and Rep. Tamara Grigsby (right).

(COPE) modernized its questionnaires in early December and warned its politically-savvy two dozen questioners -- representing some 47,000 union members -- to hang tough and expect a marathon two days of interviews.

A dozen who received the questionnaires -- to be mailed or faxed back by Jan. 2, the same day the nominations papers were due -- didn't make it through the nomination process. Some veterans decided to simply duck the tight schedule, which automatically made them ineligible for COPE endorsement. Yet almost 50 candidates signed up for interviews -- incumbents, challengers and open seats.

COPE perused their returned

questionnaires and on Jan. 7 and 8 interviewed the hopefuls, then weighed and discussed what choices could be made -- or which might be better left till after February 19, when some of the smoke and confusion cleared.

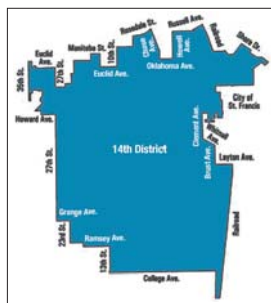
On January 9, leaders cleared the Serb Hall meeting room of all candidates, who were still passing out literature in the hallway, and COPE offered its recommendations at the monthly delegate meeting.

It also reminded delegates of the limitations -- two-thirds of COPE must approve any choice, no extensions were offered to candidates beyond Jan. 2, and a candidate had to complete the

**COPE continued Page 9**



At the labor council's December opening house, he clearly had won support of probable future colleagues Supervisors Peggy West (left) and Marina Dimitrijevic. Then Christopher Larson (center) impressed the COPE committee and gained solid endorsement January 8 for the open 14th District (right) occasioned by Richard Nyklewicz's retirement. **Story on Page 7.**



# Bowling

## MCLC MIXED SENIOR BOWLING

**DECEMBER 2007 RESULTS**

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
SLAMMERS	60	31
PIN PALS	52	39
GUTTER RATS	49	42
CRAZY 8's	39	52
8 BALLS	37	54
1 BOARD OVER	36	55

**IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 500**

DON WIEDMANN	591
BOB WAGNER	569
DAN LAACK	564
DON PHILLIPS	524
EUGENE HERRICK	510
DAN KNIPPEL	506

**IND. HIGH GAME OVER 185**

DON WIEDMANN	225
DON PHILLIPS	220
DAN LAACK	216
BOB WAGNER	215
EUGENE HERRICK	202
ELMER HELM	194
DEL GROSS	189

**IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400**

JOYCE KNIPPEL	477
PHYLISS NAVARRETE	454
RAE MATOWSKI	451
MARLENE CORTEZ	408

**IND. HIGH GAME OVER 150**

RAE MATOWSKI	182
JOYCE KNIPPEL	173
MARLENE CORTEZ	171
PHYLISS NAVARRETE	154



### Major health initiative online

The AFL-CIO has launched an enormous online survey to rate the US health care system and get officials involved.

It intends to reach at least 20,000 people. In an initial test of one electronic database, the response within a few days was overwhelming.

"People really want to talk about their health care and, unfortunately, all the stories are bad," AFL-CIO spokeswoman Careen Benjamin said.

Anyone, including people not in a union, can respond to the survey. The group said it plans to give copies to all presi-

dential candidates and Congress, as well as candidates for congressional, state and local office.

The survey lists 28 questions, plus a chance to tell one's own health story. Participants can choose to have their responses published online by their first name, or listed anonymously.

The survey is at [www.healthcaresurvey.aflcio.org](http://www.healthcaresurvey.aflcio.org).

### Official Notice

Election time for AFSCME Local 82 includes nominations for the top four officers, trustee and delegate positions and other elected positions at the February 12 and March 11 general membership gatherings.

Members will receive notice of meeting rooms at UWM. Final election will be held April 8.

The delegate election is for the WSEU (Wisconsin State Employee Union), which holds a general convention in July.

Berthina Joseph  
Secretary, Local 82



LEFT: Gov. Doyle turned ardent in supporting Lena Taylor's ideas and candidacy when he anchored a Milwaukee fund-raiser before Christmas at the central city restaurant and bar, Roots.

Scattered throughout the crowd (above) was the truth squad, campaign squad, volunteer squad, mod squad - you name it - of Lena's fellow Rufus King high school graduates who have flocked to her campaign.

### Taylor vs Walker events

Several occasions, only a few with audience interaction, have already been scheduled for the two candidates for Milwaukee County Executive: Labor's endorsed candidate, State Sen. Lena Taylor, and the incumbent Scott Walker. Among the chances to compare them:

- Saturday, February 2, approximately 12:30 p.m., NAACP Youth Council Forum, 2745 N. Martin Luther King Dr.
- Monday, February 11, 7:15-8 p.m., Access Television, "The Jeanetta Robinson Show," MATA-Media Channel 14 studios, 2404 W. Clybourn (contact Charles Walton, 414-202-6145).
- Wednesday, March 5, 7-9 p.m., Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations, Jewish Community Center, 6255 N. Santa Monica Blvd, Whitefish Bay.
- Thursday, March 6, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Capitol West Neighborhood Association Forum, Faith United Church of Christ, 4240 N. 78th St.
- Tuesday, March 11, noon-1:20 p.m., Milwaukee War Memorial Center, 750 N. Lincoln Memorial Dr., sponsored by Milwaukee Rotary Club.
- Tuesday, March 18, 1-3 p.m., REMCO Forum, Washington Park Senior Center, sponsored by Retired Employees of Milwaukee.
- Thursday, March 20, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Milwaukee Forum, Water Buffalo Restaurant, 249 N. Water St.

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# The impossible 6th: 8 on the trail, 1 in jail

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

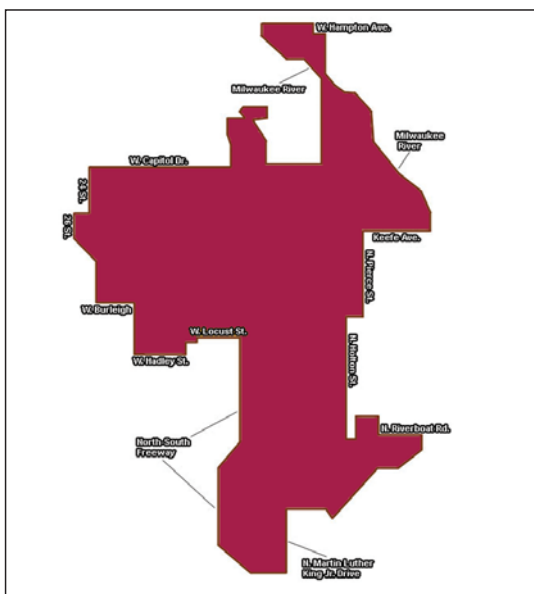
You would be looking in vain in this story to find any Feb. 19 recommendations in the Ald. Michael McGee dispute. But do look for a moment at the map of the 6th District.

Sharing the bustling Riverwest with East Side's District 3, flowing down along the Milwaukee River and over to Martin Luther King Dr., District 6 also heads west and north to encompass major slabs of Locust, Burleigh, Capitol, even Hampton.

It needs more jobs desperately for determined families, and more help for troubled adolescents, and more freedom from intimidation and street violence. But it is also poised to flourish, to lure even more development money for vibrant, diverse opportunities.

It has an important place in the city's history of fiercely dedicated "eyes on the prize" citizens.

In the media, however, this



perfectly positioned central powerhouse of growth is painted as Milwaukee's armpit.

The surrounding community has begun to flinch rather than embrace. Commuting suburban-

ites find routes of avoidance. Neighboring districts swoop in to lure development money and opportunities away. Community and religious groups have to fight even harder here for jobs, education and attention.

Many in unions live here or are rooted here by family connections. The little shops, the libraries, the playgrounds carry fond memo-

## Comment

ries. (Isn't that the block where Mayor Frank Zeidler lived for decades - and when I was a kid, didn't he let me come over and help garden?)

So on the one hand the image bashing the 6th has taken is unfair, simplistic and harmful -- a lost opportunity crying for change.

On the other it is struggling with an aldermanic race like a bad episode of "The Sopranos."

Citizens are angrily taking sides over McGee, held in jail on charges of intending bodily harm, who is facing a field that includes devoted enemies, supporters and self-proclaimed saviors.

The names are familiar -- a school board member (Charlene Hardin), a Coggs of a famous public service family (Milele Coggs), a former alderman (Fred Gordon), a city development specialist (Una Van Duvall), the leader of a recall effort (Vianna Jordan).

With McGee there are nine candidates in all Feb. 19 (down from an original 11). And that's just the official candidates. Others are putting up write-in signs.

In that recall effort, residents felt that outsiders, even the Waukesha GOP, were telling them what to do. They backed McGee strongly. But from that race also came charges of vote buying, an issue McGee is scheduled to face after the primary but before the April 1 election. A felony conviction forces him out.

COPE interviewed several candidates -- but not all, obviously including the one behind bars -- and thought several impressive, members told Labor Press.

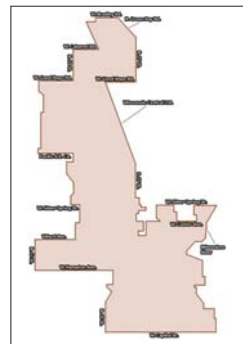
But the committee was torn. Obviously a fully free alderman is desperately necessary to help and protect the community. But if the 6th District was upset before at outsiders telling them what to think, how would they react now?

And in so volatile a legal and emotional entanglement, COPE decided the residents of the 6th District are best suited to whittle down to two, at which point labor would be more influential if it decided to reconsider.

So look at the map again. If you live there, make up your mind by Feb. 19th and be heard.

## No-show equals no-go for COPE in city District 1

There was another crowded Common Council race where COPE couldn't make an endorsement, over in District 1. Incumbent Ashanti Hamilton has gained labor support before, but he did not complete a questionnaire or arrange an interview under deadline. Only two of his five opponents went through the process.



Map of city District 1

and to the end, this sort of thing will happen and there's nothing we can do," noted Annie Wacker, who was the COPE point person on arranging contacts.

While respecting the commitment of all the candidates in all the races, here that was not enough for balance on the issues -- one of which seemed the pros and cons of the shootings and license revocation at Club Escape.

COPE hopes to return to the District 1 race after the primary - "but if people don't take our questions and interview process seriously



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- Mrs. Barbara Stewart, City of Milwaukee
- Mrs. Delores B. Mantilla, Milwaukee County
- Mrs. Cenettie M. Johnson, Milwaukee County

# Flaherty top choice in lively 3rd District field

There was a surprise on the Milwaukee Common Council. One open seat. Good friends of the incumbent learned only two days before his announced retirement. Few saw it coming -- and even as we went to press many remain obsessively curious about why it happened in the first place.

Michael D'Amato, popular enough to have been touted for other offices and looking last Thanksgiving as if he could survive any challenges, announced he was not running again in the 3rd District.

Speculation immediately abounded, particularly given the level of big developments and neighbor unhappiness in the district. While D'Amato has enjoyed labor support, and cited personal reasons, his announced resignation unleashed a floodgate of community concerns.

How influential could the alderman seat be about town and gown issues of overcrowding and security around the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee?

Were some people playing up the youth and racial issues in one of the safest -- and most liberal -- districts in the city? How were residents being kept in the loop on construction and river projects?

Why has there been more fighting than solutions over mass transit? How should development and consolidation be handled from Lake Drive to Cambridge to Riverwest?

Into this unexpectedly wide-open contest leapt eight candidates -- a daunting number to assess. It would have been easiest to just take a pass.

But COPE interviewed in depth and saw a clear leader: Patrick Flaherty, already well known to the non-profit community for his ability to forge coalitions, handle large budgets and inspire quiet compromises at City Hall.

Flaherty, founder of Center Advocates and Vice Chair of Citizen Action of Wisconsin, has owned a home in the district for 14 years and clearly looked far deeper than others interviewed into many of the district concerns: river development, mass transit, projects, neighborhood accord and response to complaints (something that constantly came up as a concern of 3rd District residents).

Flaherty smiles a lot and laughs easily and "understood prevailing wage as well as I've ever seen on a questionnaire," noted Sheila Cochran, the council's secretary-treasurer, who has

worked closely with Flaherty on Citizen Action issues.

Other COPE interviewers who hadn't met him also noted his balanced temperament and openness. They were taken by his composure and reasonable answers under pressure and -- given some of the candidates in the field -- his ability to stay sane and focused.

That proved very important at the Miramar Theatre January 16 -- on Oakland Ave. in the heart of the district -- when all eight candidates showed up for the first forum (sponsored by six neighborhood associations) and faced a packed and vocal house.

D'Amato's departure brought his legislative assistant into the contest. Sam McGovern-Rowen shares with Flaherty that reasonable tone and appearance but also brings with him the pros and cons of close association with the departing alderman.

Both know their way around City Hall and landed the endorsements of other public officials and civic leaders -- though Flaherty had the edge with the backing of the area's popular veteran advocate in the legislature, Rep. Jon Richards.

While both are expected to be the front-runners, there are others who can't be ignored.

The only woman, Sura Faraj, is known as a Riverwest maverick. John Connelly, who also has campaign experience for former mayor Norquist, is the UWM police relations specialist.

Nik Kovac is well known in the district and his father led the Downer area's punch-back on a multi-story garage development.

These three have convincing forum set pieces on their individual impassioned concerns, though the issue in this race will come down to who has the believability, temperament, honesty and creativity for the long

haul. And there are just enough other candidates in the race to supply comic relief.

So the competitive lines were being drawn, clearly and loudly, in a fast-moving contest that no one contends is any sort of pushover.

Labor does not have deep membership density in the 3rd District.

But it has deep sympathizers with its progressive causes and philosophies, so union support can make a difference for Flaherty. -- D.P.N.



Pat Flaherty (center) chats with other candidates before a standing-room only forum at the Miramar Theatre January 16, moderated by Milwaukee magazine editor Bruce Murphy. The turnout reflected the political involvement of the residents and the issues that are driving this 3rd District aldermanic race toward an active February 19th primary. Six neighborhood associations joined in sponsoring the event, five of the speakers brought along their own vocal cliques of enthusiasts.

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# These city incumbents retain COPE's faith

Initially, COPE members were perplexed -- what had Ald. Terry Witkowski done to face two opponents in District 13 with union backgrounds? Both plumber Chris Kuester and former police union boss, the famously grim-faced Bradley DeBraska (whose union had actually endorsed Kuester), came in for interviews as did Witkowski himself.

Surely there must be some grounds to the dispute with the alderman, who handles an unusual district encompassing Mitchell Field and running down to College Ave.

Turns out nothing serious, or prohibitive, nor did either opponent offer better ideas or stronger methods for getting things done.

Not only did Witkowski win easy approval from COPE, some in the room wondered whether the opponents had confused him with an alderman COPE has never endorsed in a district to the west -- the similarly named Jim Witkowiak, who faces four opponents in the primary for District 12.

Neither Witkowiak nor his main competitor, Angel Sanchez (who won in 2000, lost in 2004 and looks to square off again), filled out questionnaires or came in for interviews, so there was no endorsement.

Ald. T. Anthony Zielinski of the 14th District, a leader of Fair Trade initiatives and other legislation to keep the Common Council on its toes, came in for the COPE interviews (neither of his opponents did) and was a shoo-in for endorsement.

Ditto Ald. Joe Dudzik, a former AFSCME member, who went



Ald. Witkowski retains labor support in a strange primary.



Relaxation has become a stock in trade for Ald. Willie Wade, shown here at the Milwaukee council's open house.



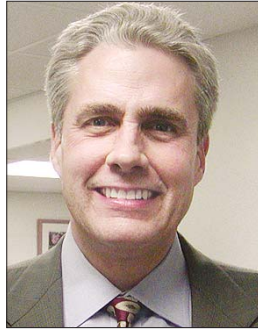
COPE sticks by Ald. Joe Dudzik in a busy primary. As it did (below) for Ald. Zielinski



Ald. Joe Davis has no opponents at all.



Ald. Jim Bohl also won COPE support.



Backed Ald. Bob Bauman faces one opponent in April.



he had two opponents to force a primary, then one was removed for insufficient signatures, then that one was restored because of a misunderstanding, so the primary was suddenly back on.

through the process for the 11th District while neither of his opponents did. COPE readily endorsed Dudzik

Ald. Willie Wade, a former SEIU and MTEA member, has a first-ever City Hall track record.

In two elections since 2003 as the old 10th District was reconfigured into his new 7th District, newcomer Wade had to beat three people who were or about to become aldermen --

Rosa Cameron (later convicted), Fred Gordon and Michael McGee, the latter two now competing in the crowded 6th District.

So this year's bounce-around was no big deal to Wade, as first


plans for the district and was promptly endorsed.

The good news for several candidates endorsed early by COPE is that they won't face a contest until the April 1 election, which gives them time to trumpet the labor endorsement and raise more funds. Nor has COPE necessarily finished with interviews.

Ald. Michael Murphy of District 10 thought he faced primary opposition but a failure of signatures leaves him with an early endorsement by COPE and no race until April 1.

Ald. Robert Bauman of District 4, the powerful downtown area, was interviewed as was his lone opponent, and he was also endorsed for April 1.

Endorsed with no formal opposition at all were Ald. Joe Davis of District 2 and Ald. Jim Bohl of District 5 (though a lingering challenge may give Bohl an April 1 opponent).



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**Election info:  
 The basic nuts and bolts**

Sure, the unions work hard on election interviews and details, but so do Milwaukee's city and county workers.

If you need a refresher on who's running in the city and for what, just go to [www.city.milwaukee.gov/2008SpringPrimaryCan24415.htm](http://www.city.milwaukee.gov/2008SpringPrimaryCan24415.htm). Election workers and greeters are still needed for both the Feb. 19 primary and the April 1 election. Contact your election commission. The major positions require a bit of training, a commitment for all day at the polls (with lunch and dinner breaks) and they do pay citizens (who are not candidates) for the inspection work.

The city also provides absentee balloting through Feb. 18 in Room 102 of the Zeidler Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway next to City Hall. The public is also invited to the absentee ballot counting, which takes place from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Feb. 19 at the City of Milwaukee Warehouse, 1028 N. Hawley Rd.

7 a.m. to 8 p.m. are also the hours of voting at the polling places on Feb. 19. All voters -- and new voters especially -- should plan in advance on where they must go to vote.

The city has long provided a nifty Internet tool to help voters locate their polling place and their various elected officials.

(Some suburbs have worked to provide the same service but it is currently absent on the county side of the Milwaukee government portal, [www.Milwaukee.gov](http://www.Milwaukee.gov))

Choose the city side of the Internet service and then the top left link: "Find My Representatives." There you enter your full address and the web returns to you not only your voting location but a list of the city, county, school board and aldermanic representative for the address (and just for good measure your House and Senate officials).

**Endorsements to date**

With races still to be looked at after the February 19 primary, and with **Justice Louis Butler** roundly backed April 1 for a new term on the Wisconsin Supreme Court, here are the Milwaukee labor council delegate recommendations so far after marathon interviews in early January.

The endorsements are based on deliberations held for the union community and supportive organizations:

**FEBRUARY 19TH PRIMARY**

*Milwaukee County Board*

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

**District 15** (opposing incumbent Lynne De Bruin): **Daniel Cody**.

*City of Milwaukee Common Council*

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

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

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

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

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

**APRIL 1 GENERAL ELECTION**

*Milwaukee County*

County Executive: **Lena Taylor**.

*Circuit Court Branch 40 (open seat)*

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

*County Board*

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

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

*City of Milwaukee*

Mayor: **Tom Barrett** (incumbent).

Treasurer: **Wayne Whittow** (incumbent).

*Common Council*

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

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

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

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



Jan Balistrieri in District 9

**Second time's the charm in District 9 race**

On April 1, Jan Balistrieri wants another shot at Paul Cesarz.

In 2002 Cesarz, the unknown pharmacist and land-dealer, was swept into office in a special election by the first wave of recalls -- and kept in office by his adherence to such Scott Walker's schemes as selling parkland and urging the creation of taxing entities to take the pressure of spending off the county government's back (though not off the backs of taxpayers).

In 2004, with clarity that he was a Walker clone, Balistrieri took her first run at District 9. She figured her insider knowledge of what was right and wrong at the county, and how to fix things, would carry her through. It didn't.

Today, Balistrieri, a 25 year veteran of county service, understands "I didn't understand enough" about the political game.

She means the human side of the campaign trail -- patience and endurance. Simple things like working all day plowing snow for the county while sustaining energy for doing doors. Like balancing family and politics. Like dealing with voters who would bad-mouth public workers and expect her to agree. Like learning when to walk away and when to move in.

In 2008, two things have changed. One is greater awareness in Franklin and Oak Creek areas that Walker and Cesarz's approach has hardly left the parks more attractive and the community better off.

The second is Balistrieri spent time developing people politics. Make that PEOPLE politics.

The capitalization refer to AFSCME's political education network, PEOPLE.

She has been serving as Local 882's representative in AFSCME District Council 48 and getting tips from the best.

COPE endorsed her easily, not just because Cesarz is bad and her philosophy is better. "She's a much better, more genuine candidate," said one COPE member. -- D.P.N.

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**CIRCULATING** their nomination papers – and also themselves – at the December 14 Open House of the Milwaukee labor council were the two candidates for Milwaukee County Circuit Court Branch 40. **JUDICIOUSLY**, Rebecca Dallet (left) and Jeffrey Norman (far right) were careful to work opposite ends of the hall. They got a lot of practice doing that at a number of labor parties. **BOTH MADE GOOD** impressions. Dallet has a notable resume and major backing from other judges. Norman is well known for his tenacity and perseverance in a municipal judge contest. **IN JANUARY** they produced COPE's only dual endorsement in any race.



## COPE discovers a real grownup for District 14 – Chris Larson

**P**olite and unobtrusive, Christopher Larson is actually too old to be running for County Board supervisor.

That is, if you go by history in District 14, which runs from Oklahoma Ave. south to College Ave. with a west border of 27th St.

Richard Nyklewicz, the predecessor who's retiring after 32 years of service, was actually 20 when first elected. Larson, his backers laugh, is over the hill at age 27.

But don't be fooled by his boyish looks. COPE wasn't. His understanding of county needs and the backing he has drawn from both public officials and union workers testify that there is depth and knowledge behind his quiet manner.

Larson, a lifelong Milwaukee resident and a Thomas More graduate nine years ago, has the financial acumen that the county often turned to the 14th District to supply.



Christopher Larson

He has a degree in finance from UWM and served as business manager for InStep Running & Walking Centers.

He is also emerging as the stable presence in a Feb. 19th primary that could get feisty and may have to rely on him to generate light amid the heat.

Among his three opponents for the open seat is Sebastian

Raclaw, who stirred up some tension when he tried to win the presidency of the Milwaukee police union, openly attacked Nyklewicz on his web log and asked Scott Walker for help raising money for this campaign.

Larson in contrast intends to keep his campaign positive and neighbor to neighbor.

He does think the county faces some hard decisions, but his emails also feature a favorite quote from FDR: "A nation doesn't have to be cruel to be tough."  
-- *Dominique Paul Noth*

Stopping by the Building & Trades holiday party at Plumbers Hall was the first – and lone – African American on the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Incumbent Louis Butler enters the April 1 race for a 10 year term supported across the board – labor councils, Realtors, police union – yet despite his balanced reputation is still likely to face a big-money attack from the right wing.

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# Toxic disgust imported to Sensenbrenner

Around the nation in a hundred events, the United Steelworkers backed by AFL-CIO used Jan. 16 as a National Day of Action to confront members of Congress and shame them with reality to halt toxic trade.

One of the targets in Wisconsin's Congressional delegation is in the Milwaukee area - and known for some pretty toxic legislation of his own affecting workers, Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner.

Members of USW, the AFL-CIO and health and safety organizations paid his Brookfield office a visit at 11 a.m., talking to his office manager and urging his support for the Food and Product Safety Act (S-2081) introduced by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio).

The bill is not just about the lead-laced toxic toys from China that have been making the headlines. It is about red-lead steel, counterfeit circuit breakers, poisoned pet food, contaminated human food and drugs and other dangerous imports that many in the public haven't heard about.

Joined by thousands of union workers in the nation, the purpose of the protest was framed by USW President Leo Gerard:

"People are starting to realize that we're paying the price for cheap, imported goods so corporations can make bigger profits. It's time for our policy-makers to fix this broken trade system, repair our regulatory agencies and protect our jobs and families."

The problem of toxic



Union workers and trade groups take the campaign against toxic goods to Rep. Sensenbrenner via his office staff.

imports is enormous - and most of the public started to realize this last June when 1.5 million "Thomas the Tank Engine" painted in China toys were recalled.

Since then more than 6 million toys in all have been recalled for high levels of lead, which can cause a variety of health problems, including learning disabilities, stunted growth, kidney damage and even death.

Other toxic imports that have come to light in recent months include lipstick, toothpaste, seafood, children's lunch boxes and pet food.

As many as 450,000 passenger tires made in China were recalled last year because of a blowout risk.

Over-the-counter drugs made in India and China that were not approved for human consumption have made their way onto our store shelves.

Hollow structural steel

imported from China used in the construction of skyscrapers and power plants has been called into question by construction firms and industry organizations for allegedly failing to meet mechanical specifications.

As many as 295,000 sets of malfunctioning car fuses from China were recalled because they could damage the electrical systems in automobiles.

Federal inspectors found prunes tinted with unsafe chemical dyes, frozen breaded shrimp preserved with cancer causing antibiotics, poisons in swordfish and juices and fruits that could only be described by inspectors as "filthy."

This hit list of toxic products and fraud was provided by the USW from its research.

Amazingly, while you would have expected instant anger and demand for regulations for American consumers, whose health and lives are so threatened, instead the anger and demand has been slower growing.

This is similar to the country's reaction to America's trade deals, as Sachin Ccheda reminded delegates to the labor council at the January meeting.

Now executive director of the Wisconsin Fair Trade Coalition who had been pressing Congress to do the right thing on pending trade deals, Ccheda asked the rhetorical question: "Dose anyone know one



Fair Trade leader Sachin Ccheda urges council delegates to fight against the Colombia and South Korean bills in Congress.

American worker who benefited from NAFTA?"

Despite the inevitable answer in the negative, the US just approved a similar deal, with only marginal improvements on labor and environment, with Peru. And now the struggling middle class can expect nothing more than the same.

Yet Ccheda rattled off the leading presidential candidates who managed to avoid recording a vote for the bill by making themselves unavailable to actually vote against it. So, he lamented, did some of fair trade's best friends, including Rep. Gwen Moore -- "whom I adore" -- and the national AFL-CIO.

More gumption is expected on the looming free trade bills involving Columbia and South Korea (learn more at [www.wisconsin-fairtrade.org](http://www.wisconsin-fairtrade.org)).

Officials and labor groups are now hearing the anger and facing the irony. Millions of manufacturing jobs in the last seven years have been exported to countries without strong labor, environment, health and consumer safety protections -- and these are the products that are returning to our shores poisonous.

S-2081 addresses a wide variety of goods (including consumer, industrial, medical and food products) that Americans need toxic protection from. It requires companies that produce and bring toxic products into the US to cover the full costs of any recalls. In one move, the US Congress could prevent toxic goods and stop toothless free trade deals.



PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS are not far from even the local races and partisans. Inevitably, a touch of confusion as well as ample enthusiasm accompanied ceremonies at Yatchak Hall Jan. 16 for the opening nearby of Barack Obama's staffed headquarters for the primary. The news of the opening came from the political arm of Mayor Tom Barrett -- who has backed Obama since April -- in a press release that called the site "the Milwaukee labor council building."

YET ALL CENTRAL AFL-CIO councils have agreed not to endorse any candidate (while letting member unions roam free to support and debate anyone they want).

THE BUILDING is probably best known as the council's home, but it is just one of the many union tenants of the owners, the Graphics Communications Conference, now a partner with the Teamsters. Among the unions leasing space are the SEIU State Council, which subleased space to Obama's campaign.

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## COPE

From Page 1

process just to be considered.

All COPE's recommendations were unanimously approved -- the delegates clearly understood the time, work and thoroughness put in.

It turned out that some of the candidates interviewed January 7 and 8 won't face an opponent until April 1 -- and in a few cases have no opponent at all.

It also turned out that some candidates should have been as diligent as COPE was. There's a reason for care and speed.

The Milwaukee Area Labor Council - as it will be known from Jan. 27 on, after adding Ozaukee and Washington counties through a merger -- had already struck fire early for its main efforts for the spring.

Statewide that was returning to the Wisconsin Supreme Court the first African American member, incumbent Louis Butler.

For Milwaukee County it is turning state Sen. Lena Taylor's race for county executive into something more than hope. The quick start has paid off -- she already is closing the funding and voting gap against Scott Walker, whose six dismal years seemed designed to make county government crumble around him before someone smart got there.

Labor got one break in the Butler and Taylor contests -- breathing room. Potential primary-causing opposition (three or more candidates) vanished at the end of 2007. In fact, two withdrew from the county exec race in favor of backing Taylor.

But any relief in those races



Mayor Barrett took his turn on the COPE grill -- quite candidly it turned out. See Page 10.

was balanced by mass confusion for city and county contests..

Consider the logistics: Eight aldermanic races in the city pulled 40 candidates through for Feb. 19 and COPE contacted almost all.

Some candidates didn't like the pace. They fumed about the admittedly tough deadlines. Incumbents wondered about opportunities before the primary to gain support and mingle with union voters.

*There certainly are:*

*For public officials and endorsed candidates, the Milwaukee labor council will turn its Feb. 6 delegate meeting into*

*a Serb Hall Open House with meet and greet and nibbles.*

But the sour grapes? Having none of that was Paula Dorsey, a veteran of COPE and election watching and also president of the AFSCME District Council 48 board.

The tight schedule, she pointed out, separated the serious newcomers from the "I hope you like me!" unprepared. "If they want to hold public office, they'd better know how to organize," she noted. "How were people who got in front of us (for interviews)

who didn't have a clue about budgets, taxes and what the elected official really does. They may be well-meaning but what a waste of time."

Typical examples of that:

When asked what he would change in the city allocations -- a billion dollar budget! -- one aldermanic candidate confessed he had no clue. "I figured I could learn about all that once I got elected," he said.

Several of the candidates for city alderman or county supervisor didn't even know what taxes

did, who collected them or how they worked.

When one candidate suggested that he would "bring along a lawyer" to tell him what to do, the COPE interviewers could only roll their eyes.

Another was shocked that union membership didn't bring automatic approval, or that lack of union membership didn't rule a candidate out.

The process also clarified what labor expects from the candidates -- and it's a mountain of competence and desire. What are their precise positions, number of volunteers, money in the bank, backing from public officials, willingness to support union causes -- like opposing privatization of public workers -- and how hard would they work the doors alongside union volunteers?

These are the answers valued. "I mean well" doesn't hack it.

In truth, there were some primary contests so confusing that COPE stayed out of final choices, but there were others where COPE played Star Trek -- boldly going forward.

COPE chose clear preferences in crowded open seats. In two cases, it backed dumping a serving County Board supervisor -- including one who had earned union support in the distant past.

There were choices that won't be a ballot issue until April 1 and there was a pledge to interview skipped candidates or re-assess races in February.

Our stories explore endorsements, and some races where COPE didn't endorse. More interviews, if not quite a marathon, await labor next month.

## Calendar

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

### Wednesday, February 6

Open House and Delegate Meeting  
Appetizers and Cash Bar

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.

### Tuesday, February 19

Wisconsin Presidential Primary  
and Local Primary Elections  
Find Your Precinct and Vote!

### Wednesday, February 27

Executive Board, 2 p.m.  
Yatchak Hall, 633 S. Hawley Rd.

### Wednesday, March 5

Delegate Meeting -- Last Before April 1 Election  
Milwaukee Area Labor Council AFL-CIO  
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma Ave.

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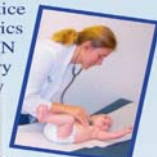


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# Funny things happen on way to the election

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

A hard race was expected in District 18, but there won't be any. No race was expected by a veteran labor friend in District 1, but he left the barn door open for all manner of mischief.

First to the County Board 18th: On Jan. 7, when Johnny Thomas strolled in for his early morning COPE interview, he brought some startling news. He had just learned that the other two candidates for District 18, where Roger Quindel had resigned, had failed to gather enough legitimate nomination signatures. So in effect, barring a freak write-in, he was the new supervisor.

The union members happily congratulated him. Truth be known, his ideas and background -- military veteran, master's degree in business administration, Harley-Davidson analyst, strongly supportive of union issues -- had impressed COPE readers more than the other candidates did in the detailed questionnaire.

So did his attitude about his startling victory - don't take anything for granted. He still intends to do doors and he was planning to follow Quindel around to learn about the county's widespread facilities. "He gets it," noted one COPE member.

Over in county District 1, no one had filed against James White, a seasoned campaigner with deep labor support, who was the first supervisor to successfully beat back a recall effort years ago.

But something had gone awry and on the same day that



Johnny Thomas

Thomas learned he had won in a walk came a shocker for White.

His name would not be on the April 1 ballot. There would simply be a write-in slot for voters in District 1

What happened? Apparently, when nomination signatures and addresses were

gathered, the handlers sought people from the old (now redrawn) District 1, and just enough of those were outside the real boundaries to push him off the ballot.

To make up for the error White intends a full-blown campaign to remind people. But he well knows the mistake means anyone can file notice of a write-in campaign or even conduct a stealth write-in. The county has already drawn inquiries about just how to do that.

Not caught by such problems in District 4 was Marina Dimitrijevic. Labor Press talked to her and several other supervisors in mid-December who had no opponents on the horizon -- no indication anyone would run against her.

But she was not about to be caught napping. She kept her campaign forces moving, her



James White

fund-raising going, and she kept her eye on her own nomination papers -- and sure enough, at the last minute she's being challenged.

If the opponent survives court complaints about how he gathered signatures, she'll be ready and has already talked to such past supporters as labor unions.

Such surprises were extreme this year, but the County Board has often drawn candidates that are running on a whim or complaint, or just to stir things up.

No one has successfully explained about District 16, where the hard-working and outspoken John Weishan Jr. is facing three candidates, only one of whom came in for a COPE interview.

One (out of five) was also the magic number of COPE interviews for District 17, a wide open seat where everyone expected more diversity and more campaigning.

Dan Devine had long announced his departure to run for West Allis mayor. But one out of five? Not impressive enough or clear enough for COPE to make a primary choice. After the primary, this race may be revisited.

## Candor and the mayor

"I can count on labor to speak frankly to me," said Mayor Tom Barrett as he settled in for his COPE interview January 7. And then he added impishly:

"And you sure do."

It was clear he can count on that continuing. The mayor was recommended for a second term. COPE had interviewed his filed opponent and even a write-in candidate, but there was never any doubt Barrett would be endorsed and there was some pleasure that no strong opposition had emerged for so avowed a believer in union basics.

But to the unions, an open

door and a policy of frankness remain part of the equation -- more so than ever. But proof is even better.

Barrett came in for some sizeable compliments from the union leaders -- the care he took for the workers' concern in the last budget, the effort he made for UNITE HERE to talk to hotel and restaurant developers on multiple projects downtown, the takeover and initiatives, with organized labor's involvement, in the WIB (workforce investment board).

But there was hair-down discussion of troublesome areas: the policy and control of city development, the fight for community benefits on any project the city is involved in, his staff staying alert to those sharp anti-union practices that keep erupting.

For instance, years have



Host Lyle Balistreri playing Santa seemed to crack Barrett up in December at the Building & Trades holiday party.

gone by since the Department of Public Works project at the fabled A.O. Smith (Tower Automotive) site was launched as a turnkey operation. The substandard wages that occurred, forcing the removal of an offending firm from future city projects, was not what the mayor

wanted to happen, leaders conceded, but the pain still lingered -- and so did the view that he shouldn't have been snookered in the first place.

Barrett conceded mistakes, suggesting that he came into the mayor's office with more of the background and expectations of a legislator, where he had been most successful.

Defly he preached the mayor's role as a balancing wheel and how deeply he had been upset by the games that had affected his administration.

The unions made it clear that the learning curve was over. A second term meant higher expectations from him on policy, speed -- and delivery. -- D.P.N.

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# Support of Cody also about dumping De Bruin

The Milwaukee labor council's main focus on electing Lena Taylor as county executive doesn't mean unions can overlook some jumpy County Board races. The lineup of supervisors is going to change no matter what, with two retirements and one departure, plus active challenges by union members of two sitting incumbents.

Plus there's been a host of screwy happenings to turn the Feb. 19 and April 1 elections into a curious hodgepodge. (See stories on Pages 7 and 10.)

And all this is for the other major arm of county government, one that has held off Scott Walker's worst ideas and longs to be working in cooperation with a new county exec (by Labor Press' count, 13 of the 19 would be glad

Residents of District 15 will get a chance to compare labor's endorsed candidate, Daniel Cody, with the incumbent supervisor, Lynne De Bruin, and conservative Daniel Wycklendt at a candidate forum from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, February 12, at St. Aemelian-Lakeside Capitol West Academy, 3939 N. 88th St. The sponsor is Capitol West Neighborhood Association



Daniel Cody

gust and frustration, underlay the COPE recommendation to back a personable, truly Democratic (with both a small and a capitalized D) and pro-active challenger, Daniel Cody, in the 15th District, and dump a well-known (and once labor supported) incumbent Lynne De Bruin.

Cody is unabashedly progressive. De Bruin defended herself in the COPE interview as supportive of unions. But AFSCME, which represents county workers, had devastating chapter and verse on her votes, her alliances with Scott Walker and how she has been troublesome not only for the union but for so many of her constituents.

A former nurse, she has long been given a pass because of her interest in health issues, "but all we need do is compare the few people she helps against the ones she's failed," Cody noted in his interview.

"It's frustrating," he added later. "She's a regular on conservative talk shows bashing unions or progressives."

Asked about her self-description as a moderate. Cody points out how she supported Walker with her votes and, were it not for other supervisors, would have allowed him "to destroy the county by a death of a thousand cuts, on things like the parks and bus routes that are so vital to our seniors."

"Philosophical views are one thing, but pretending to be receptive is another."

COPE agreed and asks unions members to volunteer for Cody, to get involved in the primary voting and set up a major confrontation and discussion in the April 1 general election.

Cody has already tapped into the long-term disappointment within the district about De Bruin, complaints that have been visible to Labor Press for years in

personal contacts with residents of the area as well as on websites and in neighborhood meetings.

The odds are Cody can also improve county efficiency. Privatization or ineptitude in his speciality has cost the taxpayers with technology that should have been saving money.

Cody is an IT expert who "won't be fooled by the technobabble that is practiced on so many public officials," he said.

A Washington Heights resident along with his spouse and two children, a member and union steward for American Federation of Teachers Wisconsin Local 4848, active in the Democratic Party and a five-year blogger (dancody.org, now also danielcody.com for this race), Cody is open about his views on media, politics and neighborhood concerns.

He says the main complaint he hears about the incumbent is "she's an absentee landlord - she shows up every four years at election time and is only receptive to small slices of her constituents."

Since a staunch conservative has joined the race, District 15 will have a primary election Feb. 19. -- D.P.N.



We'd like to claim that the labor council's Open House brought out all that intense talk about progressive politics. But actually it's the times we live in. Here in earnest discussion are (from left) Rep. Josh Zepnick, progressive action groups' Robert Kraig and One Wisconsin Now's Cory Liebman.



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