



# READY TO FIGHT BACK?

## Election and recalls now and then patience will be needed to claw out of Walker's ditch

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

I hate to argue with the president of the AFL-CIO when Richard Trumka boasts that the "momentum" on the side of the middle class will carry unions to victory in Wisconsin. I agree that right now it does - that Scott Walker could be the best organizer and motivator unions ever had and that the Big Mo is crucial to the fight in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and other states. Because if those governors thought Walker's overreach in Wisconsin was something to emulate, they sure know better now.

So yes, momentum is the inspiration, the trigger and right now the heart.

But more important will be persistence. Only perseverance will build that momentum over months and even years to balance, weakly at first to be honest, the crippling blow of allowing Walker into office with a Republican majority in the first place.

Persistence starts in Wisconsin April 5, to scorn the Walker clone running for county executive, and no matter how he ducks and weaves, Jeff Stone has exposed himself as that, as Labor Press discusses at right. The intelligent balanced choice may not be the flame-throwing political progressive some in the community want, but **Chris Abele** does believe in bargaining rights and negotiation. He thinks, he listens and he knows county government.

So with Abele as county executive, Tom Barrett as Milwaukee mayor and a Common Council and County Board dominated by those willing to listen to the electorate and work with unions (a majority on the board that will be furthered with the election April 5 of labor's candidates, **Eyon Biddle** in the 10th county district, and **Jason Haas** in the 14th), Milwaukee maintains a modest dam of public opinion and voter-empowered leaders to stand



Suddenly the hottest name on the April 5 ballot is JoAnne Kloppenburg for state Supreme Court.

against the worst excesses of the governor.

So Abele and company are clear counters. But to stop him?

### THIS is the Supreme race!

Frankly the governor's biggest bulwark in the April 5 election is maintaining the Wisconsin Supreme Court because Walker is clearly relying on the conservative top court to back his constitutional excesses.

If you think there's something immoral about squeezing the middle class and attacking the children of the poor while rewarding corporations and well-heeled parents, you may also wonder if such a budget is legal. The best candidate to answer that honestly is a sizeable underdog unless the voters wake up.

She may be a respected prosecutor and moderate who in a 22-year legal career has worked in several administrations under four attorney generals from both parties. She may be a UW, Yale and Princeton graduate, a Peace Corp volunteer, a noted litigator and prosecutor at the Department of Justice since 1989 - and yet the public has barely heard of her.

That alone is a recommen-

dation in some quarters but a liability in normal political circumstances. The times are not normal.

**JoAnne Kloppenburg** is also relying on public financing and hasn't been attacked much by the corporate money that usually swamps these campaigns (look out for the last two weeks if her numbers start rising).

Until Walker's shenanigans, too little attention has been paid to this race even though the court has been mired in dissension because of ethical lapses by two of its conservative members, Annette Zeigler, who sort of apologized and recuses herself from some decisions, and Michael Gableman, who has not apologized for his lying about a fellow jurist and still seems to be biding his time to step out with a full unseemly throat in decisions benefiting his corporate masters.

Voters are not yet galvanized to recognize the need to break the right-wing 4-3 edge on the court and slow Walker on constitutional issues he has dominated. The voters have to knock off incumbent David Prosser, an 18-year GOP veteran of the legislature before he was elevated to the court in 1999 by Gov. Tommy Thompson.

Prosser played a key role in the current gridlock, largely because his conservative buddy system overrode his judicial duty. Insiders see no other reason he didn't agree with three colleagues that Gableman violated judicial ethics. He didn't want to slap a fellow conservative -- even just on the wrist! -- and the state has paid dearly for his lack of judicial guts.

How vital is Prosser to Walker's success? Progressive Ed Garvey spelled it out clearly in a recent column:

"Pause and ask if the Republicans violated the laws with slick maneuver . . . Who will ultimately decide? The State Supreme Court, and that means David Prosser as the swing vote. You know Prosser as the 'WMC Justice.' Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce put about \$6 million into his campaign. They spent like drunken sailors on leave. But they were not drunk; they knew what they were purchasing and so do you. "When the Walker (bargain-



Chris Abele chats with voters after a delegate meeting and massive open town hall at Serb Hall where he was endorsed by the Milwaukee Area Labor Council. **More photos Page 11.**

ing rights) bill is tested in the Courts, who will ultimately decide if it violates the Wisconsin Constitution? David Prosser!"

Out of his own mouth Prosser destroyed any view that he could avoid bias on the bench. He actually offered himself as the "complement" to Walker and the state legislature.

Kloppenburg has correctly stayed above the current political fray because clearly what Walker and the state legislature have done will come before the court. Prosser has already put his thumb on the scale (in 2010 he reportedly gave out campaign literature against state Sen. Julie Lassa in favor of Sean Duffy for the House), confident that he has a majority of voters.

But that was before what just happened in Madison, so it is now this race that should be the first on the lips of every speaker at an anti-Walker rally: "Kloppenburg! Kloppenburg!"

### Do schools still matter?

There are other Milwaukee races April 5, including incumbent **Pedro Colon** for Branch 18 of the Milwaukee Circuit Court. Others endorsed by labor in the Milwaukee public schools races are **Terry Falk** for the at-large seat, incumbent and

**Election** continued Page 8

### Labor not alone backing Abele

Devoted cleavage to Scott Walker has Jeff Stone spinning like a top as he tries to keep from slinging mud while screwing himself into the ground in the race for county executive.

Chris Abele's empathy with the working class and closeness to Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett as a future partner have righted and stabilized his campaign, allowing a political novice to plant his feet on the ground and use his considerable intellect, money and knowledge to focus more on how to govern than how to embarrass the opposition. Especially since Rep. Stone is doing that for him.

The contest is now between one who thinks and learns and one who dodges, snarls and fulminates, trying to both stand by his governor and escape from him. The once affable Stone can't divorce himself from the governor -- that sure was him on the platform, taking the votes against workers and facing the camera when the National Guard was invoked in case of labor unrest.

He banked on Walker's radio buddies more than ads to push

**Abele** continued Page 9

# Calendar

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

## Tuesday, March 29

**Fourth Annual Zeidler Lecture**  
Noted labor historian Will Jones, free  
7 p.m. Centennial Hall, 733 N. 8th St

## Wednesday, March 30

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

## Monday, April 4

**Save the Date! National Day of Action**  
More details at [www.we-r-1.org](http://www.we-r-1.org)

## Tuesday, April 5

**General Election**  
Polls Open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Vote Your Choice  
but Make Sure to Vote!

## Wednesday, April 6

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

## Web sites created to help job seekers

Two interactive websites have been created by the US Department of Labor to help job seekers -- those just entering the market and those who want to use their existing skills in a new career.

MyNextMove -- [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org) -- is a simple-to-use analysis tool that asks for the user's skills and interests and then matches those with specific careers and training programs. There are also job listings and college/vocational courses to search.

MySkillsMyFuture -- [myskillsmyfuture.org](http://myskillsmyfuture.org) -- is a site for people who want to use their existing skills in a new position.

Type in your current or last job title, and the database gives you a list of related jobs that wouldn't require you to go back to school.

# Fight unites unions and community

By Lynnnda Guyton

Editorial Assistant, Labor Press

"If the economy is bad and workers have less money, obviously the last place to go is a restaurant," said Ruth Weill. She is a private sector worker who manages Centro Café Restaurant in Riverwest. She doesn't belong to a union but was approached by Labor Press as one of the citizens who has been attending rallies against Scott Walker's policies.

She is very concerned with the situation facing Wisconsin in the fight to keep the worker rights that were fought for long ago. This, she says, will not only affect her but also will trickle down to everybody, union or non-union, as less money is spent throughout the community.

The fight we have now is way beyond union collective bargaining rights, Weill feels. "It is

what sparked a lot of people to get off their butts." From her perspective the attack on public workers is only one piece of the class warfare puzzle.

Unfortunately there have been people igniting this war for a long time and not many people got involved, but now she has to say that this is the straw that broke the camel's back.

Complacency is a problem and now people are needed to organize, educate and advocate. Weill is the mother of one child and doesn't participate as much as she would like to but she is determined to go to Madison as much as she can and has attended a number of rallies in the Milwaukee area.

What she really enjoys doing is organizing and educating people from all walks of life on the issues, especially getting people to vote, letting them



Ruth Weill runs a cafe. She's not in a union. She's not even a Democrat. But here's why she'll be protesting in Madison and Milwaukee.

know that voting is our biggest resource and that not enough people utilize it.

She sits on the board of her neighborhood association and had a very good turnout for a recent county executive panel. Her passion lies in politics and says that it should be talked about, because not talking about it is what has gotten us in trouble, i.e. Scott Walker.

What Weill wants people to know is that we are all workers and that unions set the standards of all workers including the private sector and that's why this fight with Governor Walker is important to her. In the end she hopes people will open their eyes to see what's going on.

She remarked that she knew all along that Walker was the dangerous one to watch and expressed her sentiments by posting them on Facebook as well as posting information of events that organized labor is involved in.

Interestingly, Weill is not Democrat or Republican but has been a political activist with the Green Party since the 1990s. But, she says, "Right is right and this is everybody's fight."

## Bowling

### FEBRUARY 2011 RESULTS

TEAM	WINS	LOSSES
CRAZY 8s	97	71
PIN PALS	90	78
SLAMMERS	80	88
GUTTER RATS	83	85
8 BALLS	79	89
ONE BOARD OVER 75	75	93
IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 475		
DAN LAACK	599	
ROGER BARANOWSKI	589	
BOB WAGNER	586	

### MALC MIXED

#### SENIOR BOWLING LEAGUE

DEL GROSS	582
STEVE LINK	547
WALLY GEISE	535
DON WIEDMANN	512
DAN KNIPPEL	510
GENE HERRICK	509
GREG MARTIN	492

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 190

WALLY GEISE	244
DEL GROSS	231
DAN LAACK	223
GENE HERRICK	223
BOB WAGNER	215
GREG MARTIN	214
ROGER BARANOWSKI	213
STEVE LINK	194
DON WIEDMANN	193

#### IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 400

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	494
RAE MATOWSKI	474
JOYCE KNIPPEL	474
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	461

#### IND. HIGH GAME OVER 150

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	186
RAE MATOWSKI	185
JOYCE KNIPPEL	184
PHYLLIS NAVARRETE	161



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# The heat is on!



Only the eight Republican senators who have served a full year or more can face an immediate recall movement under the state constitution. All of them are.

Only five of the Democrats who fled the state are in the same boat -- and it is likely that Koch brothers' money and well-heeled intruders from Utah will force several to face recalls. But it is mainly anger combined with steady organization that have already collected thousands of signatures, well on the way to putting all eight in the GOP before the voters, supported by a national outpouring of \$2 million so far and volunteers that hope to sign enough voters in the required 60 days (March 3 was one start date).

Some senators are in strong GOP districts and think only a miracle could oust them. Glen Grothman, who deserves to be dumped, is sure that he can survive any threat up in the West Bend area. Yet the growing distaste for the refusal to negotiate erodes such confident, along with insight into his extremist views revealed in a YouTube Tea Party video.

More immediately vulnerable are GOP senators Alberta Darling, who won by a mere 1,007 votes in District 8 over Sheldon Wasserman, and Randy Hopper who won by just 184 votes in 2008. Other races were also close - Dan Kapanke, Luther Olsen - but throw historic comparisons out the window. District polls of all voters show several Republicans you would normally not think in jeopardy would lose an election held today, as would Walker himself.

You have to be a voting eligible resident of a district to sign a recall petition, but any citizen can circulate petitions door to

See Page 8 for more recall strategy and why Walker's followers think he can escape anger.

door, and that has brought special offices to most of the districts and surges of volunteers who want to help canvass and get involved.

A recall is the crucial first step. Next comes good candidates to run for office. Then win elections! All that will take months of commitment. [www.recalltherepublican8.com](http://www.recalltherepublican8.com) will keep you up to date with breaking events. Recall offices listed at right.



**WISCONSIN TALKS BACK!** On March 12 an estimated 100,000 stuck a thumb in the governor's eye after he signed a bill that was nothing more than union busting. The largest crowd to date did have some outsiders -- at right are actors Susan Sarandon and Tony Shalhoub (a Green Bay native whose sister is a schoolteacher). In the hat is activist Jesse Jackson. Somewhere around the capitol were international union presidents. But overwhelmingly (below) this was Wisconsin: fire-

fighters, the homeless, the disabled, carpenters, families, college students, truck drivers, hundreds of farmers in a tractor parade -- the whole shebang also welcoming home the fugitive 14 senate Democrats who stymied the assault on unions when Walker pretended it was about the budget. Called heroes by the crowd, they saluted them right back as the real heroes, asking them to exchange placards for recall clipboards. Many still are. -- Photos for Labor Press by Rick Nemish



Only an address for the Mary Lazich recall was unformed as we went to press:  
**Senate District 2 - Cowles.** 1061 W. Mason Street, Green Bay. **Senate District 8 - Darling,** Sweet & Associates, 2510 E Capitol Dr., Milwaukee. **Senate 10 - Harsdorf,** Earth Angels (limited times), 321 N 2nd St, River Falls. **Senate**

**District 14 - Olsen** 216 W Wisconsin St., Portage. **Senate District 18 - Hopper,** 480 Main St., Oshkosh; 21 N. Portland St., Fond du Lac. **Senate 20 - Grothman,** Keberle and Patrykus Law Office, 2100 Gateway Court (near HY 45 & Paradise Dr.), West Bend. **Senate 32 - Kapanke,** 116 5th Avenue South, La Crosse.

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**414-771-7070** or [lynnda@milwaukeeelabor.org](mailto:lynnda@milwaukeeelabor.org)

# We should admire what Canada doesn't have

By Robert F. Kennedy Jr.,  
Reader Supported News

As America's middle class battles for its survival on the Wisconsin barricades -- against various Koch Oil surrogates and the corporate toadies at Fox News -- fans of enlightenment, democracy and justice can take comfort from a significant

victory north of the Wisconsin border.

Fox News will not be moving into Canada after all!

The reason: Canadian regulators announced in late February that they would reject efforts by Canada's right-wing Prime Minister Stephen Harper to repeal a law that forbids lying

on broadcast news.

Canada's Radio Act requires that "a licensor may not broadcast ... any false or misleading news." The provision has kept Fox News and right-wing talk radio out of Canada and helped make Canada a model for liberal democracy and freedom.

As a result of that law, Canadians enjoy high quality news coverage, including the kind of foreign affairs and investigative journalism that flourished in this country before Ronald Reagan abolished the "Fairness Doctrine" in 1987.

Political dialog in Canada is marked by civility, modesty, honesty, collegiality, and idealism that have pretty much disappeared on the US airwaves. When Stephen Harper moved to abolish the anti-lying provision of the Radio Act, Canadians rose up to oppose him fearing that

their tradition of honest non-partisan news would be replaced by the toxic, overtly partisan, biased and dishonest news coverage familiar to American citizens who listen to Fox News and talk radio. Harper's proposal was timed to facilitate the launch of a new right-wing network, "Sun TV News" which Canadians call "Fox News North."

Harper, often referred to as "George W. Bush's Mini Me," is known for having mounted a Bush-like war on government scientists, data collectors, transparency, and enlightenment in general. He is a wizard of all the familiar tools of demagoguery; false patriotism, bigotry, fear, selfishness and belligerent religiosity.

Harper's attempts to make lying legal on Canadian television are a stark admission that

right-wing political ideology can only dominate national debate through dishonest propaganda.

Since corporate profit-taking is not an attractive vessel for populism, a political party or broadcast network that makes itself the tool of corporate and financial elites must lie to make its agenda popular with the public.

In the Unites States, Fox News and talk radio, the sock puppets of billionaires and corporate robber barons, have become the masters of propaganda and distortion on the public airwaves. Fox News' notoriously biased and dishonest coverage of the Wisconsin's protests is a prime example of the brand of news coverage Canada has smartly avoided.

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## Zeidler lecture lands labor historian

The free annual lecture in honor of Milwaukee's late great Socialist mayor will feature a prominent labor historian and UW-Madison professor, William Powell Jones, noted for a prized history of African American lumber workers and for his research on the Jim Crow South and current and past struggles of working Americans.

A recent article by Jones in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel explored how Scott Walker's budget bill and attack on public employees would hit hardest at low-wage workers in a radical departure from the peaceful labor

### Oscar Wisconsinized

It is a modern no-no to insert politics into the Oscars during telecast, but all bets were off before and after the ceremony when several participants spoke up. Oscar winner Wally Pfister in LA jumped into the fray over right wing Wisconsin GOP Gov. Scott Walker's campaign to emasculate collective bargaining rights. He excoriated Walker at a press conference after winning his Oscar for cinematography. "I think what's going on in Wisconsin is kind of madness right now," Pfister said.

progress in Wisconsin that Jones as historian has chronicled.

Followers of the lecture will note that last year's speaker, writer John Nichols, has been practically living in the state capitol during the recent protests and is a regular guest on MSNBC and other news outlets.

In a free and open talk and discussion, Jones will speak at 7 p.m. (doors open at 6:30 p.m.) Tuesday, March 29, at the Milwaukee Public Library's Centennial Hall, 733 N. 8th St.

The annual Frank Zeidler Memorial Lecture was created to celebrate the ideas and service to the citizenry of the public official and activist who served as mayor of Milwaukee from 1948 to 1960. Previous lectures were provided by Nichols, author Jeremy Scahill and historian John Gurda.



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# Why a pang as moderns celebrate Moderne?

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

Several hundred of the social and working cream of Milwaukee gathered February 24 in the same County Historical Society marbled halls where "Public Enemy" filmed. But these festivities of landscape displays, appetizers and camaraderie were tinged with sadness from all speakers -- developers, labor leaders, architects, AFL-CIO financiers and public officials such as Mayor Tom Barrett and aldermen Mike Murphy and Bob Baumann.

Because 70 miles away, as speakers such as building trades president Lyle Balistrieri reminded the crowd, the reality was playing out in Madison. Balistrieri and many of his trades union colleagues were heading that way right after this reception. In fact, it turned out, several others in attendance were as well, a reaction emphasized outside the reception as dozens of protesters marched from MATC to City Hall to underscore their distaste for Gov. Scott Walker's attack on bargaining rights and state aid to education.

It is that drama, and the ideological cruelty that many at the reception feel has gripped the state (and this was hardly a liberal gathering), that tinged this celebration of the largest Downtown



high-rise west of the Milwaukee River. Many suggested it would be the last such cooperation Milwaukee would see for a long time among business, labor, the city and believers in the future.

It may be the final gasp of such progress, speakers at the gathering hinted, because this project combines organized labor financing, good-paying jobs -- maybe thousands of them if it all works over the years -- immediate jobs (Balistrieri indicated that 350 of his members were already at work), prevailing wage commitments and optimism about a downtown that can draw empty nesters and thrive, despite the heavy-handed tightwads in Madison who want compensation lowered, citizens restricted, dreams curtailed and only a few at the top rewarded.

Outside a few minutes before the reception, a ground-

breaking had been held on Old World Third St. near Juneau Ave. for the Moderne, the bold re-creation of the architectural art movement of the 1930s renewed into a 30 story condominium, using the only towering crane currently visible in the city. The projected building is topped with penthouses, bottomed with parking and potential retail space.

Truthfully, delays have surrounded this project and doubts still abound in all quarters, but it is going up and hopes do rise with it. Speakers cited the stubborn continuity of developer Rick Barrett, as well as the stunning styled design he believed the city needed, even with apartments listed at a quarter of a million dollars a pop.

Skeptics can point to the series of easements and official promises coaxed and cajoled by Rick Barrett (no relation to the mayor), but pragmatists note how he re-designed, bent, modified and committed to the best in construction. That led the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, which manages \$3.9 billion in assets, to help put up the big money and make the Moderne part of its national plan to support 10,000 union jobs by the spring.

As proud as trust officers Stephanie Wiggins and Mike Arnold told the crowd they were to work in Milwaukee -- it's the trust's ninth area project over the decades -- it was also clear that this might be the last big one for a while, not just for a union based trust but for any forward-looking financial company exploring investing in Milwaukee big-time again. Other speakers, even city officials, couldn't help sounding like wagon train masters fording the



Fears that an era of union-government cooperation were stalling hovered over a bash honoring an old architectural era and new skyscraper Downtown, credited to the determination of developer Rick Barrett (bottom). Among the hundreds at the fete were Lyle Balistrieri, flanked by aldermen Michael Murphy and Nik Kovac (right in photo).



Missouri yet viewing the end of the West.

One participant at the reception pointed out that the Moderne was a leap of faith and a belief even in hard economic times in America's future - but if the current dominant hard edge of scorn and economic fear continues, this could likely bring a halt to big

developments, particularly for urban communities with a more liberal base and a greater need for cooperation in politics.

Pausing in munching a mini quiche, the commentator lamented to me, "I don't see a lot of that faith coming out of the ruling class in Madison."

## Changes at School for Workers

Author, researcher on labor policy and documentary films, former SEIU organizer and political science doctorate in Latino studies, Armando Ibarra moved to Wisconsin from California in January to join the faculty of the School for Workers,



Armando Ibarra

UW-Extension, Continuing Education and E-Learning.

His areas of specialty include diversity in the workplace, international labor migration, organizing and immigrant labor, leadership development, and applied research for new and internal organizing drives.

The school reports other changes. Now that Neill De Clercq has returned to full time teaching, a labor education specialist well known to the Milwaukee community, Corliss Olson, has been appointed the new director.

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MASTERS AT THE ART OF FINE OFFSET PRINTING

# Why Walker carpet-bombed workers' rights

By **Dominique Paul Noth**

Editor, Labor Press

hams, feints and false dealings. If anyone questioned those journalists who conveyed worst fears about the unscrupulous machinations possible from Scott Walker, the governor sure ended any doubts March 9. He orchestrated a legislative sneak attack violating basic democratic rules and stripping public union rights -- despite his insistence that he never intended any such thing, just some "modest" proposals about budget fixing, which his lackeys eliminated to pass this concoction despite public outcry.

There may be a few gullible FOX News and mass media types who don't want to believe what is going on and some faithful Republicans who remember when their party contained honorable dealmakers. But Walker has virtually guaranteed less of them as they realize how he has used his media friendly manner to mislead and flat lie to even those who sympathized.

There's no one left who would make a deal with him if they weren't wearing a crucifix and a necklace of garlic -- and probably not even then.

The new bill that strips bargaining rights eliminated the only reason he said he was touching those rights in the first place, to "repair" the budget. The non-repair bill passed hastily and probably illegally -- but it could take endless court battles to expose the gamesmanship.

Those who doubt reversal should remember how Milwaukee County suffered similarly when Walker was county

## Comment

executive. Months after he left office, the courts intervened and nailed his denials to public employees as an overreach that is costing county taxpayers around half a million dollars. But never forget: It was a misled citizenry that embraced such tough excessive stances and helped Walker get elected governor. So now he feels emboldened to reach into the pockets of school teachers and others. Will the suckers line up again?

**T**hough the details are still dubious of how there could possibly be no financial impact on the state budget in eliminating rights (huh?), legal tricks may help the bill survive unless the electorate breaks the conservative hold on the Supreme Court on April 5.

The pretense that Walker was really seeking to empower local governments has totally evaporated, stripping his budget plan of any redemption except union bashing and doubly exposing the entire charade.

It is hard to fathom anyone in the state, or the country, who can believe his words -- and yet the Wall Street Journal blithely accepted an op-ed from him that was about a piece of legislation his cronies had just killed! And these Murdoch employees didn't seem to mind a bit. Look for even supposedly moderate corporate media to invite him as a guest and accept statements that events now prove are only

momentary occasions of political convenience.

If you want to credit Walker and his corporate financiers with larger purpose -- method behind the madness -- let me offer a Machiavellian suggestion for standing behind such intellectual nonsense as citizens deride him (and just unions -- the national polls including Republicans and independents have clearly turned against him). Walker's presidential hope are pretty well shot for now, but not the money the corporate campaign networks must spend to support him, not the spin they must put on base behavior. They smell the death of the progressives including unions that represent the major money opposition to GOP politics, and if they can wound them in Wisconsin, imagine what they can do in Illinois or California.

**B**ut it is more than that. The pretense of "evil unions ruled by wealthy bosses and loaded with freeloaders" was essential to this corporate campaign, and that fabrication was dismantled in Madison, where ever more real people gathered *after* Walker's alleged victory. The bulk of voters now know which group is ruled by wealthy bosses and riddled with comfy freeloaders.

These ever-growing protesters kept their tempers as they insisted on their rights. That impressed a nation and exposed the big lie of the ads that this was all about union thugs and imported agitators.

And so Walker and his allies have stepped up the pressure and deliberately sought to goad the opposition into uglier and perhaps even violent action. Hence



Clever put-downs have abounded in Wisconsin, this one at 6th and Wells. Other favorites: **GOV. WALKER, YOU PROBABLY CAN'T REMEMBER ME, BUT ... I CAN RECALL YOU. AND AT LEAST MY GRANDMA'S WALKER HELPS HER.**

the falsehoods that he was offering compromise when he never will. Hence those petty games about denying Democrats their paychecks (quietly abandoned as legally murky) or fining them for contempt or taking their parking spots, or harassing their families with state troopers. Hence the lockdown of the state capitol to diminish the media impact of mass protests.

**C**ombine all that theater with the simple maddening reality that he wants to eliminate basic rights to bargain on benefits, working conditions, sick days, leave, safety concerns, and more. The sick strategy emerges clearly: Walker expected to cold-slap unions into strikes (generally illegal for public workers) or other mass actions that would turn the public against them.

Another purpose is that a strike by public workers, howev-

er they describe the action, or a walkout by students, however justified, can be interpreted by Walker as an affront to law and order and a reason to mandate what many believe he really wants, to privatize more aspect of public service and reward his cronies

**Y**et events on the ground may be out of the reach of the wiser heads who realize his game and are looking around the political corner, calling for remedy at the ballot box, as public officials and most union leaders keep saying. But as one protester heading for Madison told me, "People are just madder than hell and will not sit meekly by as politicians kick their ass."

Will false GOP claims erase the reality of a month of calm steady mass protests? "I don't think that larger support will disappear if some folks decide on a job action" one protester told me, an attitude that seems to be gaining traction. "If what was being done to us was being done to most Republicans I know, they would have been knocking heads a long time ago."

Still, leaders are urging a committed calm, a controlled anger. Loss of control, they fear, might deflect attention from the ballot box, from the recall elections that could sweep the state out of its unexpectedly destructive Republican majority, not to mention the swelling storm to recall the governor himself.

In that view, it is misbehavior by the opposition that Walker must depend on. Otherwise he can't slow a growing tide that could make him the shortest lived governor in Wisconsin history.

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# The ugly just grows in that 2-year budget

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

We're not "open for business," we're closed to progress. That's the view of many public leaders, not all Democrats by any means.

"Oh sure there's always fat to cut and projects we don't have to do," said one official. "But there's not this much fat or waste anywhere. We will have to reduce care for the unfortunate, public service, maybe health and law personnel. He may not yet be making Wisconsin Bangladesh, but we're heading south of Mississippi."

But only for the middle class, of course. Scott Walker's two-year budget caters to corporate buddies, here and abroad. They can sell the schools handbooks, software and study guides for his new third grade reading program, yet another hurdle to confound the kids and teachers.

They can buy state power plants or privatize all the public services that are apparently on Walker's agenda at universities.

He outlined intentions to break up the UW system of higher education, forcing the largest aid cuts on the system with an option for more revenue only for UW-Madison if it splits off. Later the same for UWM in plans that give Walker control of tuition and contracting.

Expect this budget to be scoured to expose more riches for the rich in what some call the "corporate takeover of Wisconsin."

Several local officials envisioned to me a Wisconsin where the homeowner plows the street, picks up the garbage and cleans up the park while his children go hungry at schools, struggle with double class sizes and have no athletic or music programs -- all in the name of money. Is that an exaggeration? The cuts seem to them that deep.

They explained: Even consumers when they go shopping look for more than the price tag, for real value. Companies when they pick states and cities also look for quality and value -- and much of that comes from good public service, competent teachers, diverse transit, parks. Walker takes that away. Even if he got every "tool" he wants, even thinking that "no new taxes" is the deal-maker, he's denying local leaders real flexibility to create real value.

Still, the most disturbing budget reductions for those interviewed affect children -- to a degree that turns into shameful politicking the self-congratulatory rhetoric that he wants to protect their economic future.

That's why, while some in the media still sound confused over Walker's motivations, even during his March 1 budget unveiling -- long on big words and short on details of the pain --

## Analysis

parents and teachers weren't fooled for a second. As he postured in Madison - after having locked out the mass protesters so only his few faithful were present to applaud on cue -- parents and teachers were already on the street demonstrating at some 21 locations in Milwaukee.

Bracketed on all corners of 6th and Wells St. and dancing to the nonstop honks of passing rush hour traffic, the adults bore home-made placards and pushed strollers while their young children twirled round and round waving signs. Other intersection crowds totaled hundreds of spirited but disgusted citizens creating squads of sympathy throughout the Milwaukee area, organized mainly by MPS parents and teachers.

It will take some time to move from general dislike to specific anger as they absorb the real human suffering hidden within the clinical budget. It will keep journalists and economists busy for weeks figuring it all out, particular now after all the hasty legislative rejiggering.

What they saw immediately was bad enough, so what other horrors lurk beneath? For one thing, the budget gives an anti-Medicaid bureaucrat power to cut not just benefits but eligibility and it chops into municipal transit while beefing up state highways. It will force the poorest elderly from simpler and cheaper prescription programs. So make no mistake. This budget doesn't just throw the regular citizens under the bus, it even throws the bus under the bus.

There always are necessary steps to rein in spending, but that's not what shines through. This is a political document, a policy choice by an unbending and poor thinking non-listener. It's not the necessity of "we're broke" but the ego of election victory that led Walker to such hasty and somewhat sloppy excessive measures. The only recourse will be to make him and his supporters pay at the polls.

The budget difficulties so many states face stemmed from deep national recession, spurred by Wall Street, a reduction in government revenue marked by job losses, foreclosures and runaway consumer fears, mitigated for a while by federal aid (stimulus). So attacking public workers isn't the cure, and not when they've conceded the financial issues.

Wisconsin's shortfall is not anywhere near as severe as many other states. (12.8% of state spending, while the national average is 20%, according to analysis by the national Center



Citizens blanketed Milwaukee streets before, during and after Walker's budget unveiling.



on Budget and Policy Priorities). Given who's spared and who's rewarded, this is hardly the "shared sacrifice" advertised.

Public school children are the main sacrificial lambs. They will suffer the greatest state cut to education since the Great Depression, a slash of \$900 million (by my count, NOT Walker's \$836 million) that puts education support back a decade.

At the same time, Walker wants to lift all caps, ZIPs and income levels on charter and voucher schools expanded throughout Milwaukee County and supported with public dollars -- and he'd like to add more counties. He'd let anyone with a bachelor's degree teach in charter schools, not requiring teaching certification. He would not change the current rules that don't count students in voucher schools as part of the formula for distributing state aid, allowing him to reduce that aid to public schools even further while not touching it for vouchers.

He would end current mandatory evaluation of voucher schools as well as mandatory residence for MPS teachers. He would also lift the cap on virtual charter schools, again without special testing.

Very few voucher schools and only some charter schools even match public school education. Yet Walker wants to cut the average school per-pupil revenue limit by \$555 for public schools in the first year and butter up even more private schools with public dollars.

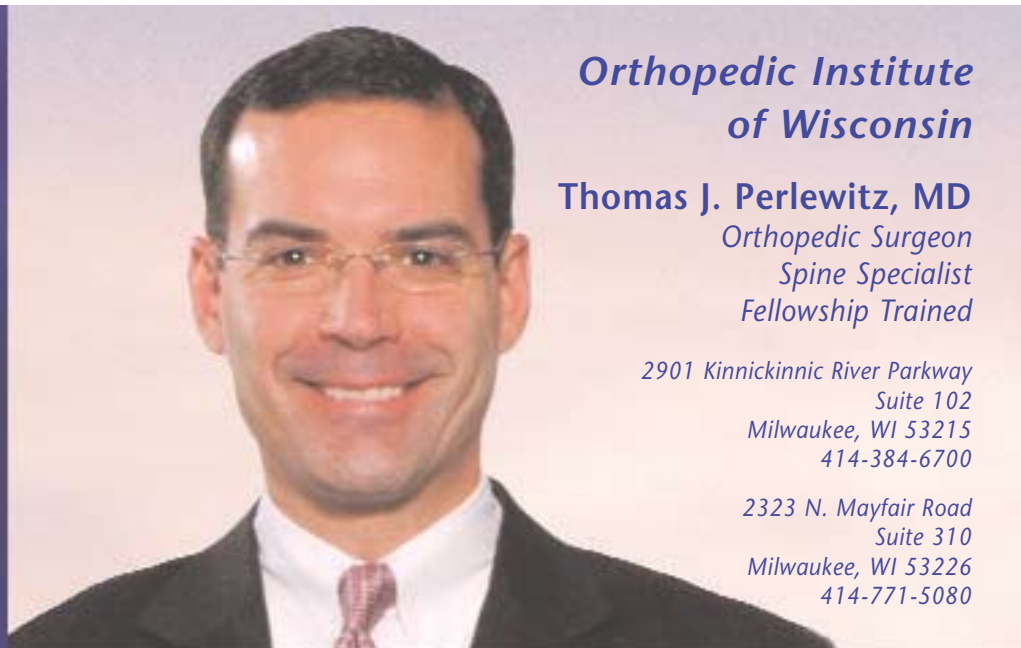
No one wants to pass debt on to our children, but he wants

them more poorly educated along the way. Which makes no sense - unless it's really an attack on union teachers.

He would eliminate all state subsidies to local units of government for recycling - the biggest change since recycling of aluminum cans and newspapers was required in the Tommy Thompson era.

When you combine millions less to towns and cities, massive cuts for public K-12, no way to cut that deep without crippling community growth and no way out because of refusal to raise revenue - Walker is forcing the local governments to make the deep cuts in services and personnel that he won't.

His so-called state budget rescue actually robs businesses of customers who can afford to buy anything. The Institute for Wisconsin's Future conservatively estimates that his budget will cost 9,000 private sector jobs, not to mention falling returns from income and sales taxes. Digging into Walker's own estimates, his proposals take as much as \$1.2 billion a year out of the state economy. It's not an injury to public workers and unions. It's savage injury to all.



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## Election

From Page 1

board president **Michael Bonds**, District 3, and newcomers **Meagan Holman**, District 8 (previous occupant Falk is running unopposed for at-large), and **Mark Sain**, opposing the incumbent in District 1.

Yet so far there seems voter disinterest in the school board races. So much has been going on. But in reality, Walker's budget decimates public education by cutting how much money the state gives public schools. He also wants to expand voucher schools without income limits, in effect offering unrestricted taxpayer money to private schools in Milwaukee County. This supposed conservative believer in local control has stuck it to school districts, deliberately shifting the power of control to Madison and away from local elected officials.

Why no great outrage? Because even those conservatives who give lip service to local rule are happy to see less voice in liberal Milwaukee. Too many docile citizens have failed to recognize or else simply accept this state attack on their right to influence change for their children.

But should the recalls and other actions shift the balance, who is sitting on the school board becomes vitally important,



Incumbent Pedro Colon has been endorsed by MALC for Branch 18 of the circuit court. as Walker's backers well know, and voters are only slowly beginning to recognize. They have to wake up before April 5.

### Recalls can't be fast enough!

The ballot box is vital but many think its biggest corrective weight will pound out in waves, in door to door activism, district by district direct citizen action. Recalls.

What has often been a right-wing weapon is now consuming the progressive public and activating anti-Walker citizenry in startling numbers.

No one likes the messiness and slowness of the process, but average citizens I interviewed -- one wielding a recall clipboard admitted she had previously voted Republican -- say Walker has left them no choice. His attack on unions, schoolchildren and BadgerCare (which brought

tractor-loads of farmers to Madison March 13) were not what he campaigned on. So even if recalls are a sometimes confusing push they're the big remedy.

Even MSNBC host Ed Schulz and his commentators didn't grasp the whole picture. It's true that recalling three Republicans shifts the balance in the Senate but that can't wipe away Walker's bills and correct the course. Those laws also passed in the Assembly, heavier with Republicans.

The long-term game is what those Republicans will think in a few months when they see their colleagues summarily ousted. The new mood of the electorate could make these Walker yes-folks in the Assembly change their minds. Or else they can expect recalls of their own or more likely face these voters again in November of 2012.

Either way, organizers say, the pressure and success of senate recalls are the key. Keep the pressure on and think around the corner. *See Page 3 for more recall details.*

The state Democratic Party has gotten behind the effort that started with grassroots anger, offering organizing expertise and an active website at [www.recalltherepublican8.com](http://www.recalltherepublican8.com).

Party leader Graeme Zielinski is driving both the recall organizing and supporting

Abele for county executive -- and he has been blown away by the citizen reaction and active support.

"This is hardly my first rodeo," said the veteran of national campaigns and rallies, "but I've never seen anything like this and I think the anger will last. Hardly just union people -- not just workers but citizens of all sorts. Private, public, teachers, retirees, students, mothers."

### Why Walker thinks he'll win

I didn't want to be the cold water interviewer, but I pointed out it really has to last -- and Walker and the national conservative community, both pundits and corporate backers, think it won't. They think union members are selfish wimps, that everyday people only care about themselves and will back off if things get better -- that the anger over stolen democratic rights will dissipate over the time it takes to bring change.

To get to a recall vote only requires a quarter of a district's vote in the governor's race so as important as clipboards and signatures are right now, it will then take weeks to confirm and set an election. And that will take 50% plus one vote to oust a Republican senator.

The first actual ouster elections will be lucky to happen by mid-summer. A recall movement has started against Walker but can't take place until next year.

The full damage of his restrictions on bargaining rights and slashes to education, health care and safety nets won't have an immediate impact except in pockets (such as UW employees who immediately lose bargaining rights whether they are paid by the state or not - another proof this was always about unions not the state budget).

Many public employees and teachers won't feel the full bite for months, some protected for a while by union contracts or federal stimulus that runs out in the fall, some by the simple nature of economic changes. Unions had already agreed to financial concessions, so their members were braced for losing deferred compensation in pensions and health care -- so complete agony won't hit for months.

That's what Walker is counting on. The major loss of freedom as well as income will be more like a Chinese water torture, drop by drop with Walker hoping citizens will forget by the time they're wet.

The uncertainty has its paradoxical side. Think of the grandmothers who feared death panels that didn't exist in the Obama health bill. Now they're waiting for the ax of Scott-care to fall on their Medicaid and their families.

The BlueGreen Alliance noted that single-handedly

Walker has "set the economy in reverse." Private sector workers who lost their jobs wonder what will happen now, since they were taken in and supported in their job search by public worker relatives.

There are thousands of such workers soon to lose that life-line, and there are thousands of children beginning to realize they will lose teachers, programs and manageable class sizes in rural and urban areas. But kids can't vote and most jobs won't falter for months.

Union members hope Wisconsin's strong work ethic carries through the temporary disaster of bad choices in public office. But will such fortitude weaken the resolve for change?

I pointed out to Zielinski that this is not a patient electorate, and union people are notoriously impatient for changes - they even change their own leaders if things don't happen fast enough.

It's hard to see how any of Walker's ideas will add jobs and attract thoughtful businesses to his perverse view of the economy, but it is clear that the nation's general recovery under Obama will make things better and make even Walker look good - and unions are the last people to wish the state bad luck in jobs and economy even under a rotten leader.

His supporters believe time is on their side. New York Times conservative columnist David Brooks, notorious for preferring historical examples over moral considerations, looked back even to Calvin Coolidge attacking union cops, Reagan dumping air controllers, even Margaret Thatcher attacking British labor to note "I can't think of a single leader who was injured by standing up to unions."

But Zielinski and many community leaders believe Walker is about to break that mold. "He's done something I never expected," Zielinski said. "He's helped us educate the people about what is at stake. Now there are a lot more of them involved in this effort than he imagined" -- including many who voted for him.

That's turned to idiocy the standard right-wing defense that by not listening to the country he's just thinking about the good of the country. It's undercut his tough-guy stance and evaporated the impact of those union-bashing Karl Rove ads.

The governor has become a cancer spreading pain throughout the body politic. That is why so many believe in momentum combined with persistence. They're going to survive the cancer.

How long will the fight need to last? Said Milwaukee labor council leader Sheila Cochran:

"One day longer than he does! We're not going away."

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# Abele

From Page 1

his campaign. Now he complains when Abele points out the obvious, that faithful sycophant Stone is culpable in Walker's excessive power grab, obeisance to the Kochs of the walk, and schemes to pretend it was about the budget and then dropping the budget thing and going after basic bargaining rights.

Stone had a central role on the center stage - and everyone in Milwaukee saw it. In an interview with the Journal Sentinel, he indicated - get this - that he was against taking bargaining rights away from public workers before he was for it. But he was for it loudly and more than twice in budget votes.

Called on the flip-flop by Charlie Sykes, he backed away. Pounded for his view by Abele in a TV ad, he snapped that was unfair.

No wonder Stone looks like an escapee from "The Exorcist," twisting and spitting while Abele has remained calm and growing. It was Abele who went to Madison and stood by public nurses. It was Abele who sent Walker a letter asking him to back off his attack on bargaining rights. It was Abele who backed bipartisan thoughtfulness on the future of mental health facilities and O'Donnell Park. And when he offered consolidation of services with other municipalities, all Stone could sneer was that wouldn't save enough. Which simply reminded voters that, as Abele said, Stone is "following in the footsteps of Scott Walker."

What seems most to have peeved Stone, who has invoked Walker's legend in this race, is that Abele's campaign is pounding on a simple truth - Madison is merely an extension of Walker's Milwaukee tactics that rather than helping the county is presenting it with immediate costly consequences.

Said Abele, "Our number one priority in Milwaukee County must be creating more good-paying jobs. As we make the tough decisions to get our economy moving again, working men and women must have fair, open and honest bargaining rights, as well as protections against poor working conditions and unfair treatment. We can take on difficult budget and economic problems by coming together to find common ground and agreement, and working men and women can be part of the solution - if they are allowed."

Abele has won the endorsements of Milwaukee labor. He would coordinate with Barrett on Park East development, and is already using much of Barrett's recent campaign staff to reach out to Milwaukee voters (probably well aware that Barrett drew 62% of the countywide vote in the contest for governor).

The rap on Abele was that he came from money (while



Abele has laid out a five-point plan forward that doesn't include a tax increase.

funding many progressive causes), had never run for public office (just run a big foundation), overstated details in the primary (as did all the candidates) but mainly still expresses a willingness to work with all sides and not throw daggers. Quite simply, that sure sounds better to voters than Stone, who likes Walker's style, which includes not talking to the other side while saying you will.

Abele has drawn support because of Stone's big clay Madison feet as well as such Stone-sinking ideas as selling off the county's best assets, like the airport. But what surprised me as I made the journalistic rounds was that Abele had been doing his homework. He has talked to diverse experts in local government and won them over.

I learned that in an interview with the man you could call the brains of the county government - in a more flattering way than Karl Rove was called Bush's brain. And no one would call him a liberal. In fact, "I'm just a conservative South Side guy," Richard Nyklewicz chuckled during our talk.

For 30 years as a supervisor -- he preceded Chris Larson in District 14 -- Nyklewicz was known as the quiet man pulling the county's financial chestnuts out of the fire. He was the clever but cautious fiscal scalpel whom many think kept the county government afloat through the worst excesses of Walker and even Walker's predecessors. He is still praised as the mentor of responsible detail work, with such intimate knowledge of how things should operate that he surprised many in not pursuing higher county office.

Recalling how it was teachers who inspired his interest in government, he's told interviewers he never had that sort of political fire and just quietly retired in 2008.

Years ago Nyklewicz had a spat with Stone about airport operations, and from up close and personal contact with then exec Walker, he is not a fan of the new governor or his approach. But he's stayed out of expressing public opinions in retirement, and speaking up now is hardly an anti-conservative thing given his reputation.

"Pause and think about it," he said. "Did workers cause the problem? The answer is no. So

why demean them? When you start threatening people's livelihood, well, frankly, I'm amazed at the peacefulness of the response."

"I think folks are finally seeing the real Scott Walker. What I fear most is his now having a line item veto despite everyone's hope that there are reasonable people near him in the government. Most people know that when you find yourself in a hole you stop digging. He doesn't."

But distaste for Walker doesn't translate into agreeing to support Abele, so I was struck by how deep that commitment was. "I've talked to him and I like him. My take is he is extremely intelligent, curious, with a breadth of knowledge from the business sector. He's big on best practices."

"You know, I'm a process person. I think he needs to become more familiar with the reasons why things were set up the way they are in county government, but he's doing that by talking to people. And there are some benefits in looking at it all from a fresh perspective. I want that backed with a knowledge of why things evolved that way."

Nyklewicz paused. "The current Madison administration is going to give county government a hard road in any case, but that's why we need bright people who have a fresh view -- not dictating to people."

-- Dominique Paul Noth

## LABOR COUNCIL ENDORSES FOR APRIL 5:



Eyon Biddle, seen amid protesting nurses and others outside the mental health complex, has been MALC endorsed for county supervisor District 10, as has in District 14 Jason Haas (left). Newcomers backed for the Milwaukee school board are engaged parent Meagan Holman in District 8 and retired firefighter Mark Sain (below right) in District 1.



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# Obama uses Wisconsin to make moral point

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

It's a myth of our current mass media that the president of the United States has remained mum on what is happening in Wisconsin except for one brief interview weeks before the biggest protests to a WTMJ-TV reporter in Milwaukee.

From that one, the right wing media played up his opening comments about how we all need to tighten our belts and the left-wing emphasized his ending comment that Gov. Scott Walker's bill seemed more like an assault on unions than a budget fix.

Obama, at a time when he is pushing for fiscal austerity and has himself frozen federal wages, clearly does not want to be too aggressive on this point, or take sides so strongly that he becomes a distraction from the genuine

outpouring from the streets taking place in Wisconsin.

If a president gets physically involved in anything, that sucks the air out of the room, and he is smart enough to know that.

But it is a media fabrication that he has remained silent since. In typical fashion, he has remained polite and focused on fiscal austerity and deficit repair --- a master of being indirect and pointed at the same time. On Scott Walker, he has been most circumspect - why reach down? Slapping toads is not the president's style.

As one DC pundit told me, "He's not going to become the sound-bite simpleton for marching with unions that the cable news heads wants, nor as outspoken as the liberals clearly want. He's waiting for the public to see the issue more clearly without giving up his principles."

## Massey security chief indicted for lying to FBI about explosion

The chief of security for the Upper Big Branch Mine has been arrested and charged with two felonies for allegedly lying to the FBI and obstructing justice in the investigation of the West Virginia coal mine explosion that killed 29 miners last April.

Hughie Elbert Stover was charged by a grand jury. US Attorney Booth Goodwin said he made false statements to federal agents investigating allegations that security guards at Upper Big Branch routinely warned mine workers when federal inspectors arrived at the mine. The indictment also alleges that Stover had an unnamed person dispose of thousands of pages of security-related documents stored in a Massey building near the Upper Big Branch Mine.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration's (MSHA) investigation of the explosion found evidence of poor maintenance as the cause of the explosion.

The Upper Big Branch mine in Montcoal, W.Va., is owned by Richmond-based Massey Energy Co., which had been cited for numerous safety violations. Stover works for Performance Coal Co., Inc., a Massey subsidiary.



White House photo of Obama speaking to the governors about not vilifying workers.

But when the occasion presents itself, Obama makes his comments count, often in private - but most openly to the media at the bipartisan gathering of the nation's governors in D.C. the last weekend in February. (In recent weeks he has also spoken mainly through aides.)

That governors' meeting was the height of protest in Wisconsin, as Obama well knew - so amid all the congeniality and conviviality of the White House reception and address to them came the perfect moments for some sharp bitebacks.

It came after chuckles from Vice President Joe Biden's pointed reminder that all the governors from both parties, regardless of political stance, had clearly loved the federal stimulus help for their states, with Biden assuring them that though the stimulus had come to an end, the federal government stood ready to be an active helpful partner -- if Congress allows. (That was the pointed part.)

## Comment

Obama was all about cooperation in his remarks:

"So, yes, we need a conversation about pensions and Medicare and Medicaid and other promises that we've made as a nation. And those will be tough conversations, but necessary conversations. As we make these decisions about our budget going forward, though, I believe that everyone should be at the table and that the concept of shared sacrifice should prevail."

But you'd have to be a simpleton not to miss the targets of his next remarks, including the Wisconsin governor:

"But let me also say this: I don't think it does anybody any good when public employees are denigrated or vilified or their rights are infringed upon.

"We need to attract the best and the brightest to public service. These times demand it. We're not going to attract the best teachers for our kids, for example, if they only make a fraction of what other professionals make. We're not going to convince the bravest Americans to put their lives on the line as police officers or firefighters if we don't properly reward that bravery.

"If all the pain is borne by only one group -- whether it's workers, or seniors, or the poor -- while the wealthiest among us get to keep or get more tax breaks, we're not doing the right thing. I think that's something that Democrats and Republicans

should be able to agree on.

"Now, as we begin to get our budgets under control, the other thing we can't do is sacrifice our future. Even as we cut back on those things that don't add to growth or opportunity for our people, we have to keep investing in those things that are absolutely necessary to America's success -- education, innovation, infrastructure."

Walker understood who the comments were aimed at (the president didn't hide behind a Skype phone call as the David Koch prankster did) and again shot erroneously from the hip in self-defense. But then, you could hardly blame him for repeating the canard that had also been trotted out by NBC "Meet the Press" host Dick Gregory and went unchallenged in initial media reports by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and other media outlets.

Sniffed Walker, "I'm sure the president knows that most federal employees do not have collective bargaining for wages and benefits."

Unmentioned were that federal employees, who often do have other bargaining rights that Walker would take away, don't bargain for wages and benefits largely because those are mandated by federal legislation or backed in bipartisan orders at a level of competence that I suspect state employees would gladly accept if Walker were to guarantee in the same fashion.

These are the health benefits that members of Congress can access, conditioned on income and clearly the envy of average citizens during the health care debate. Surely Wisconsin public workers would like Walker to offer that - they would be guaranteed without bargaining!

Only starting at the end of March, he will refuse paycheck write-off of dues or union membership without yearly agreement by a supermajority. Not for him is the federal proof that wages of all public workers can be frozen in necessity, as Obama had done, without destroying the fabric of mutual exchange, which has been hard won at the federal level, as federal unions would quickly share if the press simply asked.

But again, the unknowing and lazy are blind-sided by partisan soundbites.

There was a regrettable absence at the D.C. gatherings -- it was empty of Walker, busy handling the uproar in Wisconsin, or trying to spin the media in his favor.

That robbed not just protesters but governors in D.C. from opportunities they clearly wanted, opponents to chastise him and members of his own party to suggest it was time for Walker to pull in his horns.



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# Packed punchy Town Hall

The delegates completed a lot of business in a March 2 meeting deliberately truncated to open up Serb Hall after a half hour to a town hall announced only two days earlier. So a brisk meeting was followed by fireworks and insights.

The delegates endorsed a slate of recommended candidates for the April 5 election and accepted nominations for officers and the executive council. Then they were pushed forward as 800 people crowded in while the stage was taken over by a remarkable array of panelists and notable guests. Representatives of federal officials were there. So were members of the school board.

Mind you, this took place in the middle of the Illinois flight of the 14 senate Democrats, but also a time it was becoming clear that Scott Walker had awakened a sleeping giant called the American worker. What was common at union meetings was now in the national consciousness -- everyone was talking bargaining rights and worker rights.

But despite the frequent applause the crowd was not there for slaps on the back. (A good thing, too, as the citizens would discover in a week.) It was there to learn and get ready from a legion of front-line stories and expert economic and personal testimony. It was there for both mutual support and some pretty hard and basic questions about how to move forward,

making sure that everyone was agreeing to hold fast. Oh, there was mutual love in the room and high emotion, but mainly determination.

Chris Abele, endorsed by the delegates for county executive, arrived to greet the exiting crowd.

At that earlier meeting the delegates also bid farewell to members of the executive board either retiring or moving on to other duties (Bill Christianson, James Fields, Sam Gallo, new state AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Stephanie Bloomingdale). They applauded plumbers leader Scott Redman's reversal of taking a break ("This is not the time to quit," he had told his colleagues).

There was no objection to renominating the officers for elevation in April or to recommend names to fill the executive board: Christine Vidmar of Workers United Local 122, Candice Owley, returning to the board for WFNHP Local 5001, Scott Parr of International Association of Machinists Lodge 2110, and Dan Panowitz of AFSCME Local 33. All these plus returning officers will be elected by acclamation in April, with the addition to the expanded Washington County seat on the board of Dan Large, IBEW Local 494.

-- Dominique Paul Noth



Chief financial organizer and town hall organizer Sheila Cochran took a cell phone call from fugitive senator Chris Larson, then shared it via speaker with the crowd, doing the same with Sen. Spencer Coggs. Then Cochran handed the cell to Coggs' relative in the hall, Rep. Elizabeth Coggs (below), sitting with a former county board colleague, Willie Johnson.



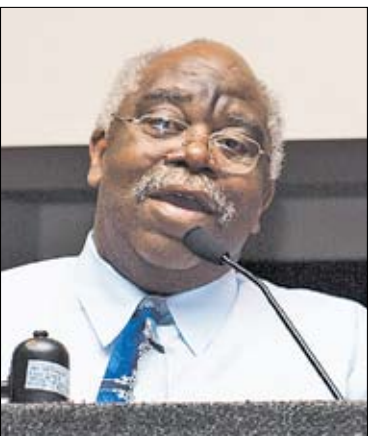
Opening many eyes, IWF's Jack Norman offered a pinpoint economic analysis that skewered Walker's financial pretenses about the state's budgetary health - and flatly warned how devastating to the economy these Walker voodoo economics would be.



Milwaukee Teachers Education Association President Mike Langyel spared neither facts nor feelings, moving from how his teachers were under threat of jobs and rights loss to how he was mainly worried "for our children, whom we have to be here for." They were under even greater threat from proposed cuts in public school funding and programs. Another speaker, Lyle Balistrieri, detailed how his trades union council had been and will be in the thick of this fight - "Don't think for a moment he's not coming after us."

**BELOW:** Rep. Barbara Toles tried double-duty -- stir up the crowd with candor, which she did, and meet her obligations as a public official. She had just received and was struggling through Walker's 1,345-page two-year budget minefield, Hidden in its thickness and legislative legalese are traps and pitfalls for every citizen.

As the forum revealed, one of Walker's gimmick is making legislators vote on bills before they have a chance to understand them



Supervisor Michael Mayo, acting county board chairman, calmly laid the reality on the table. Unions may be the spearhead, "but get on the phone and call everyone you know. Old, young, workers or not. This hammer is landing everywhere."



Rep. Fred Kessler, while sometime seated with fellow Rep. JoCasta Zamarrilla, here shared the forum with Milwaukee Ald. Willie Wade and AFSCME's Patty Yunk. He detailed the screaming matches as Assembly Democrats tried to forestall hasty votes in violation of state laws. He assured the crowd the battle would continue in the courts as well as in the chambers.

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# Walker's Koch addiction

## Every voter should burn this phone call into their memory as they act

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

The unions had nothing to do with it and the establishment media is conflicted because pretending to be a well-heeled right-wing dude to get a public official to spill his real feelings is a basic violation of journalistic ethics. That said, every Wisconsinite needs to listen to the results, first posted in late February and still essential listening at [wnymedia.net/buffalopundit/2011/02/buffalo-beast-poses-as-david-koch-calls-wi-gov-walker](http://wnymedia.net/buffalopundit/2011/02/buffalo-beast-poses-as-david-koch-calls-wi-gov-walker).

Listen to Walker's preening when he thought he was talking to "one of us" -- a diehard right-winger and rich beside. Duplicitous and arrogant are only the first words. Egotistical, delusional, amoral also come to mind, at least they did to folks who voted for Walker for governor.

To say it opened their eyes was clearly their first reaction, far stronger than the second reaction that Walker was conned into candor.

He doesn't know he has been duped. He falls all over himself to boast about his reputation, that his enemies now know how dangerous he is (so do his friends), and he reveals his strategy to what he thinks is one of the Koch brothers, the rich right-wingers who heavily funded his campaign and opened a lobbying office in Madison.

The contents are frightening to both right and left -- particularly shameful for the right-wing - in what it reveals about the cloud cuckooland where Scott Walker dwells. If any doubted that ideology can totally warp your world view, if you ever suspected that smooth talk and an affable manner can disguise extremist corrupted vision, just take a few minutes to listen.

Forget whether your own personal philosophy leans Democrat or Republican or independent, or hard right or middle left. Just listen.

Walker admits he is seeking to break unions, and he doesn't limit it to public service ones. (Listen) He compares himself to Ronald Reagan breaking the air controllers and suggests he is also proving to the enemies like the Soviet Union (which no longer exists) that he is not to be trifled with. I can hear Osama bin Laden trembling in his cave about facing the governor from Wisconsin. Don't

doubt that he thinks he is Reagan reincarnated, just listen.

He proudly discloses that he has already prepared lists of public service workers to lay off, so even if he gets his legislative way he won't flinch at curtailing public service and throwing families into the gutter.

And it is only for strategic reasons ("we talked about it") that he rejects the idea of planting agitators in the crowds of protesters, whom he also dismisses radical 1960s nuts the "silent majority" will turn against.

(But what the world was seeing on TV were their hard-working neighbors, largely white and middle class insisting on their rights. The real silent majority at work.)

His hubris is rampant in that phone call. He's ignoring news analysis that his attack on bargaining rights goes far deeper than anything he campaigned on. He ignores that it is not outsiders or even unions driving the protests. He weirdly tries to suggest that anyone outside Wisconsin has no right to comment. (One pundit suggested Walker now return the \$460,000 he raised in out of state individual campaign contributions.)

When he thought he was unburdening to David Koch, he made it clear that he does not oppose trickery or thuggery on moral or ethical grounds, or even on the Christian values of his upbringing. It would only be about strategy (Lord help the GOP when they realize the strategic foundation has turned to mud) because he thinks the public is on his side, that the public will remain sheep believing what-



ever he does. He says the voices on the street are making no headway against him, they're all hippies, and physical action or deception against them should be opposed only because it might backfire.

Human concerns or actually listening have flown out the window, and Walker believes that if he is unflinching that alone will cow his opponents into giving up. Now I agree that comparisons of Walker to Hitler or to Mubarek are overblown and should be avoided, but let's not pretend he didn't provide a bizarre echo chamber.

He doesn't kill people, he's not a full-fledged dictator and the Egyptians and now Libyans suffered death and torture in their rebelling, a far cry from the economic devastation about to land on state residents. But it remains true that tyrants start off attacking trade unions and opposition voices, and try to paint opponents as indecent, druggies or anarchists, not concerned vocal citizens. Walker is certainly doing that, and is only candid not to the press but when he thinks he's talking to a like-minded guy with big bucks to back him.

So while comparisons to Egypt seem overly facile, the governor sure exposed a Mubarek-Lite quality.

The tape also paraded an intellectual incompetency behind his political ideology, a world view so smoothly shallow as to offend real conservatives. Walker's inadvertent but clearly candid and preening 20 minutes on the phone came because Internet journalists doubted his statement that he wouldn't talk to anyone. Oh yes, he would, they thought, if it were an important enough fish on the other end of the line. They were right.

It would take a psychiatrist to pronounce whether this interview rises to diagnosable "megalomania" or whatever the scientific equivalent of "genuine nut job" should be. But since arm-chair psychologists abound in our partisan environment, you cannot blame the public right and left from listening and drawing its own conclusions.

Walker's opponents see the Koch call as simply confirming their feelings, but it should be Walker's followers who are most dismayed.

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