



## Center of Excellence gains federal funds to expand

Among the \$1.2 million for economic development in Milwaukee pushed through Congress by Sen. Herb Kohl in July was a quarter of a million dollars to expand the Center of Excellence at 38th St. and Wisconsin Ave.

Kohl called the center run by WRTP (the Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, along with Big Step) among the "exciting initiatives" in a city that has "fallen on tough times."

"We need to invest in projects that will create good jobs," Kohl said. The money will support further construction and renovation at the Center, which in less than a year at this location has chalked up impressive results. Through apprenticeship classes, training certificate programs and rapid referral to job opportunities, it has helped hundreds of residents add skills and climb out of poverty.

Kohl, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has been particularly active since the Democrats gained control of Congress in introducing legislation to further Wisconsin neighborhoods. He also pushed for RACM to receive \$750,000 to acquire and refurbish properties to revitalize the 30th Street Industrial Corridor. RACM is the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Milwaukee. The corridor was once a vital industrial artery, laced with large manufacturing plants.



Sen. Herb Kohl

## Protest unmasks Dobbs by duplicating him



One hundred versions of the CNN host hope that by looking like him they also will be heard in the immigration debate.

— Labor Press photos by Dominique Paul Noth

Members of Congress admit it has been the most strident and dominant voice in the debate. He has annoyed casual TV viewers by the exaggeration, tone and flat-out nastiness. He has also encouraged the vigilante crowd and the citizens who see terrorists under every bed. And he has caused exasperated immigration rights activists to wonder aloud: Is this fair?

Should a pudgy older white guy constantly exposed for falsehoods and trying to beat Fox News at its own cable ratings game hold this much power at the public podium?

He has the microphone, to be sure, but does that free him of the

obligation to facts and fairness?

Voces de la Frontera doesn't think so, and July 16 the worker rights center was joined by a dozen other community and religious groups, and handfolds of amused passersby, to ladder the steps of Milwaukee's federal courthouse with a hundred Lou Dobbs asking, "Do we have to look like him to be heard?"

The humor as well as the outrage drew media attention as the diverse participants donned masks of Dobbs in a surreal protest of CNN's most highly rated host. More pertinently it reminded the community why America hasn't had a balanced, inclusive debate on a multi-lay-

**Dobbs** continued Page 10



Concluding with applause and expressions of solidarity, Iraqi union leaders joined with American ones at the crowded Yatchak Hall outside the MCLC offices June 21. From left were MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Cochran, who served as moderator; Iraqi oil union leader Faleh Abood Umara; USW's Douglas Drake, who handled the extensive question and answer session, and Hashmeya Muhsin Hussein, head of the electrical workers union. — Photo by Sue Ruggles of USLAW

## Iraq's destiny, from workers who must live it

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

Disagreements erupted in loud voices. Accord was more quietly stated during the visit of Iraqi union leaders to Milwaukee.

But in both tempers and tones, the message was clear June 21: the US should get out, let Iraq be a nation and not impose its own monetary concerns on the country's future.

The message recognized that workers everywhere should be in solidarity, that the American people are still regarded as friends. But it brutally dissected and dismissed US policy and characterized the US media as still too willing to embrace the administration's simplicities.

At the Milwaukee talk, a union member and veteran was clearly angered when the leader of the Iraqi oil workers union described American troops in the same words President Bush and Pentagon officials have used, an "occupying force."

"American soldiers have never been occupiers," he shouted at Faleh Abood Umara. "We've always been liberators."

Faleh had heard this before in the tour of US cities this summer arranged in part by USLAW (US Labor Against the War) He noted afterward that America's support of its own soldiers and its vision of itself as a noble nation

make it difficult to criticize policy without seeming anti-American, but that his viewpoint reflects the realities he sees in Iraq everyday and that many US citizens still have trouble confronting.

To the angry audience member, he smiled politely and did not budge. He pointed to the Iraqi deaths that far outstripped American casualties and how the violence existed most heavily where American soldiers could be drawn in.

Hisself imprisoned by Saddam Hussein, Faleh also lost a brother in the aftermath of the US occupation — and he reminded the audience crowded into Yatchak Hall that in 1991 he had been among those who rose up in southern Iraq to overthrow Saddam based on US promises of support. "No liberators then," he said.

Left to their own devices, Faleh said, "Iraqi people as a whole will never allow al-Qaeda. Wherever US forces are, the killing and carnage is more."

Both he and the other labor leader, the first woman to head a major Iraqi union, Hashmeya Muhsin Hussein, also raised eye-

brows by insisting this was not a war between Shiites and Sunnis "but between factions of politicians from these camps and the gangs (militias) they control," said Hashmeya, president of the Iraqi Electrical Utility Workers Union.

American media makes much of the hatred between the two Muslim streams based on their history and even their prayers, but "did Americans find us fighting each other when they came to Iraq?" asked Hashmeya. "No. The fighting among Iraqis started two and a half years after the Americans came."

Faleh added that White House public relations has done "everything they could to encourage sectarian strife" — and if Iraqis are just groups of religious fanatics, "how did we manage to get along in the past?"

In fact, the history is that the sides reconcile faster without Big Brother interference and in much of Iraq Sunnis and Shiites depend on each other and even intermarry, Hashmeya said. Which is why she insists that the nationalist slogan should be "We are not Shia or

**Iraq** continued Page 9

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# A master of the petulant long goodbye

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

## Comment

When the dust cleared, Gerard Randall got a little bit of reward for making so much trouble in giving up leadership of the Private Industry Council. And Mayor Tom Barrett and his designated leader, Donald Sykes, just have to wait a few months to get rid of him.

Randall was faced with an inevitable transition of government workforce money to the mayor's control. The federal law is clear -- if the mayor of a large city wants to take on the challenge, the mayor can.

But Randall did not go gently into the night.

He griped and moaned on the public airwaves, lobbied behind the scenes, used his existing structure as workforce development board (until July 1) to force

recognition from the state, froze funds and spread distress about the takeover.

Sykes, a genial presence with considerable skills at negotiations and community development, had only accommodating things to say about Randall -- even while trying to get his hands around the ever dancing details and in the end conducting an audit of where the PIC money had gone.

But no question. Randall proved again an expert at making a nuisance of himself. (Gov. Doyle discovered that years ago when Randall declined to follow form and resign from the UW board of trustees.)

It was the mayor and Sykes who won the central battle when the PIC board, containing many Randall friends and PIC recipi-

ents (a practice that ends under Sykes), agreed to install the mayor's choice as the new CEO. But the board also threw Randall a \$61,000 bone of reduced pay and a new title (assistant CEO) until Dec. 31 when he departs the premises.

Barrett believed that PIC's final decision ensured "that no existing programs or client services are disrupted while we undergo this transition," but in effect, for a few months, Randall had denied the mayor's office the smooth transition everyone else had wanted.

No one could point to anything but trouble accomplished by his tactics.

One result is that it won't be clear until October how funding survives and new programs can form. Under Randall, the HIRE Center for displaced workers had no new program funds available since February and several workers received layoff notices.

That situation may ease. Sykes has delayed for a month the layoff of two PIC personnel attached to the HIRE. Two vacancies in Job Services for the HIRE were retirement related, insiders say, and had more to do with Doyle's pledge to reduce the state workforce by attrition. (The irony

here, say the insiders, is that these positions were paid by federal dollars, so the gains for the state are negligible.)

Two other workers from the LETC staff who received layoff notices are likely to have those reversed since more funding than PIC indicated will be in place for HIRE operations. The PIC executives who imposed the layoffs before Sykes took over have been "reassigned."

Randall's supporters have suggested everyone is making too big a deal about the federal money that PIC handles. It's only \$14 million this year, they say. But that ignores the past and the future.

Ten-fold that amount went through PIC into Milwaukee in the 2000s. Much of that funding was for experiments or innovations to generate new money, and Labor Press research suggests that Milwaukee did not shine compared to other cities in the tactics it employed.

PIC under Randall pretty much failed to add private and foundation money to the mix, which the mayor intends to do.

And there is likelihood, with new power for Wisconsin representatives in Congress, to undo the Republican influence that has shrunk workforce development

funds coming in from D.C. Which should mean higher federal attention in the future.

Sykes, while impressed with the HIRE operations, has also signaled that he wants changes, which may include added inner city prominence without eliminating the popular and well-located facility at 9<sup>th</sup> St. and National Ave. Randall's old headquarters at 27<sup>th</sup> and North has become Sykes' new headquarters, and an added presence of HIRE there is actively under consideration.

As newspapers noted, during Randall's nine years as head of PIC, which was attached to the county not the city, his salary grew from about \$95,000 a year to more than Barrett makes today (\$156,000 to the mayor's \$143,867). In that time, the PIC staff shrunk in half from 120.

Still, in an era of obscene CEO pay -- the private sector pays 431 times the average of one employee -- where "golden parachutes" for dumped executives are approaching a national scandal, it probably seemed reasonable for the PIC board to decide that Randall could help with the transition. But it was an excuse for paying him \$2,375 a week until Dec. 31 to just go away.

## Presidential lineup for AFL-CIO

With appearances by candidates at gatherings of individual unions and at special individual forums, with a website, [www.workingfamiliesvote08.org](http://www.workingfamiliesvote08.org), devoted totally to the candidates answering working family questions, the AFL-CIO has been building all year to this: the AFL-CIO Presidential Forum in Chicago.

It will be nationally televised on MSNBC starting at 6 p.m. (Central) on Tuesday August 7th.

All the major Democratic candidates have agreed to participate. This is the only forum (debate) devoted to worker issues and it will be vital to the pending AFL-CIO decision whether to encourage its affiliates to endorse a particular candidate or, in effect, cut the unions loose to go their own way.

Which is why rank-and-file input is key and has been arranged, said Mike Cavanaugh, the AFL-CIO director of the office of state and local affiliates. He points out that workers can in this case determine what the candidates will talk about. Some of the questions asked in the nationally televised event will be selected through an online contest at [www.workingfamiliesvote08.org/contest](http://www.workingfamiliesvote08.org/contest). Union members are submitting and voting on questions right now.

The AFL-CIO executive board voted in March to ask each of its 54 national unions to make no endorsement until the AFL-CIO general board decides whether or not to endorse a candidate prior to the primaries. The Aug. 7 forum and member feedback are key steps down that path.

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**Ms. Mamie White, Milwaukee County**  
**Ms. Ada Beatrice Williams-Parr, Milwaukee County**  
**Ms. Opal Veal, Milwaukee County**

# Labor Press wins Midwest awards, encourages more state membership

Labor Press' Lynnnda Guyton attended the Midwest Labor Press Association (MLPA) conference held in Cleveland, Ohio, in June. In that capacity at the conference banquet, she accepted five awards won by the AFL-CIO Milwaukee Labor Press for entries in the annual contest.

Guyton is also an official elected to MLPA office and invited all Wisconsinites "who work on newsletters or papers for your local unions to join us next year in Dubuque, Iowa." "The conference is very

informative and has a great mix of classes that you can take such as Desktop Publishing, Writing for Change, Photography, Labor History, Photoshop and Publication Critique which I have taught for the last two years," said Guyton.

"Each year there are different classes added to the mix and you always bring something new home to implement into your papers. The people attending are like family because many of us have been attending for years and we learn from each other." This was an election year



Lynnnda Guyton

and Guyton was elected to serve her third 2-year term as Wisconsin's MLPA state vice-president.

MLPA encourages and welcomes new members with new ideas to join this organization.

If you or someone you know are interested, feel free to give Lynnnda a call at the Labor Press office, 414-771-7070.

Or write to her at Milwaukee County Labor Council, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53214

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# Calendar

## Sunday, July 29

**Annual St. Ben's BBQ for Homeless, Hungry**

4 p.m. setup, 5 p.m. dinner

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St. Benedict the Moor's Church, 1015 N. 9th St.

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## Wednesday, August 1

**Delegate Meeting**

Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO

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

## Tuesday, August 14

**Laborfest Planning Meeting**

5 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

## Tuesday, August 28

**Last Laborfest Planning Meeting**

5 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

## Wednesday, August 29

**MCLC Executive Board**

2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

# South suburb voters decide Aug. 7 on addition to County Board

On July 10, voters in southern suburbs made a pretty clear choice among six candidates, deciding which two would face off Aug. 7 in the special election for the 8th District seat on the Milwaukee County board, vacated when Ryan McCue was elected Cudahy mayor in the April general election.

Running way ahead was Patricia Jursik, a lawyer with concern for the county parks and public service experience including the MATC board in the 1980s.

Squeaking into the run-off, with roughly 23% of the vote to Jursik's 42% -- which put him 32 votes over third place -- was Chris Kujawa, an avowed supporter of County Executive Scott Walker who is open to more parks privatization and property sales to developers.

The four eliminated candidates together didn't reach Jursik's primary vote total of 1,693, according to election reports, while Kujawa fell short of 1,000 votes in a district that includes (partly) Oak Creek, Cudahy, South Milwaukee and St. Francis.

Salaries for members of the Milwaukee County Board are near \$51,000. All the supervisors are up for re-election in April of next year. The 8th District choice will be elected in time to help decide the 2008 budget.

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Midwest Labor Press Association

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# Keeping union busting a big business

By Ben Zipperer and John Schmitt

Special to Labor Press

As the percentage of American workers in unions continues its long and severe decline, the US Senate voted to kill the Employee Free Choice Act. What prompted the now-dormant bill, and what is causing the weakening of the labor movement, is not a decreased need for unions. According to polls, about half of non-supervisory workers want to join one.

But employers are increasingly breaking the law to prevent their workplaces from being unionized.

Fifty years ago, more than 30% of private-sector workers were organized. That share today is 8%. Globalization and the new, technology-driven economy have contributed to this decline, but advanced economies in Europe survive these same developments with union cover-

age rates as high as 80%. In the US, much of the fall-off is actually the result of illegal, anti-union actions by employers.

Our recent analysis of cases brought before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which oversees union-management relations in most of the private sector, shows that employers illegally fire as many as 1 in 5 union organizers.

Actions by the world's largest employer are a case in point. When butchers at Wal-Mart's Jacksonville, Texas, store joined the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, Wal-Mart permanently closed its meat-cutting departments, switched to pre-packaged meat, and fired four of the union supporters.

But just picking on Wal-Mart is unfair, as much of the business community also despises unions. Unions fight for increased wages and benefits and

for redistributing earnings from employers to workers. Corporate managers, on the other hand, try to maximize profits for shareholders and compensation packages for those at the top. Compelled by the threat of lower profits, many employers will do whatever it takes to avoid a union workplace.

Not infrequently, this means breaking the law. The NLRB makes it illegal to intimidate or fire workers for union activity. Yet, according to our study of data from the NLRB, there has been a steep rise in illegal firings of pro-union workers in the last few years. Currently, 1 in 53 is dumped during an election campaign. And employers generally fire the workers who are leading the union organizing drives. If 10% of union supporters are actually organizers in their workplace, NLRB data show that about 1 in 5 is fired illegally for their activism.

Interestingly, union membership has actually increased in the public sector. Whereas the private sector -- the bulk of the US economy -- has seen unionization fall by three-quarters over the last 50 years, public-sector union membership has tripled over the same period to about 36 percent. Persistent, illegal activi-

ty by employers in the private sector explains this disparity. Illegal firings exist in the public sector too, of course, but they are less prevalent. Additional civil service protections ensure that firings are more onerous to the government than they are to a business. Besides, we should expect less union busting in the public sector: There is no profit motive there.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower once lambasted union busters, proclaiming, "Only a fool would try to deprive working men and women of the right to join the union of their choice." The fools today are actually quite rational, practicing the cool calculus of costs and benefits.

In a worst-case scenario, the cost of firing a union supporter isn't that much. It includes legal proceedings and remuneration to

the discharged employee. At a maximum, discharged employees will receive missed earnings minus any income they have earned in the meantime. The total award usually amounts to less than \$4,000, a small price to pay to avoid sharing profits with employees through a union-negotiated contract.

In its vote, the Senate eliminated the opportunity to increase fines and make other changes to labor law that reduce the incentives for illegal employer aggression. But without those reforms, crime really does pay.

Ben Zipperer is a researcher and John Schmitt is senior economist at the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C. - located at www.cepr.net

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# Laborfest offers early chance at 2008 Harley

With photographs, brochures and press releases in late June, Harley-Davidson announced its details of some 14 motorcycle models, commemorative and otherwise, to celebrate its 105th anniversary.

One of the earliest opportunities to see one and win one comes through organized labor as the 2008 Roadster will be displayed at the Union Label Booth at the Wisconsin State Fair Aug. 2-12. Then it will be raffled off Sept. 3 at Laborfest.

Harley plans special rides, events, and even anniversary-exclusive paint for the bikes to



A 2008 Roadster like this will be raffled off at Laborfest. Harley Davidson unveiled its new lineup of motorcycles in late June.

celebrate the new lines and the 105 years, and yet Laborfest

remains one of the earliest chances to win the opportunity.

Along with limited edition bikes and a new custom model called the Rocker, the Harley 2008 line generally features 20% larger gas tanks, electronic throttle controls and more antilock brakes.

Harley riders traditionally head off the Laborfest parade, along with vintage American-made cars.

Over the years, the raffle winners have tended to be veteran devoted Harley riders.

Union members of the Milwaukee County Labor Council will offer tickets for purchase or for members to sell. State Fair visitors have the earliest chances for the 2008 bike.

Raffle tickets -- \$3 each or 2 for \$5 -- can be purchased at the Union Label Booth throughout the State Fair, Aug. 2-12.



## 'Ask a Lawyer' online

Unions offer almost knee-jerk support to worker rights and human rights, assuming everyone agrees on what they are.

Test yourself. Believe it or not, the following are reasons used to fire an employee:

- Worked too many hours
- Worked fewer than seven days a week.

- Holds a second job.

- Didn't ask boss for permission to go on a date.

- Took a five-minute break in a 10-hour shift.

- Was hospitalized.

Which are legal? Well, you'd be surprised.

Fom conversations with its own rank and file, AFL-CIO affiliate unions know there is confusion - and that sense of confusion extended even further when Working America was formed, the now 1.6 million member community of workers without unions but interested in knowing their rights and improving society.

For both groups, the labor federation has taken a unique approach on the Internet - free advice from lawyers for union and non-union workers alike on basic rights, legalities and avenues of redress.

The "Ask a Lawyer" feature, focused on protections in the workplace, is available by posing questions at [www.workingamerica.org/askalawyer/](http://www.workingamerica.org/askalawyer/).

You can also find the answers to questions that have probably been on your mind and were posed by others.

## Trapshooting

After 13 weeks of shooting in the Milwaukee County Labor Council league, here are the results by team, reflecting wins, losses and ties:

### Class AA

- Pipers-Plumbers Local 75..... 11-1-1
- 6 volts to lightning IBEW 494-1 ..... 5-8-0
- Blind ..... 3-6-4
- Wire & Fire CWA 4603 .. 3-7-3

### Class A

- Blind ..... 8-4-1
- Plumbers Local 75-2 . . . 5-5-3
- APWU Local 003 . . . . 6-7-0
- Wirenuts IBEW 494 .. 2 4-7-2

- LEAGUE HIGH GUN**  
**Gregg Brzezinski . . . . . 311**  
**Tom Armstrong . . . . . 309**  
**Jeff Jeske . . . . . 308**  
**John Kling . . . . . 307**

Submitted by Ron Wahl, League Secretary

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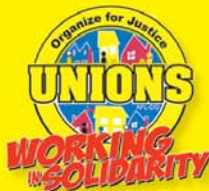
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# Our artificial distinction of muscle and brains

By Dominique Paul Noth  
Editor, Labor Press

It was a one-cycle news story at best. Behind the scant details was a routine action that may have saved lives.

During rush hour in the Marquette Interchange, a major ramp was shut down for two hours because "authorities," the media told us, detected that a gigantic drill rig some 50 feet away was in danger of tipping over and landing on traffic.

Now you probably assumed that some sophisticated supervising engineer or computer monitoring manager was the quick-thinking "authority" cited in the news reports. Because the media didn't know, or bother to find out, that everyone quickly bowed to the call of the lone operating engineer (Local 139) handling the rig.

Experience led him to sense that the rig was 5 degrees out of alignment, so he shut down and called for safety measures. No one questioned his sense of safety, so integrated is the professional alliance of workers and managers in highway construction.

In fact, these routine life-protecting decisions are often the

## In My View

case of one knowledgeable worker reacting with speed and his call being accepted. But the prevention is almost always credited in news stories to some "authorities," vague higher-ups.

I kept stumbling across such incidents as I was gathering information for a number of stories on workforce development in Milwaukee. And something else struck me as curious amid all the statistics and interviews.

In our society and in our media, there seems a largely artificial but deliberate distinction made between everyday workers and those with "higher education," as if one side just grunts and sweats and the other makes the important choices, as if one side lacks essential tools and judgment and the other holds our future in their hands.

I understand the tendency. It seems reasonable to say our economic future relies on "high-skill" in technology, bio-tech and software sophisticates. It is comforting to say that "entrepreneurs"

and "innovators" are our future, without mentioning how many of those entrepreneurs and innovators come out of the pack, not the Ivy League schools.

We also know (but seldom say) how many of the necessary jobs in these areas require skills that do not depend on college degrees.

But to keep chanting "high tech" "high tech" without recognizing the totality of workforce needs is not reality. It smacks of a simplistic vision that seems to comfort public officials. It freezes recognition of workers constantly adding skills out of both experience and training, out of education gained by attitude of mind as well as on the job, of immigrants—trained and un—serving as leading creators of new jobs.

Some of the best ideas do bubble up from the bottom, as romantic as that notion sounds and as depressing as it must be to the Harvard business school.

To describe our workforce as "low-skill" or maybe "middle-skill," with a slight curl of the lip, is not only inaccurate but deepens a social disconnect in an age when labor councils represent engineers and environmental scientists as well as landscapers and carpenters.

While pressing for more research centers to keep Milwaukee on the cutting-edge of opportunity, it's easy to forget that construction workers will be needed to build those labs and

staff will be needed to maintain them. That's not just couriers and janitors. Every top-level scientist will need two to five mid-trained technicians to support their work, from stem cells to forensic analysis. Much of that work does not need 12 years of education after high school. In fact, companies of all kinds require competent support staff, committed work ethic and a rounded cultural environment to keep all levels of workers engaged and content.

Yet the essential working-class remains characterized as big muscles and no brains. If that were true, all the tech sophisticates in the world simply couldn't function, much less survive.

When Delphi went bankrupt and started shrinking its Oak Creek plants toward nothing—the rumors now have the workforce there gone in about 18 months—I recall the head of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, Tim Sheehy, telling journalists that the days were long past when Milwaukeeans could get good work with just "a strong back and a good alarm clock."

If the laborers and ditch-diggers of today, who use satellite GPS, lasers and sophisticated electronics in their work, were insulted by Sheehy's remarks, they will have to get in line behind the UAW workers at Delphi, whose skills are precision tooling and running quarter of a million dollar machinery.

Even as the UAW struggles to maintain living standards for its workers—while politicians dilly-dally on the health reform that would cure most of these ills

—economic reports named the US auto worker as the most productive of a productive US workforce and valued each member's contribution to company profits at \$300,000.

Sheehy, in fairness, probably meant to draw a circle around the importance of education, but he also drew way too bluntly an attitude among business leaders about muscle work as facile and interchangeable, not the stuff of leadership.

But he's hardly alone. In most of our forums and discussions, the "future" is relegated to the "intellectual." Yet everyday for safety, efficiency and reliability, we depend on the worker who combines muscle and brain.

I suspect it was that way in the heyday of huge manufacturing plants, from A.O. Smith to Allen-Bradley. It was not just the children of those workers who became leaders and shakers in our community. It was the workers themselves.

Are sanitation workers "low-skill"—as I've frequently heard them described—because they work in cold weather, roll and heave our garbage carts and take away the smelliest, messiest parts of our urban existence?

I've often found them the friendliest, most helpful faces of our city service, and some of our most nimble cost-savers. While my profession is considered intellectual, I frankly couldn't do what they do, skillfully operate some of the largest vehicles on our streets and then convert those vehicles into snow plows and salters when we desperately need them.

Brain power is essential to public school teachers, but so is physical endurance in controlling a passel of fourth graders. Practicing nurses are recognized as "intellectual" life-savers, a growing, highly-trained and essential segment of our society, but physical demands co-exist with the medical acumen, and they rely on a team of lower-trained health professionals who have their own important skills and can be valuable caring eyes.

That same combination of skills was visible as I met bricklayers at City Hall, including a tiny woman who also turned out to be diabetic and a former felon.

Why do we continue this charade of separating muscle from brain -- and muscle from character -- in economic projections?

Partly it's status -- we would like to believe that the executive in charge of human resources is more important than the resourceful humans at the company.

Certainly if we look at the current state of Milwaukee, the folks who are supposed to be creating the jobs have frozen at the controls while the people doing the real work have not slowed one iota.

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### Iraq From Page 1

“Sunni but Iraqi.” Americans can find an emphasis on such nationalist spirit overcoming bloody divisions in our own history.

Both speakers believed that the Bush resistance to getting out was economic, a grab for oil.

Told many Americans doubted that, both speakers pointed to history, the sagging oil production in the US and the insistence on an oil law fashioned in D.C. as one of the “benchmarks” of Iraqi progress.

Why, they ask, insist that equitable distribution of oil profits to the people requires reducing Iraq to a minority position in terms of profits?

Why doesn't the oil law address Iraqi employment or union recognition at a time of 65% joblessness? Why create closed committees and contracts unless the aim is to outsource the oil fields?

Outside help in modernizing Iraqi oil production “would be welcome,” said Faleh, “but not at the price of foreign control of our national treasure.”

In an interview afterward, excellently translated by Jamal Amro of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, I asked Hashmeya how Americans should handle our sense of guilt. After all, we invaded hastily and for the wrong reasons and have seen devastat-



ing destruction of Iraqi neighborhoods, infrastructure, economy and society. Yet what is keeping us there are good intentions – rectifying our own wrongs in invasion and torture, destroying the terrorists we helped lure to Iraq, preventing a religious bloodbath.

“Could it be worse than the bloodshed now?” Hashmeya interjected. She reversed the Bush dictum by suggesting the US should stand down first so that the Iraqis could stand up. She also suggested that our failed policies encouraged sectarian strife, not-

TOP: Hashmeya Muhsin Hussein (left) offered humor in her talk at Yatchak Hall but also turned the crowd serious (top) with some of her stories of life in Iraq for the union worker.

LEFT: Translator Jamal Amro listened as Faleh Abood Umara (right), explained how his union stopped through group determination a Halliburton subcontractor from taking over an oil field. Faleh later received a handshake and a solidarity T-shirt from Milwaukee USW leader Douglas Drake (bottom).

ing that Iraqi-on-Iraqi violence is a small part of the attacks except when bombings can inflame interference by occupation forces or by sectarian militias.

Then she smiled and quoted an Iraqi proverb that has echoes in Western religion as well: “He will not give us more than what we can handle.”

“People have the right to choose their own destiny,” Hashmeya said in a theme she carried around the country. “We are asking the US to leave Iraq to its own people.”

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# Dobbs

From Page 1

ered issue — and why, in fact, the harsh voices of fear and vigilantism have blocked out the common issues of families under threat.

It's taken a while, but mainstream media has now recognized that Dobbs and his ilk are one of the problems.

Once, as host of money shows, Dobbs was known as a conservative pro-business commentator sucking up to Wall Street CEOs, but his rating success came when he turned into cable's best-known and endlessly self-proclaimed populist, criticizing the same businesses for free trade deals and outsourcing and even supporting the principle of trade unionism.

But on immigration, he has become a daily rant and a weekly essayist forced to ratchet up the hysterics to make his point and criticizing all those who criticize him. His "Broken Borders" segment has become a tool for journalism schools to teach "broken facts."

On "60 Minutes," defending himself against charges of racism by pointing out some of his best friends have different skin colors, he was also confronted on his reportorial excesses and snapped, "If we reported it, it's a fact."

Which reminded wags of the old, "Who are you going to believe: Me or your own eyes?"

The popularity of his anti-immigrant anti-facts rhetoric helped CNN catch up with Fox but now it has prompted exposes on how Dobbs distorts. Apparently, if ratings are the game, distortion is the dice.



Voces leader Christine Neumann-Ortiz has her choice of Lou Dobbses to megaphone.

Media Matters, the watchdog group, detailed almost weekly how the crawlers at the bottom of "Lou Dobbs Tonight" inserted the word "Amnesty" in front of any immigration rights proposal and noted that this "politically charged word" was pushed in even to summarize CNN news reports about how misleading the word "amnesty" was!

Using reports from white supremacists and careless researchers, Dobbs created a parade of incidents from state records that made it seem that child molestation, hit and run, rape and domestic violence could all be attributed to immigration status rather than personal behavior. He even brought leprosy — "not a public health issue," said a top federal official who has seen the low numbers reduce even further since 1983 — into the immigration debate by inflating 70 to 1 the actual cases reported.

Not only does Dobbs make it sound like the country is overrun by leprosy families without

papers, he makes it seem like our jails are, too.

Only 7% of the US population are non-citizens, and only 6% of the prison population are non-citizens, but in Dobbs world a third of all prisoners in the US are immigrants.

It was another impossibility that led the New York Times to a detailed analysis/expose May 30. Because he was "somewhat taken aback about how shameless he (Dobbs) has been during the whole leprosy dispute," said author David Leonhardt, "I spent some time reading transcripts from old episodes of 'Lou Dobbs Tonight.' The way he handled leprosy, it turns out, is not all that unusual."

On immigration issues, "Mr. Dobbs has a somewhat flexible relationship with reality."

Almost proving the New York Times point, Dobbs posted a commentary after the piece appeared. If you struggle through his defensive gobbledegook — continuing a pattern of repeating charges while suggesting he was only correcting the record — you will find that Dobbs actually retracted what he

had reported about lepers and prisoners. But you could read the article twice without noticing.

He also shifted ground to accuse the ultimate odd couple — President Bush and Sen. Kennedy — of conspiring to remove sovereignty from the US through an alliance with Canada and Mexico. (Whatever you think of Ted, can you conceive of George giving up any sliver of his view of sovereignty?)

Dobbs, incidentally, got wind of the amusing Milwaukee protest and invited Voces founder Christine Neumann-Ortiz to appear on his program, a calculated device he has used frequently to defuse criticism with a veneer of objectivity. Neumann-Ortiz has actually been an interviewed guest on real CNN news shows.

And Voces is not resting on its Dobbs masks. It has sought to broaden the immigration debate through person-to-person forums in a "Wisconsin Reality Tour," a summer tour that hit ten cities in eight days — Madison, La Crosse, Beloit, Whitewater, Sheboygan, Green Bay, Appleton, Wausau,

Milwaukee, and Racine.

The forums included actual stories from immigrants around Wisconsin and directly addressed issues that affect immigrants in the heartland, including raids and unfair labor practices.

"Without fair federal legislation, we're seeing local governments overstepping their authority and taking matters into their own hands. It amounts to racist vigilantism, and it's unconstitutional," said Neumann-Ortiz.

(Dobbs' bloated commentary has probably encouraged this overreach, demonstrated by an ordinance in Green Bay that bans business licenses for employers who hire undocumented workers.)

Aside from being largely unenforceable, "these local ordinances break up families and hurt our local businesses," said Neumann-Ortiz. "This is our nation's latest civil rights struggle and these officially sanctioned racist policies only end up hurting our community and our economy."

In contrast, Voces has highlighted recent pro-immigrant rights policies adopted by the Milwaukee and Whitewater police departments.

Voces is also actively supporting the New Sanctuary Movement, an effort to lend moral and financial support to immigrants facing deportation that splits up families. Mosques, synagogues and churches are being asked to shelter immigrants and several have already indicated a willingness.

Neumann-Ortiz also envisions the New Sanctuary Movement as a strong message to Congress that it must act on immigration. "People of conscience are not going to stand by and let other people suffer and be persecuted because Congress is not willing to step forward and change these unjust laws," she said.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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# Meet faith intern, join Labor in the Pulpits program

Among the tangles and coils of organizing in a new and uncertain world, organized labor needs the power of all progressive social institutions to support the movement toward justice. It is in this spirit — recruiting the masses to understand the great opportunities for positive social change that organized labor affords — that we turn again to the Labor in the Pulpits program.

Labor in the Pulpits — or “in” the Bimah or Minbar for other than the Christian faith — is a good way in to bring out the community and ask what religion teaches us about treatment of workers.

Every Labor Day Sunday, (Sept 2, 2007) speakers from across the labor community are welcomed into congregations across Milwaukee to speak about the issues that workers face collectively.

The theme for this year is “Your right to organize: The struggle for God’s Children, immigrants and citizens alike.”

The program by the Faith Community for Worker Justice receives an intern every year from the national organization, Interfaith Worker Justice. The intern’s job is to work full time from June 12 to Aug 18 on organizing the program.

This year, I am the intern

working on behalf of the Faith Community for Worker Justice. My name is Jonathan Royal and I just graduated from Marian College in Indianapolis, Ind., majoring in Sociology/Political Science with a concentration in Peace and Justice Studies. In Indianapolis, I was highly involved in the peace and justice movement and worked with the Community Faith and Labor Coalition on the campaign to raise the minimum wage.

Also at Marian I was one of the three founding members of the Dorothy Day House for Peace and Justice, a house modeled after the tenets of the Catholic Worker. The house was created to give students a place to work for Peace and Justice.

With this year’s immigration theme comes a call for congregations and members of the faith community to understand that the issues of immigration and right to organize are intimately connected.

The way the power structure currently exists often puts easily exploitable immigrants, desperate for work, into situations that drive down wages. The problem is not with the laborers, but with lowering wages for all. Too often, the community feels that these immigrants are “taking our jobs” while management defends



Jonathan Royal

its stinginess as “letting the market work” (even illegally). As profits roll they can watch the workers fight against each other. As long as infighting continues between the workers, they cannot join together to demand better wages for everyone from the people who have the power to give them.

The immigrant community and the labor community face the same forces of oppression and must work together to unionize and raise wages for all.

Labor in the Pulpits this year brings these issues to the forefront. Workers are free and have the right to organize unions and be treated fairly in their jobs. Texts from just about every faith tradition affirm the rights of the laborer. It’s the job of the labor community to continually remind the religious community that, in order to bring forth the Kingdom of God, we must be willing to engage in issues of workers

rights.

The Labor in the Pulpits program has had a rich history in the city of Milwaukee. With a strong union and religious community, the city has the largest and most diverse Labor in the Pulpits program in the country.

The program has had enormous success as last year over 100 congregations hosted Labor in the Pulpits programs. Speakers from the faith community, labor community and peace community dedicate themselves to the program year after year. Participating are congregations that understand the importance of issues of worker justice. These faithful commit year after year to

making sure that their places of worship hear about the issues affecting workers in their community.

The program is versatile enough to allow for themes, issues and campaigns to change depending on current situations. Every year, once congregations hear about the issues regarding worker justice, they are invited to participate in different organizations and support union organizing drives in the city.

This year promises to be a solid year in the Labor in the Pulpits program. With much work to do in the realm of worker justice, it is pertinent to make sure that the work for Peace and Justice ring true.

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## MATA offers coverage of Iraqi visit here

Our story on Page 9 offers highlights of the Milwaukee visit of the Iraqi union leaders but the entire event, including audience give and take, was also taped for airing on Channel 14 for Milwaukee and North Shore cable subscribers. That's the MATA Community Media.

If you missed the "Voices of Iraqi Workers Solidarity Tour" event at Yatchak Hall outside the Milwaukee County Labor Council, you can see it on MATA. Here is the remaining schedule:

Saturday 7/28/2007, 8 a.m., Sunday 7/29/2007, 5 p.m., Tuesday 7/31/2007, 3 p.m., Friday 8/3/2007, 7 p.m., Saturday 8/4/2007, 8 a.m., Sunday 8/5/2007, 5 p.m., Tuesday 8/7/2007, 3 p.m., Friday 8/10/2007, 7 p.m., Saturday 8/11/2007, 8 a.m., Sunday 8/12/2007, 5 p.m., Tuesday 8/14/2007, 3 p.m.

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