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Second-shift workers walk into an uncertain future in Oak Creek as Delphi files for bankruptcy.



Film producer Robert Greenwald is helping the national campaign against Wal-Mart make innovative waves.

Ominous oracle of Delphi UAW battles new assault on decent wages, retirement

By Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Labor Press

"Philosophers can speculate about fairness (to workers). I have to deal with reality."

That was one of the gentler things Delphi CEO Robert (Steve) Miller said Oct. 12 in a Michigan press conference defending his decision to take the largest US auto parts supplier into federal bankruptcy – a week before the bankruptcy laws got tougher and a day after he protected the company's ruling class with enhanced compensation.

Miller simultaneously demanded that the United Auto Workers accept a 60% cut in hourly wages for its 24,000 Delphi members, driving them down to \$10-\$12 an hour.

Miller, who expects the company to stay in bankruptcy for nearly two years, at first defended his protection of executives and plant managers (he deliberately sweetened severance packages for 21 of the company's top-compensated executives and then offered bonuses and stock options to managers who would stick through the bankruptcy). He blasted both UAW President Ron Gettelfinger and Michigan Gov. Jennifer Grantham for criticizing him.

But in the firestorm of media derision that followed, on Oct. 17 he said veteran executives had

volunteered to take a 10% pay cut during the bankruptcy and he would take a token \$1 salary rather than \$1.5 million. Still, he did not rescind the request for bonuses and longer severance sweeteners in bankruptcy court filings and retains the \$3 million signing bonus he got in July for taking the CEO job, and his \$4 million exit package.

He warned the UAW to accept his wage cuts or else he would ask the US bankruptcy court to set aside the union contracts, including defined pension benefits covering retirees.

He in effect defied the UAW workers to strike, saying such an action would simply "hasten and expand the number of plants that might have to be closed."

The move into bankruptcy came even as the UAW was negotiating concessions with Delphi, as it was more successfully doing with auto makers that, objectively, are in deeper financial doldrums.

On Oct. 17, General Motors praised the union and announced a tentative GM deal (it still requires worker ratification). The modified plan would reduce the company's impending \$60 billion in health costs by 25%, providing a needed billion dollars a year cash flow for the troubled auto maker.

Delphi continued Page 6

Putting Wal-Mart in holiday slammer

Wal-Mart has never seen anything like this.

Starting in November and extending through the holidays, it will be under the microscope everywhere.

It will be clobbered with all the tools of the culture as well as by foot soldiers. It will face sophisticated and even novel marketing, challenges not just by grassroots and union organizations but by angry manufacturers, women's groups, consumer groups, students and national media.

The campaign will cover not just 50 states but almost the entire globe – movies, media stories, parking lot rallies, educational talks, all coordinated region by region to speak across the political divide.

Ridicule that speaks volumes is also part of the mix, just as for many cable viewers the satire of the "Daily Show" some-

times seems more truthful than the actual news.

For an early example, consider the folks at JibJab. Their straight-down-the-middle lampoon of the 2004 presidential race became a national fad. Now their "Big Box-Mart" at jibjab.com is a devastating two-minute dissection of how the American consumer is shopping his way into economic oblivion, all to the cheerful tune of "Oh, Susanna."

Make no mistake. The past protests have hurt Wal-Mart and even prevented it from building in communities around the nation (including Franklin). Look at the slips in sales. Look at the strong impact this school year of the nationwide plea for consumers to go elsewhere for back to school items.

Add in the court attacks on Wal-Mart's gender discrimination, **Holiday** continued Page 4

Iowa corn will flatten legendary Red Star Yeast plant here

The workers at the Red Star Yeast plant have suspected for more than a year that 85 jobs would soon vanish from the Menomonee Valley. Now the only unknown is whether the plant will close in the next two months or as long as six or seven months down the road.

The inevitable march of technology, commodity pricing and transportation costs doomed the plant, which dates back to the 19th century and now is operated by the world's biggest yeast maker, the Paris-based Lesaffre Yeast Corp.

But few look for "Lesaffre" in the grocery store when they want to bake bread. Red Star remains the world-familiar brand for both home and commercial bakers.

Harry Shayhorn, president of Brewery Workers Local 9 (UAW), says the local has 74 workers at the yeast plant. There are also 10 to 15 managerial and non-union workers who have been alerted by Lesaffre that their jobs are going.

Decades of creating yeast from sugar byproducts (beet and cane molasses) is also disappearing, caused by technology as well as diminished availability as

molasses is explored as a fuel commodity, Shayhorn said.

It was in 2004 that his union members saw what was coming. That was when Lesaffre announced a new plant was going up in Iowa, right next to a corn plant that could pipe over liquid syrup, and corn would become the base of future yeast creating.

That plant is now in test phases and if the process works out as the experts hoped, both the Milwaukee plant and a Baltimore plant with Teamsters workers will close.

As we went to press, Shayhorn had not yet received the required 60-day state warning of closure, so the actual date is still uncertain, though management informally alerted workers and the city of Milwaukee in late September.

"We've got a lot of unhappy workers," said Shayhorn. It's also an older workforce — Shayhorn estimates the average age around 50 -- signaling yet another group of displaced manufacturing veterans facing a dimmer personal future and the difficulties of retraining or even relocating.

The hourly rate at Red Star is \$21.20, plus such benefits as health care and defined pensions.



The impending loss of Red Star Yeast work did not pause Brewery Workers Local 9's long commitment to community service. On Oct. 16, for the sixth straight year, the UAW local provided snacks, card games, camaraderie and money-raising raffles with nifty donated prizes to give thousands of dollars to a half-dozen Milwaukee charities. The gifts were solicited from some 48 businesses. Raffle tickets were gobbled up by waves of workers and families all Sunday afternoon at the union's Greenfield Ave. hall. Once again the canny organizers chose the Packers bye-week to schedule their charity event. The local has won statewide recognition for its community endeavors.

But there are pension reductions for early retirement, Shayhorn said. Local 9 has already started negotiating with the company on

termination issues.

Many Milwaukeeans know the occasional aroma of the plant as they drive I-94 but few have seen the facility at 2702 W. Greves St. down in the valley or know its long colorful history.

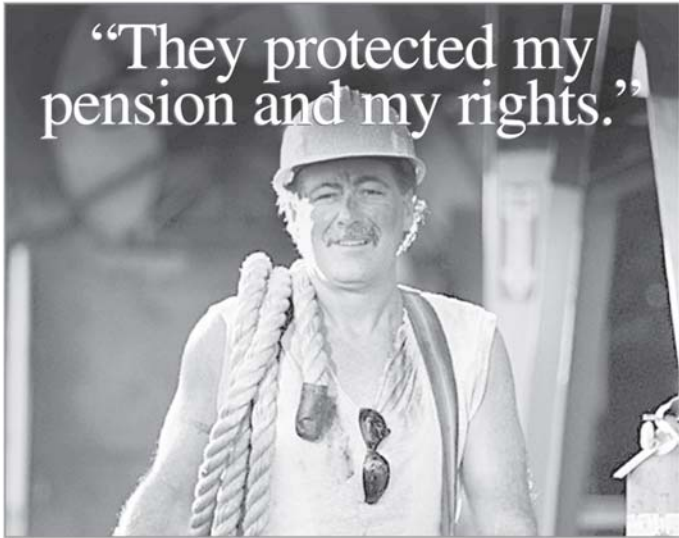
Shayhorn certainly does. "It started out making gin," he said. That was in 1882 as Meadow Springs Distillery, a gin producer that continued until 1919 when Prohibition led it to switch to the Red Star Yeast & Products Co.

It stuck with yeast even when liquor became legal again and changed hands many times before Lesaffre took over in 2001.

The only bigger water-sewer user among commercial manu-

facturers in Milwaukee is the other plant were Local 9 is conspicuously present — Miller Brewing. So the impending departure of Red Star Yeast will have an impact on taxpayers beyond the loss of jobs and the loss of a major plant hauling goods and products in and out of the city. The closing will cost the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District about \$1.4 million a year.

Lesaffre will continue a yeast plant in Alabama as well as its new production facility near Cedar Rapids. Shayhorn hears that the Teamsters, who run the corn plant right next door, are interested in organizing the Iowa yeast plant.



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A small but thundering GOP herd drives Waukesha vote

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

On Oct. 18, Waukesha County voters had a remarkably clear choice between sticking with a party label or opting for proven competence in local government.

About 14% of Waukesha's 270,000 registered voters turned away from competence and bit hard into the party apple, voting against a longtime frugal steward who refused to play the partisan game.

Many of them apparently surged to the polls at the last minute in fear the demon Democrats were coming.

All that was more than enough to make the man wrapped in the elephant flag, Rep. Dan Vrakas, the new county executive.

The tone of panic before the vote and triumph after emanating from the radio and the GOP fax machine (and it's getting harder to tell them apart) made liberal pundits dismiss the entire county as a land of knee-jerk lemmings rushing over the cliff and into the sea. It did look silly and they did look bamboozled, but consider: 81% of Waukesha voters stayed out of this one.

Perhaps those who did vote reflected the majority's sentiments. Perhaps not. Perhaps the great majority were turned off by the "us against them" rhetoric that shanghaied one of the few remaining nonpartisan safety zones on the ballot. Perhaps not. Certainly the entire county will now face the consequences of placing party affiliation ahead of track record.

The crazy thing is that the losing candidate is a pretty frugal guy who has easily been re-elected to county leadership for a dozen years. He was also serving as acting county executive and actually brought before the full board and the new executive a disciplined low property-tax budget.

Jim Dwyer valiantly stuck with asking voters to focus on his experience, knowledge and ability to work with all sides in keeping tax burdens down and cuts in local government services sensible. For that extreme stand, he got 33% of the vote.

And what does Vrakas stand for? A slogan called TABOR,

Comment

still unwritten, still demonstrably unworkable (ask the Republican leadership in Colorado), a sugar pill that takes municipal, county and school control out of the hands of local officials.

Except, the TABOR supporters say, when the community itself can speak through referendums to override the limits. But Waukesha just saw what could happen when a statewide party machine can push a ballot initiative regardless of credentials. Think of the impact on schools, parks and water policy.

Mainly, what Vrakas did to win so handily was lean on every name-Republican he could find.

Former governor Tommy Thompson did phone calls. Rep. James Sensenbrenner subdued his prickly side to do the radio ads. The state GOP's database was pressed into service. Conservative radio was nonstop in deriding and demeaning Dwyer as a stalking horse for Democratic Gov. Jim Doyle, who was said to be secretly backing the — horrors! — one candidate with proven ability.

Vrakas is a benign presence, not as conservative as the role he assumed for the campaign. But he's proven unlikely to push back against his most extreme right-wing supporters. And a good county exec has to push back against whichever party controls the legislature.

Ask Dan Finley, whose departure to run the troubled Milwaukee County Museum forced the hasty special election to fill his remaining term (to April of 2007).

Finley's success as county executive came in large part because he was a maverick Republican who refused to follow the party line even when he was courted for statewide office. That gave him a freedom of decision that Vrakas doesn't have and really hasn't demonstrated.

What Vrakas has been is a longtime GOP back-bencher in the state Assembly, definitely not known for taking stands against the leadership. The assessment of union leaders who work regularly with the state legislature is basically: "a pretty nice guy ... listens to your points in commit-



Candidate Jim Dwyer in an early campaign appearance at the Waukesha County Labor Council.

tee meetings but then votes whatever the leadership wants on the floor." Now he runs the floor — will that change him?

Frankly, the way he won will affect what he can do.

Virtually every \$500 or more campaign gift came from GOP buddies or veteran GOP people. These are the folks who actually will expect Vrakas to prove himself, to pay his debt.

Vrakas owes allegiances that will be hard to resist. You can almost hear the privateers and businesses lining up for a piece of the quarter billion dollar county pie.

Dwyer raised campaign money from unions (hardly a radical bunch in Waukesha) but interestingly most of his support

came from current and former county leaders (mayors, supervisors) and citizens who knew he answered the phone and tried to help out with neighborhood problems.

He also challenged Vrakas on how much of the local tax burdens were caused by out-of-control state spending and unfunded mandates foisted on home-owners by the GOP legislators like Vrakas.

Those talk shows keep describing the county as ferociously conservative, but that's overstating.

Waukesha County has certainly been strongly Republican in statewide and federal elections.

But Republican and conservative are different. You need look no farther than Harriet Miers' nomination to the Supreme Court to be reminded of that, and to recall how for decades the conservative wing was usually derisively at odds with the "big tent" come-ons of the rest of the GOP.

Most Waukesha County Republicans seem to picture themselves as "big tent." In county government they want service not ideology.

It was interesting that Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker, with an eye to his run as a GOP candidate for governor, rushed to Vrakas' side, because his presence undercut

one of Vrakas' key arguments — that a former Republican assemblyman would get a better hearing from Madison.

Walker is also a former GOP assemblyman and his lobbying hasn't gotten dilly for Milwaukee.

Dwyer was attacked when he pointed out that Finley had said nice things about him and about the need to have someone familiar with county government at the helm.

"County government is about people helping people," Dwyer was fond of saying. "Madison is about partisan politics, and we're better off keeping it there."

Now a small turnout of voters has brought Madison to Waukesha. They are likely to discover why county government should be kept nonpartisan.

The biggest advantage Vrakas has is not the Republican machinery that drove his victory. His biggest advantage is Dwyer, historically a forgive-and-forget guy who remains chairman of the county board and deeply knowledgeable about county operations.

Dwyer has the respect of his fellow supervisors and never seemed to take the Republican attack as personally as most politicians would.

So he's a guiding hand if Vrakas reaches for it. Or if his puppet masters let him.



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Holiday

From Page 1

child and foreign worker abuse, environmental violations — keeping its lawyers very busy. No question, the world's largest retailer has been forced to explain and wriggle.

To this point, though, it has been able to treat the protesters as gnats to be swatted away with a \$4 million a day media campaign.

It has not yet felt the need to change its corporate attitude or its juggernaut model. It has not yet improved wages for employees or the crippling cost of their health care. The taxpayers continue to pick up the difference while the profits for the owners are billions a year.

But Wal-Mart hasn't seen anything like this. The campaign should remind the company that money isn't everything in a nimble technological age. Automation may have helped Wal-Mart confound and crush rivals, and force American manufacturers to drop jobs and head overseas. But what goes around can come around.

The cornerstone of the November attack is a professional hard-hitting documentary from a veteran and successful producer who is already flooding theaters and the Internet with trailers both amusing and startling.

Without having to reach very far to find them, the human stories within "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price," feature more Republicans than Democrats.

"Wal-Mart is an equal opportunity offender," jokes producer Robert Greenwald. His film focuses on both rural and urban practices, not just union



UFCW Wisconsin campaign leader Bruce Romanowich outlined the strategies for MCLC delegates at the October meeting.

anger but environmental pain, mom and pop retail pain, health care pain and the loss of community fabric.

Greenwald's distribution strategy is being closely watched by the movie industry. He is actually pioneering what studio marketers have mainly talked about.

Greenwald is spreading from the Internet into theaters. The movie is already available online as a \$12.95 DVD. In fact, DVD sales will come ahead of the theatrical release being negotiated.

But there will be groups applauding in the dark as well — thousands of them. The mass viewings are scheduled for a formal premiere week, Nov. 13-19, when the film will be in movie theaters, churches, schools, community halls and cafes. More than 4,000 such grassroots screenings have already been set and more are coming, in an approach that

allows anyone to set a screening up anywhere, with feedback opportunities afterward.

You can find out where the film is playing and how to participate by checking out www.wakeupwal-mart.com. In fact, through bloggers and Internet partners, the list of showings will soon be everywhere on the web.

Greenwald hopes his film will have a life and legacy of its own, but he has carefully coordinated the thousands of showings with a larger union and community campaign. He also knows that the DVD business has been good for him, making him an ever-growing player in the documentary world.

Each of his movies has spread largely through DVDs. "Unprecedented: The 2000 Presidential Election" in 2002 started the concept, selling 40,000 copies. In 2003 came "Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War" (more than 120,000 copies) and then last year's widely reviewed "Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch's War on Journalism" that sold more than 200,000 copies.

The Wal-Mart film is expected to be much bigger, and the tactics far more innovative. Greenwald believes it will play even better in the red states than the blue states.

FLASH! Now we can reveal the details.

A special screening of "Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Price," arranged by the UFCW for all interested union members, will be held at the Oriental Theater at 7 p.m. Wednesday, November 16. Details are available at the wakeupwal-mart.com website, where you will also find a half-dozen other Milwaukee area screenings that week if you can't make this one.

And there is no split in organized labor on this one. Without a hiccup, the United Food and Commercial Workers, now part of the Change to Win coalition, is also working with the national AFL-CIO.

UFCW has sought often to organize Wal-Mart, only to watch the company drop entire services or abandon locations rather than let a union in. It is a frontal force in combining street rallies and movie showings, but it is also relying on the AFL-CIO and its community and political partners to bring essential research and rallies to the party.

"This nation is suffering from the outsourcing business model that the Wal-Marts of the world have imposed — it is flawed, it is wrong and is dangerous for our economic and national security," said AFL-CIO's Robert Baugh in unveiling in Ohio for elected officials the hard truths behind Wal-Mart's growth.

For Ohio, the AFL-CIO research pointed out, more than half of the jobs lost from manufacturing sector were shipped overseas. Wal-Mart sourced at least \$18 billion worth of goods from China alone last year.

Here in Wisconsin, UFCW Local 1444 campaign leader Brian Romanowich was invited to the October delegate meeting of the Milwaukee County Labor Council to urge participating in the protests.

Progressive media outlets are working on their own series

about Wal-Mart practices. Already stories are planned in The Nation, The American Prospect, In These Times and monthly regional magazines.

Mass media is picking up on the multitude of issues. They may also have to confront whether they have been lax on reporting because of how much Wal-Mart spends in media advertising, but they seem to be coming around.

Their stories have already revealed how much of the burden of employee health care Wal-Mart has loaded on the taxpayer. They've also pointed out that, while Wal-Mart got a major publicity bang for its sincere contribution of \$25 million to Katrina and Rita relief efforts, as a percentage of profits that looked miserly next to what other American corporations were doing.

Wal-Mart is such a hot topic that the original buzz on the likely commercial success of Greenwald's film was that traditional Hollywood would finance it. It wound up independently financed, and Greenwald thinks he knows why.

Wal-Mart has significant clout on culture products. About a third of DVD revenues in the nation stem from the chain, Greenwald says, and it also sells tons of music and books, which allows it to make demands on what is created. (It clearly did not want this one made; in fact, the company declined Greenwald's offer to speak up within the movie.)

What Wal-Mart does unseen within the entertainment world is an echo of how it treats other segments of the economy.

This extensive campaign also is very pointed. Its slogans are humorous but also cutting — "All I Want for Christmas Is Health Care for My Mommy," and "Real Democrats Don't Do Wal-Mart."

Riskier still, the campaign is attacking the giant at the time of its highest sales and highest temptation, the holiday season. Wal-Mart gains traction from our falling wages -- even among those who know in their hearts the consequences.

Yet the holidays are also the time when conscience enters our thinking along with pricing, and where we look more closely at how we treat each other and who our behavior is hurting.

If we start doing that, Wal-Mart really won't have seen anything like this.

-- Dominique Paul Noth

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As hurricanes hit, so did OSHA

The extensive coverage of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita blew some major stories out of the nation's news media. Among them was the case of a Texas refinery where 15 people died and 170 were injured last March in a massive explosion, drawing demands for investigation and punitive penalties against the company from several unions, including the Teamsters and the Steelworkers.

The demands, which actually sought to protect non-union workers at these Southern refineries, were answered bigtime in the final judgment from OSHA.

In September, even as the Texas City refinery was briefly closed by Hurricane Rita, the federal worker safety agency — though badly deflated in funding and guidance by the Bush administration — announced a record and in many ways unprecedented fine against the refinery, which is owned by one of the world's largest oil companies, BP.

The \$21 million fine, which does not preclude criminal charges should evidence warrant, was nearly twice as large as the previous record OSHA fine of \$11 million, imposed back in 1991 against IMC Fertilizer of Louisiana, where an immense explosion killed eight and injured 128 persons.

Typically, as the Houston Chronicle pointed out in an interview with OSHA's regional director, John Miles Jr., OSHA may issue an "egregious violation" charge once or twice a year. In the refinery case it issued 296 egregious violations.

While it could not pinpoint the precise spark that caused the refinery explosion, it found a myriad of safety standard failures, and a record of ignoring complaints from workers and experts that put dozens of electrical spark sources within feet of an antiquated vent system. Any of these ignition sources, in violation of OSHA guidelines and BP's own rules, could have led to the catastrophic explosion and

subsequent fire and chemical leaks.

The fine was leveled a week before President Bush urged Congress to suspend environmental rules and other regulations to build new refineries in the US to eliminate what he termed "a bubble in the system" that delivers petroleum products. Critics have pointed out that another major bubble in the system is the pullback in OSHA staffing despite continuing dangers at old refineries.

Miles stated in the Houston interview that OSHA has only one six-member team nationwide focused on the special safety rules at facilities such as refineries. The Texas City refinery, he said, had more frequent enforcement when it was an Amoco refinery but had been visited only a few times before September 2004 when two pipefitters were killed in another refinery explosion.

That incident plus a series of managerial failures had caused BP to be listed as an "indifferent employer" and led to no reduction in the fine assessed.

Miles also said on the day of the accident, because of faulty gauges and lack of training, employees were "flying blind." Many of the dead were in a trailer parked only 150 feet from the explosion, another violation of the rules.

The explosion brought in 20 inspectors, six specialists to deal with contamination from a resulting benzene release and two physicians. It caused BP to shut down 10 antiquated units and hire a new plant manager and safety specialist.

OSHA hopes the fine will send a powerful warning to other companies and refineries.

"They have to put employee safety ahead of production, and they need to send the message they will not tolerate people who do not follow procedures," Miles said.



John Topp did more than donate 10 of his company's toolboxes for United Way's labor kick-off. He personally hauled them to Annie Wacker, AFL-CIO field mobilizer organizing the event.

United Way urgency

Networking, motivating, socializing and some serious snacking were on the menu along with speeches and awards at the Milwaukee County Labor Council's Labor Kick-Off Rally for the United Way Community campaign.

But underneath the celebratory launching and the pointed themes - "Labor Matters" and "Building Hope in Our Community" -- were some worries. Milwaukeeans had just been deeply generous and emotionally occupied by the hurricanes, Katrina and Rita. Would they still have energy, attention and giving left for those close to home who rely on United Way for essential support?

Not just time will tell. The labor volunteers will clearly have to work harder to secure workplace giving and individual generosity. They certain seemed ready to. Three dozen labor groups supported the Sept. 22 kickoff, and most of them have already delivered treasury gifts aside from workplace volunteering.

Richard Abelson, executive director of AFSCME District Council 48 and also a United Way executive board member, welcomed the labor crowd to the Four Points Sheraton and also introduced the special speaker from United Way of America: Jordan (Bud) Biscardo, a vice president of the Department of Labor Participation and a champion of organized labor stepping up.

A group of unions won the annual Werner J. Schaefer Community Service Award for refurbishing Neighborhood House, a United Way agency. Lyle Balistreri, president of the Milwaukee Building & Construction Trades Council, accepted on behalf of IBEW Local 494, Laborers Local 113, Operating Engineers Local 139, Operative Plasterers & Cement Masons Local 599 and Plumbers Local 75.

Special décor -- and important help for creating ongoing jobs -- was donated by John Topp, executive director of the Construction Labor Management Council. He provided 10 complete toolboxes to be given to yet another United Way program: the Big Step/Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership, which has been might busy and successful training apprentices to take on union construction work.

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Delphi

From Page 1

It covers more than 750,000 US hourly employees, retirees and surviving spouses.

In 2003 at Delphi, UAW made several painful concessions and skipped wage hikes to help the company, which still commands \$26 billion in annual sales.

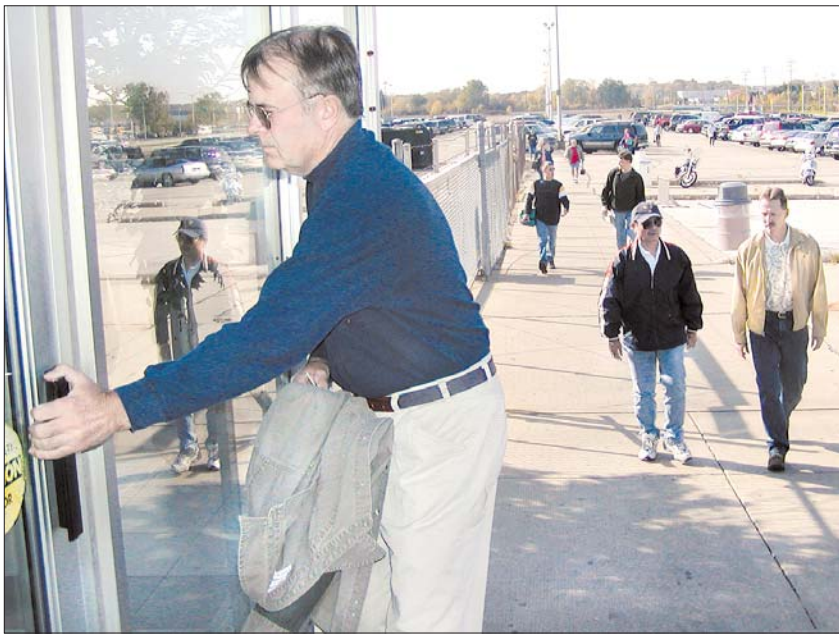
In addition to the UAW, Delphi employs thousands of workers from other unions, and those not already forced into pay cuts have been told by Miller to expect more. Non-union white collar workers, it turns out, are also under threat of wage and benefit cuts.

In all, Delphi has 44 manufacturing plants. In the US, it commands 34,000 hourly workers among an estimated 50,000 employees.

Unaffected by the Chapter 11 bankruptcy was its larger presence outside the US. Worldwide, Delphi has 185,000 employees in cluding 65,000 in Mexico.

At Delphi's two plants in Oak Creek, UAW Locals 1866 and 438 have about 1,100 workers while IBEW Local 663 has 60 and the machinists (IAMAW Lodge 72) have about 20.

There is hardly an auto or truck on the road without a Delphi component. But GM, which spun Delphi off in 1999, is still its largest customer. And a complicated financial structure also leaves GM with some employee obligations at Delphi. That ropes it into the ongoing contract renegotiation and even threatens GM's future security despite its money-saving agreement with the UAW.



As third-shift workers arrived at Delphi, one of them pointed out to the Labor Press reporter in the parking lot that most UAW workers in Oak Creek are 25-year plus veterans, a longevity reflected at many of Delphi's US plants. "So don't think for a moment it isn't our pensions that the bankruptcy is aiming at," the worker said, to amens from other UAW workers nearby.

Nothing will happen for months.

The US bankruptcy judge has ordered negotiations to continue among UAW, Delphi and GM until mid-December, with Miller warning that he will urge the court to default on pension and other contractual commitments if he is not happy with the concessions.

Even in the current political climate, and even given some past bankruptcy rulings (such as United Airlines), the court is free to resist Miller, particularly since the federal government insures the pension plan and it will be the taxpayers on the hook for a hefty portion.

In asking for a 60% cut in hourly pay, Miller is drawing an extreme marker, union and business leaders say. "It's an intolerable figure that would force us to



strike," said one UAW leader in Wisconsin. "There's probably another figure he really wants, and we won't know what that is until we're at the table."

Given Miller's corporate history, other union leaders think they know just what he's after. Said one: "He wants the American public to pay off the company's pension commitments."

Miller has done that before. There was much speculation that was what he was hired to do at Delphi last July. As CEO he carried Bethlehem Steel into bankruptcy, using the court to default

pension obligations to the union retirees.

The Bethlehem Steel case has frightening echoes for past and present Delphi workers. It is also a history that should give the bankruptcy court pause.

Bethlehem's executives reported before its bankruptcy that its pension plan was 84% funded when it turned out to be only 45% funded. That left the federally funded Pension Benefits Guaranted Corporation (alias PBGC, alias the taxpayers) with more than \$4 billion to assume (even though the insurance regulations will jleave affected retirees far from whole).

In filing Delphi's bankruptcy, the company said its pension was underfunded by \$4.3 billion, but the PBGC quickly reported that the actual underfunding was \$10.3 billion. The financially socked and rule-limited PBGC could pick up only half that shortfall should a bankruptcy court allow the company to dump its contractual obligations.

In Dayton, Ohio, the city where Delphi started in 1910 as Delco (Dayton Electronics Laboratory Co.), other unions relate the results of taking extreme cuts at Delphi with a gun to their heads. Leaders of both the Union of Electricians-CWA and USW say they took pay cuts to attract work that never came.

In Oak Creek, Delphi's two plants focus on auto electronics and have been a model of labor-management teamwork and production efficiency.

"The plants here have always been profitable for Delphi," said David York, president of UAW Local 438.

He laughed when told how Miller's example of a UAW worker was a guy making \$25 an hour to mow the lawn at a factory. "He didn't mention the people running the quarter of a million dollar equipment," York said.

The current mood of the workforce, he added, was anxious but also angry with the Delphi CEO's maneuvers. "I have never seen our workers so united in solidarity," York said.

Part of the anxiety is that the impact of the bankruptcy probably won't be known until spring.

That, in a sad irony, is also the time that another auto-parts company that Milwaukee once depended on, Tower Automotive, has announced its final shuttering.

Tower currently has only a couple of hundred workers left (mainly Smith Steel Workers and machinists) from the thousands there when it took over in the late 1990s. That was about the time GM spun off Delphi.

Delphi's Miller says he expects UAW leaders to be competent and honest — not so much a compliment but a warning not to strike.

He was adamant that his new vision of the company included even more "low-tech hardware" produced in Asia.

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Agnew's label lady joins UWM show



Milwaukee artist Terese Agnew (left) spent two years concocting her "Portrait of a Textile Worker" out of clothing labels. Through Dec. 11, Milwaukee now has a chance to respond to the results as have crowds elsewhere (below).



She was treated royally last winter in Waukesha County when hundreds of Milwaukee labor people joined hundreds of other visitors for her unveiling at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts. She has made regal visits to Madison and she is weighing invitations from museums around the nation.

But through Dec. 11 she's at last just a hometown girl.

No, the hometown is not in Bangladesh, where the photo of her at work was taken. It's Milwaukee, where she was artistically born.

"Portrait of a Textile Worker" has taken up residence just blocks from where her DNA was painstakingly assembled for two years by Milwaukee artist Terese Agnew.

The DNA in this case was clothing labels, thousands of them.

How much of this genetic material came from Milwaukee workers and retirees would be hard to estimate. Agnew's campaign to build a work of art entirely out of labels wound up attracting notice from all 50 states and many foreign countries, with contributors shipping labels from around the world.

But the anchoring shipments came from the attention generated by the Milwaukee County Labor Council. So there's special interest for workers as well as families and students to experience firsthand the eye-opening pull of Agnew's vision.

Visitors who have seen the quilt have marveled at how, from a distance, it seems a portrait of factory-line intensity and, as you move nearer, comes alive with

colors and with brand names on all those tiny labels. It brings artistic and social awareness to what's behind the clothes we wear.

The exhibit brings together the seven 2004 winners of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowships for Individual Artists. It is centered in INOVA Gallery One at UWM's Vogel Hall, 3253 North Downer Ave. INOVA stands for the Institute of Visual Arts of the Peck School of the Arts.

There is also a labor angle in the featured work from another

artist. William Andersen has traveled frequently to Asia to study Chinese art, but he also worked summers on the assembly lines of Milwaukee Electric Tool, where many in his family were also employed. Now the tool plant has been sold to a Chinese company.

Andersen's exhibited work contemplates that crossing of art and global economics.

Closed Nov. 24-27 for the Thanksgiving holiday, the gallery is otherwise open from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays. For more information, contact INOVA at (414) 229-5070.

Women will tackle state's image

Wisconsin Lieutenant Governor Barbara Lawton and the labor council's Sheila Cochran are two of the panelists for one of the Fourth Street Forum's most provocatively titled televised events.



Sheila Cochran

"What Does Wisconsin Have Against Women?" - to be taped at Turner Hall at noon Thursday, Nov. 10 -- makes no bones that there is a gender gap and explores why. Topics will include the pay gap, the female brain drain and the pressure to balance home and office.

Joining Lawton and Cochran, the secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee County Labor Council, will be Ellen Bravo, founder of 9to5/National Association of Working Women and now an assistant professor of women's studies at UWM. A fourth panelist is likely to be added. Moderating the forum will be Denise Calloway.

Each forum is taped in front of a live audience at historic Turner Hall, 1034 N. 4th St., for later broadcast on Milwaukee Public Television Channels 10/36. The taping is free and open to the public. Attendees may bring lunch or purchase it from Turner's restaurant.

The hour forum is then broadcast at 10 p.m. Friday, Nov. 11, on Channel 10 and again at 3 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 13, Channel 36.

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CLIA



MATC discord smears an occasion of statewide pride

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

It should have been a great moment for the Milwaukee Area Technical College — the governor's appointment of one of its union leaders to the Wisconsin Technical College System Board. These are the 13 people who govern, administer state and federal aid and establish policies for 16 technical colleges, among which MATC is the largest.

It was certainly an honor (the first time someone at MATC has sat on the board) and a recognition of three decades of service for Michael Rosen, the economics professor whose opinions are regularly sought by the media and who is also the hard-nosed president of the college's teachers, American Federation of Teachers Local 212.

The lead-up to the appointment, however, exposed to the Doyle administration and state legislators the boiling tension that remains between the administration of MATC President Darnell Cole and the college's unions — AFT and AFSCME.

Supporters of Cole, the Labor Press confirmed in interviews with many state officials, sought to derail Rosen's nomination largely through telephone innuendo, rather than going straight to Doyle with intellectual arguments and public protest.

Since the state Senate gives a stamp of approval to Doyle's board appointments, these phone attackers tried to use minority members of the state legislature as a backdoor to pressure the governor.

That approach cast a racial pall on the tactics of Rosen's critics. It also galvanized veterans in Milwaukee's black community who knew that for 30 years Rosen had been out front,

sometimes at personal and professional risk, in civil rights rallies and protest movements.

Doyle apparently never budged in his support of Rosen, whom he praised in his appointment as "a highly respected professor" and "a tireless advocate for the state's Technical Colleges."

But African American and other legislators from the Milwaukee area say the controversy did affect Doyle's aides and slow the process (one even said the dispute had put the nomination "on the cusp") — especially when the rumor got out that one black legislator was withdrawing support for Rosen.

Rosen recalls that it was at this point that he was urged by state officials to make sure his widespread supporters in the black community spoke up to debunk such whispery comments as Rosen "wasn't inclusive enough." Another round of calls erupted, decrying the phone attackers for calling Rosen racist.

Rosen "certainly is feisty," said longtime acquaintance State Sen. Spencer Coggs, one of the African American legislators pulled into the dispute and one who never wavered in his support.

Coggs, who has known Rosen for "30 years, since we were both Young Turks fighting the establishment," said he found the talk of racism "laughable — and then I was offended by that sort of accusation being put out there."

"I took a bully position to make sure the governor's people knew it was not true," Coggs said.

State Rep. Pedro Colon, also a recipient of calls, said he called Doyle's appointment people to "reiterate my support of Rosen — I was worried that it had to be someone credible complaining to

make them hesitate."

"No one (attacking Rosen) called me," laughed State Rep. Barbara Toles. "They knew better than to try that out on me." She is a member of Local 212 and former community outreach coordinator at the MATC — indeed the first AFT member elected to the legislature.

Calls in defense of Rosen were made to the governor's office by community leaders including MCLC Secretary-Treasurer Sheila Cochran, a former MATC board member.

In an interview, state Sen. Lena Taylor expressed dismay over how backstage conversation about the case "took on a life of its own" and "was full of false information."

Though identified by several colleagues as the legislator who withdrew support, Taylor says that didn't happen.

Early in the process, at Rosen's request, Taylor pointed out, she wrote a letter of support for Rosen's appointment. The phone calls she received raised the issue of union inclusion, she said. "To discuss the issue of inclusion is not the same as charging someone with racism," Taylor said. "It's something we all can do better with."

She asked for her letter of support to be put on hold until she talked to both sides, Taylor recalled. After conversations with Cole, who is African American, and a meeting with Rosen, Taylor said, she did not file any objection to Rosen's appointment.

Rosen never thought the use of "inclusion" dealt with his union role. He was told the calls were couched in personal terms.

He also pointed out that the Cole administration has a lot to say about faculty appointments and that, in his six years as union president, minority representation on the executive council has elevated notably.

The local media never picked up on the dispute, though by this point a lot of people in Madison were talking about it and both the governor and members of the legislature had been made painfully aware of the acrimonious atmosphere between Cole and the MATC unions.

They had also been pulled into a game very familiar to those at the MATC, one union leader not from the AFT pointed out.

"The job of union leaders is to fight for their workforces," said the leader. "Cole tries to explain away the problems with the workers as an issue of personalities, not an attack on his policies and tactics."

Indeed, many of the legislators admit they took this as a personality dispute. Rosen tends to be outspoken on issues of concern to him and Cole tends to "slip punches."

Early in Cole's tenure,

MATC insiders on both sides recall, Rosen had been noted for his efforts at cooperation.

But over the last few years of contract negotiations and the president's dalliance with privatization and downsizing, Rosen led a fiery fight against Cole's methods, making no bones about what he felt were broken promises and attacking the administration for weakening educational and salary standards and for trying to get rid of the "adult high school" and MATC's nationally recognized child-care center.

The MATC's Jim Gribble, speaking for Cole, said the president did not orchestrate a campaign against Rosen's appointment and was stating for the record that he has never considered Rosen racist and would be upset if "anybody made that intimation."

"Here are two people with strong constituencies in the community," Gribble added, "and I don't doubt for a minute that both sides got involved."

But Gribble also said "It would be understandable if people close to Cole expressed their concern (about the appointment)

since Rosen has called for Cole's resignation." Told of this, Rosen pointed out he had never called for Cole's resignation.

Gribble, speaking for Cole, said the MATC president "had remained neutral" in the appointment of Rosen to the board.

"I guess I don't understand that," said Rosen. "This should have been an honor for everyone who works at MATC and the students we serve."

Rosen pointed out that even in the first month of his appointment, his access to information about grants and his knowledge of MATC's capabilities and the needs of the Milwaukee business community had led to new opportunities for the administration as well as the school.

Said another legislator looking back at the flurry of phone calls: "It could be that the nature of the campaign (calls to minority members of the legislature) was enough to make Rosen's supporters think there was a racist underpinning, no matter what was actually said. If there's a lesson here, it's speak your piece directly and don't try to sneak around corners."



Teacher of the year Corey Odom (left) with Local 212 President Michael Rosen before the awards luncheon.

A classy moment for teaching

At a fancy hotel lunch Oct. 1, the audience was transported momentarily into the power of the classroom when Corey Odom received the Teacher of the Year award at the first Excellence in Education Celebration organized by the Civil and Human Rights Committee of Local 212, American Federation of Teachers.

Odom's love of teaching, his humor and energy, took over the Manchester East dining room. It wasn't just his clear pleasure at receiving the award as he thanked his colleagues and his family. His entire manner embodied the joy and passion he brings to the adult high school classrooms at the MATC.

Odom turned the audience briefly into students — quite a feat, since the room was full of notable educators in their own right, plus labor and business leaders — simply through his manner and short message. He stirred them to remember what good teaching required and why teachers should be elevated, not denigrated.

Odom has taught math at MATC for 32 years (30 of them full time) and was an eloquent leader in the fight to retain the program against administrative inroads.

The award was presented by the state Department of Public Instruction's chief of academic excellence, Deborah Mahaffey. Other excellence in education awards were presented in person to Rep. Gwen Moore (D-Wis.), the Rev. Joseph Jackson, president of MICA (Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope) and also pastor of Evergreen Missionary Baptist Church, and to the statewide social justice organization WISDOM.



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Wednesday, November 2

Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO
Delegate Meeting:
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma

Friday, November 19

Final United Way Labor Cabinet
Neighborhood House of Milwaukee
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Wednesday, November 30

MCLC Executive Board meeting, 3 p.m.
MBCT, 5941 W. Bluemound Road

Wednesday, December 7

Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO
Delegate Meeting:
6:30 p.m., Serb Hall, 5101 W. Oklahoma

Coalition to honor Moore

Wisconsin's first African American member of Congress has also been chosen Stateswoman of the Year by the Wisconsin Women's Network and will be honored at a special luncheon Sunday, November 6, at the Grain Exchange.

The network is honoring Rep. Gwen Moore for her leadership in the Wisconsin legislature as well as her efforts for women since she was elected in 2004 to the US House.

Composed of 45 groups from college professors to labor groups to the YWCA, the network is a powerful assemblage that for 25 years has worked to advance the status of women and girls "through communication, education and advocacy."

The Milwaukee County Labor Council, as well as the state AFL-CIO, are longtime members.

For more information on the luncheon, contact the Wisconsin Women's Network at (608) 255-9809 or wiwomen@execpc.com

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| 8 BALLS | 12 | 9 |
| SLAMMERS | 9 | 12 |
| ONE Board OVER | 6 | 15 |
| GUTTER RATS | 6 | 15 |

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 520

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| SAM SAMUELSON | 641 |
| DON BOOTON | 606 |
| GEORGE BARAK | 590 |
| DEL GROSS | 581 |
| WAYNE FRANZEN | 578 |
| DON WIEDMANN | 536 |
| BOB WAGNER | 529 |
| DAN LAACK | 527 |
| ELMER HELM | 524 |

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 175

| | |
|-----------------|-----|
| SAM SAMUELSON | 237 |
| DON BOOTON | 222 |
| GEORGE BARAK | 216 |
| WAYNE FRANZEN | 216 |
| DEL GROSS | 205 |
| DON WIEDMANN | 201 |
| DAN LAACK | 190 |
| ELMER HELM | 181 |
| STEVE KUKLINSKI | 179 |

IND. HIGH SERIES OVER 395

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| PHYLLIS NAVARRETE | 493 |
| ELAINE KARRIER | 470 |
| LAVERNE WERNER | 400 |

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 165

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| PHYLLIS NAVARRETE | 186 |
| ELAINE KARRIER | 178 |
| LAVERNE WERNER | 168 |

Machinists modernize organizing

Organizing and modern technology were front and center in Chicago for three days starting Oct. 3. More than 900 members of the IAMAW participated in a computer hookup that for the first time allowed all delegates to focus on the same problems and offer solutions across the nation, seeking to bring more workers into better pay and benefits as well as union status.

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers' international president and chair for the conference, Tom Buffenbarger, explained how the new technology allowed "in real time" for the best minds in the union to "swarm all over the same problems."

Said Buffenbarger, "Hundreds of delegates can simultaneously examine opportunities and obstacles encountered in past campaigns and debate solutions to break through the chokepoints."

The conference tested effective strategies at a time when "the demand for union representation is growing nearly as fast as the support for President Bush's economic policies is dropping," he noted.

A busload of the participants came from IAMAW'S Milwaukee-based District 10.

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Wireless merger sparks CWA organizing

Wireless is the buzz concept of our age, from the recently announced plans to make Milwaukee the first city to create wire-free Internet access from any location to society's growing dependency on cellphone contact for each family member and

every friend or working partner anytime and anywhere. One recent merger is also creating gains for the Communications Workers of America — a potential 20,000 new members, virtually doubling the union-eligible workforce at Cingular Wireless.

The opportunity comes from the purchase-merger of union company Cingular with largely non-union AT&T Wireless, a deal finalized less than a year ago.

In February the union and Cingular also negotiated a five-year national contract that provided a level playing field to approach the former AT&T Wireless workers. The contract agreed to neutrality and a simple card-check procedure monitored by a third-party arbitration association. Card-check allows a majori-

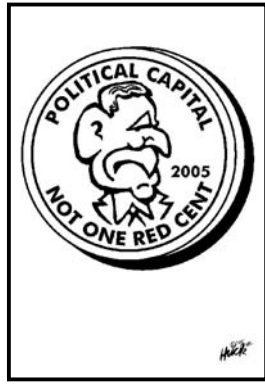
ty (50% plus one) of a unit's workers to choose a union.

Under the contract, CWA could start such organizing efforts in July for AT&T Wireless employees. With only a few technical hurdles, these employees could basically be rolled state by state into the CWA contract as long as a majority of each unit signed cards, which are verified by the outside arbitrator.

Since the CWA organizers were turned loose, the "rollup" is rolling pretty fast: 452 employees in a Pennsylvania city, 44 in Maine, 152 in Arizona — and on and on, local by local.

Just since August, more than 6,100 former AT&T Wireless employees have joined CWA. The card-check process reflects a 70% preference for union membership.

AT&T Wireless did not have a large footprint in Wisconsin, but what it did enter the CWA family this month — 14 network workers and about 50 retail workers at what once were AT&T Wireless stores. Through card-check these workers have joined CWA here, reports Joy Roberts, an organizer



Senator and the feds seek to slay the real monster

On Halloween, one of the most dreaded bogeymen in the nation will have the stake of sunlight stabbed into his heart. The monster is known as Predatory Lending, who hangs out with his evil companion, Credit Fraud.

The key to killing them is knowledge. To help you escape their clutches, a free forum is being sponsored Oct. 31 by Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.) in cooperation with the Federal Trade Commission and the United States Postal Inspection Service. It will also call in expert fraud hunters from Wisconsin's attorney general office and the agriculture, trade and consumer protection department to educate the attendees.

Though we are having some fun with the Halloween timing of the forum, predatory practices are no joke. They are all trick without treat. The FTC reports in its surveys that more than 27 million consumers were victims of identity theft, and more than 24 million consumers were victims of fraud. Wisconsin consumers reported losing more than \$5.6 million to fraud.

Titled "How to Identify Predatory Lending, Credit & Financial Fraud," the forum is free. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. and the forum runs from 9 a.m. to noon that Monday at the Milwaukee Area Technical College, Technical Building, Auditorium T, 1101 N. 6th St. For additional information, contact Cecilia Smith-Robertson or Rebecca Lopez at Feingold's Milwaukee office, 414-276-7282.



Iron Workers hall becomes host for a big MOVE day in organizing

Organizers from a variety of construction trades were on the MOVE September 26, bringing together some 90 members from four trades for a special class at Iron Workers Local 8's hall, 12034 W. Adler Lane. The room was packed.

MOVE stands for Multi-trade Organizing Volunteer Education. It seeks to make union members aware of how to help the unorganized within their own trades, and within other trades, and the importance of giving them the knowledge and tools to form or join unions.

The experienced organizers leading the class were Bruce Coleman (Organizer, Heat & Frost Insulators Local 19), Mike Mooney (Business Agent, Sheet Metal Workers Local 18), Tim Hanson (Organizer, Electrical Workers Local 494), John Kubica (Business Manager, Roofers Local 65), and Charlie Falkner (Organizer, Iron Workers Local 8).

for Local 4603.

Not all stores carrying the Cingular brand, alas, are union (so make sure to ask) But this organizing effort by the CWA of Cingular Wireless workers is currently the largest at a private-sector employer in the US. Roberts points out that many of the call centers being organized are in "right to work" (anti-union-law) states such as Mississippi and Texas.

CWA is a union of 700,000 members. Its longtime president, Morton Bahr, retired at the Chicago convention in August, where the union elevated its executive vice president, Larry Cohen, to the top job. CWA is also an active partner with global unions, a natural move given the nature of the wireless industry.

While CWA still fights for recognition and respect from such established names as Verizon and Sprint, it is keenly aware that new players and new concepts are arriving every day in the international marketplace.

The heat of the technological change and its global reach reflect enormous dangers but also enormous opportunities for the union and its workforce.

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In the name of justice, it's time to give money

The Faith Community for Worker Justice is the only local organization that focuses specifically on workers' rights.

It's also looking first to its friends in organized labor — who understand the issue of worker justice intimately — to build up its membership base.

"Individuals within unions need to support our work first, if any other fund raising is going to be successful," said Bill Morris, organizer for FCWJ, who offers several reasons for the fresh emphasis.

"First, it makes it much easier to approach organizations for institutional support if we can show them that their members support us already. In many cases a union will be much more receptive when it sees how committed its own people are.

"Also, a larger membership base makes going after grant money more viable. Foundations and large donors are much more likely to fund a group the community stands behind.

"And finally," said Morris, "we need the money!"

Morris points out that FCWJ has always run on a shoestring and needs just \$22,500 a year to operate its programs. It's starting modestly to assure four months of operation by seeking 300 membership donations averaging



Ministers, retirees and union members meet monthly for worker justice. Shouldn't you join them?

\$25 each. If it can build beyond that, and add grant money, it won't have to address worker justice issues on a hand to mouth basis, Morris said.

FCWJ was running short of funds in September but got a reprieve through a \$5,000 grant from LaborCommunity@Work, the nonprofit charitable arm of the Milwaukee County Labor Council AFL-CIO. Restructuring Morris' role to a quarter-time position will allow the FCWJ to operate through year's end.

But retreat is not the way forward for the organization. Membership is. So launching a membership drive is a major part

of its new effort.

In many ways, FCWJ has already established a base for ongoing success.

Its Labor in the Pulpits program around Labor Day is one of the biggest in the nation, with more than 100 congregations participating, hundreds of speakers and an audience of, conservatively, 10,000 hearing the annual message in support of worker issues. This year's focus on the social responsibility of businesses, and what various religions teach us about that responsibility, was eminently successful.

Even beyond Labor in the

Pulpits, the FCWJ has worked hard to involve local clergy in support of labor issues and progressive concerns. It has fashioned guidelines for ethical building of religious centers and has given awards to faith groups that have led the way in such building efforts.

FCWJ has also been drawing dozens of people to its monthly information and planning meetings. Its choir has grown and performs at various rallies, including the annual Seasons of Conscience day to draw attention to such worker issues as safe asbestos removal and fair wages.

More and more, said one of FCWJ's founders, Bill Lange, the group needs the commitment of individual workers to support its mission with money and volunteerism.

"We are not a coalition," Lange said, "but a community of people of faith. In our different faith traditions, we see the moral imperative to address issues of workers rights and social justice for workers and the poor. Organized labor has always led the way for us."

Now the FCWJ is recruiting new supporters to join its veterans in establishing both a financial base and a commitment of time. It is seeking donations and membership applications from individuals, for \$25 to \$50 a year.

Those interested in membership should provide their name, address, phone and email and send a check made out either directly to Faith Community for Worker Justice or, with a notation FCWJ on the check, to LaborCommunity@Work.

The address is the same in either case: Milwaukee County Labor Council, 633 S. Hawley Rd., Milwaukee, WI 53214.

To contact FCWJ directly, phone (414) 475-6065, extension 13.

Or use email to mlclfaith@ameritech.net.

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These men are Aurora's harshest critics.

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