



It's in the Air and on the Streets!

America hits sidewalks to curb greed, demand jobs, oust the mulish



Homemade signs lined the Occupy Milwaukee rally route Oct. 15.

Why Occupy fever keeps spreading

First dismissed as amorphous, unfocused and naïve, the Occupy Wall Street started with a few pitched tents and a hippie flavor in mid-September along with an eloquent if uncompromising manifesto that damned the entire US financial system.

Inevitably, right-wing politicians feeding on contributions from that financiers' row dismissed the Occupy effort as dimwitted. Even the lowly \$50,000 a year drones on the street wondered if the brush was too broad.

But now it's October and how things have changed! Occupy Milwaukee, one of hundreds of offshoots in a protest sharing intentions and slogans from New Zealand to Asia as well as across the US, drew enough thousands to fill Michigan St. corner to corner for seven blocks Oct. 15 in a march from Zeidler Park to the Chase Bank, followed by a daylong rally of drums, food, hand-made signs and lively interchange among strangers:

Unions, libertarians, peace activists, Ron Paul fans, bank tellers and suburban clerks students, moderates, Reagan Democrats, immigrant communities, senior citizens -- something that looked quite like the advertised 99% and certainly gave the lie to the "thugs" descriptions of talk radio.

The Tea Party never climbed above a 25% favorable rating in national polls, but Occupy has already roared up to 54% approval. There are hundreds of Occupy (Name Your City) offspring. Major organizations, political movements, unions and elected officials have not only climbed aboard but are now helping set the agenda and activities as joiners in a cause that resists any group taking charge.

The right-wing pundits simply can't believe that Occupy hadn't been paid off to become a left-wing clone, like their money did for the right with the Tea Party organizations. Instead, elements of all segments of the middle class have rallied to the movement -- and guess what? So have many of those Wall Street drones that started out as critics.

How unlike the Tea Party this is. That discontent also started with loose anger at big banks but was co-opted by conservative money into attacking reasonable health care and needed government stimulus. The Tea Party was quickly perverted into an arm of big business, electing many veteran right-wing operatives instead of true believers.

Such coercion is unlikely with Occupy, which keeps moving and growing because one reality keeps shining through - the 99% of the population with good reason to be outraged at the uncaring wealthy among the 1%.

That tiny sliver of America wields un-American power and misguided capitalistic principles. They seem to relish the increasing gulf of income disparity, they engage in the class warfare they accuse the

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All articles and photos by Dominique Paul Noth,
Editor, Milwaukee Labor Press.

Is anyone listening to jobless?

She knows something about titles as Chief Operating Officer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council and titled honoree of many community boards. But at a special "America Wants to Work" forum Oct. 12, as she introduced dignitaries, economic specialists and union leaders, Sheila Cochran made a telling point.

"We all have titles and are glad to have them," she said, but "the most important title in the room is carried by this gentleman: Unemployed Citizen of Milwaukee."

At Yatchak Hall all ears and eyes focused on Martin - and Rose and Andrea, all out of work and searching endlessly for one, two, three years, often denied unemployment compensation because of technicalities and bureaucracy, left dangling and then hung out to dry by temp agencies, used to hard work and denied the opportunity, willing to flip hamburgers for bottom wages and passed over as over-skilled or maybe just too needy given their hunger to care for their kids and families.

While there are thousands upon thousands of work-oriented citizens in the community who could echo such stories, the listeners needed only a handful to wonder what strange contagion had infected the hearts of those

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Pledges provided a brisk side-business near Zeidler Park.

Game On to recall Scott Walker

No waiting. No compromise. The longer his half-baked philosophy is in control, the more Wisconsin bleeds. So say the various recall committees.

They have talked, weighed and decided to start collecting signatures Nov. 15 to recall Gov. Scott Walker, which gives them a 60 day window (though the final date will probably wind up Jan. 17, 2012, because of calendar issues the Government Accountability Board is still working out).

Announced Oct. 10 on national cable and immediately supported by major progressive organizations, the decision reflects several realities, noted the sponsors in interviews -- chief among them United Wisconsin (unitedwisconsin.com, responsible for the famous Recall Scott Walker Internet movement including Facebook and Twitter), the Wisconsin Democratic Party, and (while instructing all eager unions to heed the PAC rules and regulations) the state AFL-CIO.

In their thinking:

There is no other name to worry about than Walker, whose own party knows he has over-reached (but seem so glad to finally be back in power that only in media comments do they reveal their distress or how cowed they have become). The Act 10 decision to deny public workers meaningful bargaining rights can't even be justified on the money side. It went from a temporary money saver to lingering disaster when even conservatives scrutinized education, safety and community survival in the second year of his fiscal budget.

It was a decision that many Republicans are now ashamed to have embraced, since it basically decided that private sector workers shouldn't aspire to good health care and retirement benefits - why else take those away from government employees? It rewards a few at the expense of many - and tries to sell that as the American way.

More than 55% of state adults in respected polls now disagree with Walker, and many once voted only GOP. "How many Republicans thought they knew Walker and discovered they didn't?" noted one recall insider. "They can't be fooled again and that's our edge."

That's why the recall organizers don't want voters distracted when

Recall continued Page 8



Marchers of all ages, causes and classes defy the stereotype Oct. 15 in a seven-block march from Zeidler Park to Downtown banks. That's when Occupy Wall Street became Occupy Milwaukee.

Ready to create jobs, county officials insist

It was a major Ready to Work demand for Milwaukee County announced Oct. 13 at the Center of Excellence for WRTP/BIG STEP that will provide key jobs training. But the press conference also threw down a gauntlet and signaled a "get on board" moment in county swagger.

With a few other supervisors lined up behind him - co-creator Theodore Lipscomb, co-sponsors Marina Dimitrijevic and Nikiya Harris - and others not present but also on board including Jason Haas and Peggy West, Supervisor Eyon Biddle not only detailed the initiative but also stated bluntly: "We are the new leadership of Milwaukee County."

He challenged the board and new County Executive Chris Abele to back an immediate change in the budget to add \$1 million, funded by combining land sales and existing conduits, and develop ongoing private-publish fiscal and work partnerships through the existing economic development department.

That \$1 million would quickly reach out to 1,000 Milwaukee County residents and at least 750 immediate jobs, existing and added, the planners say. Through screening, and assessment, focusing on those



Supervisors announcing the effort at WRTP were Eyon Biddle (speaking), Nikiya Harris and Marina Dimitrijevic at right and (inset upper right) Theodore Lipscomb.

with high school (GED) diplomas and driver's licenses -- and reaching into the vast pool of residents desperate for family sustaining jobs -- the Ready to Work Initiative would find entry level and higher positions,, use connections to create new ones and centralize training by WRTP and alongside existing skilled workers.

As funding increases, so can the plan, noted Biddle, citing

how urgent the demand is in the community. It could start with 20 hours a week at \$10 an hour for many and include job shadowing and multi-craft WRTP construction training to make up the difference.

But the key is getting money in the county budget and flipping around some existing ideas.

Other partners include Milwaukee Area Technical

College, Milwaukee Public Schools, and Milwaukee Area Building and Construction Trades, whose Ken Kramer was one of the speakers at the press conference.

"Our congressional and state leaders are failing us with hyper-partisan politics that almost always end up in gridlock," said a visibly angry Biddle. "This political wrangling does nothing to help people who need jobs - and hope - the most. When I ran for office, I told the people that I would fight hard for jobs. Now, after six months in office, the Biddle-Lipscomb Ready to Work initiative" attacks the problem head-on. "We have a serious jobs crisis. It requires bold action."

As part of that boldness, he directly challenged Abele "to support this initiative and have his economic development direc-



tor help bring this to life."

Biddle, Lipscomb and Abele were already backing an enhanced Economic Development Fund to use some revenue generated from land sales, but the Ready to Work initiative does switch deposits directly to putting people to work. It could be a way out for Abele since some supervisors oppose creating yet another commission to handle the land sales, as Abele suggested. For this initiative, said Lipscomb, "Our own economic development people are ideal."

With budget decisions looming in the first week of November, it will take quick action to have any chance of getting Ready to Work ready for 2012, many insiders concede. But there is considerable support for the urgency of job creation and the basic ideas to get government pushing for jobs and training ahead of everything else.

Lipscomb pointed out how Milwaukee County has become a job center for people living outside the county and how it was time to "put hope and jobs back into the lives of those living here." -- *Dominique Paul Noth*



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Urgency underlies United Way labor kick-off

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

The United Way Labor Kick-Off Rally again took place in the Center of Excellence job training center run by WRTP/BIG STEP. But this year on Oct. 13, with a play-off game going on and rain drizzling down, the sponsors set up a more intimate casual affair, combining the snacks with the award ceremony and the calls on unions to give generously in treasury gifts and workplace donations.

The center of the evening event - perhaps only a secret to the recipient - was the presentation of the highest honor to a union member for constant support of citizens and the United Way. The president of the state AFL-CIO, Phil Neuenfeldt, presented the Werner J. Schaefer Community Service Award to a good friend, Lyle Balistreri, president of the Milwaukee Building & Trades Council, AFL-CIO.

Teased by Neuenfeldt about his normal garrulousness in speeches, an unusually subdued Balistreri briefly recalled how he had learned the power of giving almost by accident. His anecdotes were about small good deeds that only much later had a larger impact on both his own feelings and the results for recipients.

Introductions were handled by Milwaukee Area Labor Council leader Sheila Cochran, who sits on the United Way board and also helps the AFL-CIO field liaisons (Annie Wacker, Jay Reinke and Mike Balistriere) in their community efforts. Brief remarks were made by WE Energies' Kristine Rappe, one of three co-chairs of the United Way Community Campaign that in the face of hard economic times has raised its yearly goal to \$48 million.



Award recipient Lyle Balistreri and son Vincent pose with (from left) moderator Sheila Cochran, United Way campaign co-chair Kristine Rappe and the organization's president, Mary Lou Young.

Intriguingly, it was United Way that had just made the media's "good news" headlines since a blunt broad-based effort it has led to attack causes of community distress had paid off in an amazing reduction of teen pregnancies from 52 per 1,000 five years ago to less than 33.

United Way led an effort with the city health department, MPS and advertising experts to further education, abstinence and condom awareness in a truly remarkable improvement that justifies the United Way's switch this year to attack roots of problems as well as the results of problems.

"When I'm asked how during such hardship, with more and more people needing the help of our agencies, I dare increase the

money we seek," said another speaker, Mary Lou Young, president of the United Way, "I simply respond, 'How could I not?'"

It is not just that more and more people need the help of the agencies in United Way, Young said in an interview afterward, it is that United Way has been sec-

ond behind government in support of member agencies -- and the governments under the current constricted attitudes at work are pulling back from the safety net role, starting to reduce the 46-50% the agencies count on.

Even if more people are out of work, even as union workers

are paying more in their family lives just to get by, Young still felt no choice but to set a higher goal this year to meet growing demand and ask people to dig deeper for the less fortunate to get health care, manage shrinking funds and train for jobs.

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DEL GROSS	214
GREG MARTIN	210
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DAN LAACK	197
WALLY GEISE	181
JESSE CORTEZ	180
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DAN KNIPPEL	173

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JOYCE KNIPPEL	482
PHYLISS NAVARRETE	459

IND. HIGH GAME OVER 165

EILEEN WESTERFIELD	183
RAE MATOWSKI	180
JOYCE KNIPPEL	177
PHYLISS NAVARRETE	168

Occupy backers moving forward

Encouraged by the turnout at 800 international locations Oct. 15, including an estimated 3,000 in Milwaukee, lead organizers of the Occupy movement are moving forward with planning and training sessions to keep Occupy grounded in how to get change done, the organizers revealed.

Regular meetings are being centered around the launching point of the Oct. 15 march, which is also known as the workers' park, since the Milwaukee Area Labor Council helps its design and kicks off the Laborfest parade there: Zeidler Union Square Park between 3rd and 4th at Michigan St.

Calendar

Visit www.milwaukeeelabor.org for updated events

Wednesday, October 26

Executive Council Meeting
2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Thursday, October 27

Voces de la Frontera
Fund-Raising Gala

Keynote speaker John Nichols, VIP reception 5:30 p.m., dinner 6:30, then program, awards, celebration
\$50 guest, Potawatomi Woodland Dreams Ballroom, 1721 W. Canal St., contact (414) 643-1620.

Wednesday, November 2

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

Wednesday, November 23

Executive Council Meeting
2 p.m., 633 S. Hawley Rd.

Wednesday, December 7

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



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— Elizabeth Warren, running for US senate in Massachusetts

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Ideas, need for change pack Jobs Hearing

"I'm just here to listen," said state Sen. Chris Larson, with nods of agreement from the other panelists and the eight or so elected officials scattered within the packed "Jobs Hearing" Oct. 17 at Washington Park Senior Center.

What they heard was abundant frustration, specific problems and general concern from people looking for work, job creators and even union workers -- one whom said he "feels blessed" but won't be complete "until everyone who doesn't have a job enjoys what I have."

Unhappy victims of temp jobs, intelligent explainers of transitional jobs and other professionals also spoke, and organizers from many groups were taking notes. But what mainly seized the listeners were ordinary citizens worried about how they can care for their families without jobs or even with jobs because they saw problems in

Walker's minions. They are destroying not only "my income but my opportunity," as one business owner put it.

The panelists were mainly gathering ideas and offering information about what they have proposed, and what action they can take as long as they're in the minority. They included Larson's fellow senator, Spencer Coggs, and Assembly members JoCasta Zamarippa, Sandy Pasch and Fred Kessler.

Among the detailed handouts were the state AFL-CIO jobs agenda to "Rebuild Wisconsin's Middle Class" with charts and factual analysis by leaders Stephanie Bloomingdale and Phil Neuenfeldt.

Fleshing out what national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka sought from the Occupy movement - and building far more demanding on several ideas included in President Obama's American Jobs Act, the state AFL-CIO



emphasized what elected representatives needed to do now (and or had better set about changing or replacing the majority, said one speaker at the hearing):

- Strengthen both Buy America and Buy Wisconsin requirement.
- Insist on Corporate Accountability to Taxpayers.
- Restore the Freedom of

Workers to Organize and Collective Bargain by repealing Act 10 along with Scott Walker.

- Invest in Green Technology, Green Jobs and infrastructure, job creating money and unemployment benefits in the American Jobs Act.
- Raise Wisconsin's Minimum Wage (AB 281)
- Repeal Those New

Corporate and Wealthy Investor Tax Breaks.

- Support Skill Training for Employment
- Require the Wealthy to Pay Their Fair Share
- Oppose Job-Killing Trade Agreements.

The carefully analyzed and factually supported menu had one ingredient in every item: More Jobs.



The panel of elected officials introduced themselves and then responded to dozens of ideas from the packed Washington Park Senior Center (photo above right). From left: Chris Larson, JoCasta Zamarippa, Sandy Pasch, Spencer Coggs and Fred Kessler. Several more officials were in the crowd.



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Occupy

From Page 1

opposition of, and they resist every modest effort even from their own ranks to get them to pay a fairer share.

That selfish attitude of hoarding their own wealth as the expense of everyone else -- the 1% that owns 40% of the nation and leads the greatest income disparity vs. the 99% in a century -- has had a boomerang affect. Almost spontaneously that obstinacy forced the Occupy movement to switch from blind anger at the financial system to focus on organization and an agenda of what it can

actually accomplish. It compelled cross-sections of citizens to recognize common goals.

The Occupy movement isn't quite sure of the future steps, and knows it is facing an organized, legalist and lobbyist heavy oligarchy of overly wealthy controlling our nation's politics and elected officials. This has caused political tension that frays the edges of the Occupy movement, but right now it has only exploded virally - across the Internet and news media -- not physically. Everyone who hears about the cause runs to support it -- and tries to keep belief in change alive. The alternative is ugly.

Occupy has now gathered in

all sorts of other social protests. People concerned about everything -- climate change, rapacious mortgages, crumbling bridges, frozen credit, court decisions equating speech and money, banks too big to fail and people too weak to fight back, courts open to legalistic wrinkles more than ethics -- see a pattern in the worst behavior of the barons and their tendency to fund venality.

Harsh reality and basic data also justify the movement. With unemployment at a 60 year high for those 18-24, young people are on board. People who once worked hard for a living now rely on



Hundreds of marchers signed their names to the 99% poster.

parents or food pantries, meaning the higher end of the middle class now is part of the poor and the homeless. With the wealthiest Americans parking some \$2 trillion rather than investing in jobs and America, there are ever more reasons for Americans to put their bodies on the line in protest.

Partisan clenching - embodied in GOP leaders in Congress -- has actually strengthened the Occupy movement.

Despite the sound-bite simplicities, Occupy was never about bringing business to its knees, but about insisting on common cause ("all hands on deck") in the nation's economic difficulties. There are extremists attracted to every social movement, but the right-wing is now using that inevitable fringe to distract Americans from the larger purpose.

Unions, in essence, want business to succeed to create more jobs but for years have condemned the failure to heed rules and respect workers. So while they didn't launch the good ship Occupy, they have been happy to swarm aboard and join progressive organizations in helping steer it.

That input has grown the effort beyond those catchy chants that every taxpayer agrees with ("Banks got bailed out, we got sold out") to practical ways to create US jobs. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka has not just praised capturing "the imagination and passion of millions of Americans who have lost hope that our nation's policy makers are speaking for them." He outlined pragmatic steps, unabashedly building on the labor federation's year old rallies about Wall

Street excesses. More in Occupy gravitate to the do-able: Invest that locked-up money, forgive those underwater mortgages and foreclosures caused by financial finagling. Support education and new technology. Believe again in the American worker not a jobless recovery that lines a few pockets at the top and leaves communities devastated. Embrace sensible regulations that keep greed from running amuck - because such evasion almost destroyed the nation.

Vice President Biden was quick to understand. "The core is: The bargain has been breached," he told a D.C. forum in explaining Occupy. "The core is the American people do not think the system is fair or on the level."

"It's giving voice to a broad based frustration about our financial institutions," President Obama similarly explained to the press. "The financial sector with the Republican Party fight us every step of the way. They also fight the reforms. These days a lot of people doing the right thing are not rewarded and people not doing the right thing are rewarded."

Obama has actually come in for a lot of knocks from Occupy Wall Street, which feels he preferred saving the big guys and backs a financial team way too protective of those largest institutions, the "too big to fail" that keep getting even bigger. Movement members also argue he has been too open to compromise rather than laying down the hammer and too slow to force better credit and bold investment. But at least they can't complain Obama doesn't get it.


Former House Speaker now Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi similarly voiced support of the message "to the establishment, whether it's Wall Street or the political establishment and the rest, that change has to happen."

That empathy from some politicians doesn't eliminate the inherent danger of every such movement - and the danger is not becoming an arm of the right or left establishments. It is the danger when diverse injured and humanistic concerns no longer trust in an unyielding establishment.

SEE COMMENTARY OPPOSITE



Different streams of thought marched down Michigan St. as an estimated 3,000 joined the Occupy Milwaukee protest from Zeidler Park to the Chase and M&I banks.



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Taking to streets: Very edgy. Very American

By Dominique Paul Noth
Editor, Labor Press

Comment

Let's not pretend there isn't something very risky, as well as very American, about taking your issues to the streets.

America has a history of social movements that have brought changes to our institutions, laws, rules, and a deeper understanding of the underlying principles of our country. Some of these movements were upsetting to the status quo. Some were illegal or seem dimwitted when they began. Entrenched politicians called them radicals and extremists.

But they marched against slavery, for the right of women to vote, for civil rights, for something other than wars as a foreign policy, for the rights of every worker to bargain with management about working conditions.

All at one stage or another endured, working on the conscience of America and reshaping the democratic process so much that many falsely think we must have always shared these goals.

It's inspiring that people are again taking to the streets to compel democratic action. But there is a scary side. It's wondering whether we'll believe in democratic process rather than

explode in frustration. Given the suffering in neighborhoods, the families losing their homes (and in Wisconsin their right to vote at the same time), their frail parents' health care, their kids' food and schooling, there is clearly a psychological conflict at work.

Occupy embodies forcing change by the power of numbers, but when there is emotion there has to be great care taken in motivation and organizing, especially with an opposition that would like nothing more than to inflame the distress into violence.

The danger was pointed out by Naomi Klein in the Nation magazine, reminding the protesters: "The 1% loves a crisis. When people are panicked and desperate and no one seems to know what to do, that is the ideal time to push through their wish list of pro-corporate policies: privatizing education and social security, slashing public services, getting rid of the last constraints on corporate power."

Within the Occupy movement, which deliberately lacks an official spokesman, some members don't want the Democrat label wrapped too tightly to preserve independent action. Others are only slowly recognizing that



they must have a legislative agenda and organized principles to go with their anger, and that leaders such as Trumka are well positioned to provide that.

It may be healthy that there is mutual wariness. Within the Democratic Party, some fear that Occupy could turn disruptive more than productive while others fear it will push the party to the left.

The internal debate was summed up recently by an Occupy veteran who privately wanted to stiff-arm the Democratic Party but then thought more deeply: "Including the Democratic Party" - and other organized groups, such as unions - "will raise the profile of the movement, and make it more difficult for it to be undermined"

It will take work to keep Occupy Wall Street positive and under control, because the provocateurs on the other side some-



ABOVE: Spotted in the crowd returning after the Occupy march were labor leader Bruce Coburn (left) and towering noted stiltwalker from Riverwest, Debra Davis.

RIGHT: Carrying flags or playing instruments, marchers reflected various causes. While conservative pundits kept insisting that well-heeled leftists like George Soros must be manufacturing those placards, much of the fun was how inventive, varied and self-made the messages were.



times have police and government leaders to call on to make even boisterous opposition seem radically over the top. Some of the incitements have already occurred in places like Colorado and even in New York City before pressure to back away. The people screaming about agitators on the airwaves seem to be the real agitators.

That power the right has to make trouble and act as if the law is on its side - that alone could engulf Occupy in rage when supporters consider the slick and self-righteous status quo on the other side.

But hang in there, 99%. Even the Occupy veteran makes that point: "Open up the tent, and let them all see for themselves what it looks like when history is being made."



Both Milwaukee police and sheriff's deputies - including the deputies' horse brigade - worked closely with the Occupy organizers. But while larger than anticipated, the march was respectful and peaceful, except for some outside agitators reportedly turned away by authorities.

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Recall

From Page 1

they consider who snatched food money from pocketbooks of school teachers and state, city and county line workers while also decimating all sorts of civil servants the public is only beginning to learn about - officer workers, nurses, planners, engineers. It was Walker, first, last and always in their strategy.

"You can find a financial savings here and there, but the larger destruction of morale, of good hiring practice, the loss of excellent employees through fearful retirement - all of that is long-term damage unless we can start right now to reverse course," said a Madison political leader.

The governor is still a cripple and must be stopped.

Some have argued that Walker can do little more damage if left in office, now that summer recalls have reduced his GOP majority in the state senate to one and several members clearly won't vote for further extreme excesses.

But the recall planners strongly disagree - pointing out he can do a lot of damage and still is, with attacks on prevailing wage, local control and minority hiring.

Even as the recall began he backed multiple bills that would limit big pharma's legal immunity for damages caused by defective drugs, restrict civil lawsuit awards for consumers -- but not for corporations -- and make it more difficult to bring discrimination suits. He's rewarding wealthy backers while limiting health care access to the working poor.

If ever there was evidence to move fast, Walker is providing it, say the recall folks.

His policies are shredding the state economy. It's not just the thousands of jobs lost in early decisions, not the continued emptiness of the pledge to bring in 250,000 jobs even as the state loses thousands. It's the viewpoint that protecting the richest will eventually create jobs, when it clearly hasn't.

It's refusing to raise revenue except by excluding low-income families from care. It's a flood of policies that are or will cost Wisconsin jobs and reputation. Try to find a teacher willing to work in this state. Try to find an engineer who wants to raise a family in a din of careless gun laws and rigid cultural views. Try to find a small business owner not dismayed to live near Walkerville.

And note that CEOs who rave about Walker's policies are largely shedding jobs, not adding them.

"Walker's going backwards," noted another senator, Chris Larson. "This goes far beyond public workers," a distressed Rep. Sandy Pasch said in a chat after an Oct. 11 gathering "He couldn't do worse if he set out to destroy the middle class."

Milwaukee County Supervisor Gerry Broderick, who labeled Walker a "one-trick pony" when he refused to raise revenue and submitted inadequate budgets as county executive, expecting other officials to rescue him, noted how "Wisconsin is now getting a taste of the Walker we endured - and what a bitter taste! More fools we if such weak thinking is allowed to continue."

Recalling how Walker never



While many in the community may not be crazy about the concept of recalls, Walker's name seems to be cutting right through that hesitation. Recall Walker lawn signs as well as bumper stickers have been popping up throughout Wisconsin.

told the public what he was really up to when he ran for governor, the director of a private sector union, USW District 2's Mike Bolton, noted that "Walker's time in office cannot end soon enough for the working families here in Wisconsin."

There's no time like now. Some observers had suggested the window of outrage has closed, that Walker's year of required grace from recall gave him time to fill his coffers and gather his outside networks of money. They even suggest the needed signatures are no longer there despite the public opinion polls and the way Walker animus creeps into every public campaign about jobs, Wall Street and corporate excess - and even flies in the sky over every Badger game.

So the recall supporters see 540,260 signers as simply the first plateau, the vital step that clears the road forward. That's a quarter of the number of votes in the 2010 gubernatorial election. Tom Barrett got that many just sneezing. (And in October, more than 200,000 on the Internet have already pledged to recall Walker.)

Given the delaying tactics either side could employ, and the time needed by the GAB to count and validate signatures, early recall action won't result in a race for governor as part of the



Reasons not to wait were outlined by Phil Neuenfeldt, one of the recall strategists and also president of the state AFL-CIO.

April general election, when the GOP is counting on heavier turnout because of a presidential primary that will only be busy on one side.

Several see anger at Walker strengthened by winning away two senate seats in Republican districts and retaining all threatened Democrats. "Only someone on the Republican payroll would call winning 5 out of 9 recalls a failure," noted Stephanie Bloomingdale, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO. Nor will Walker's redistricting efforts to change legislative seats in favor of the GOP have any effect, since this is a statewide race and it's all about turnout not boundaries.

It's also quite possible that in several districts where experts think sitting GOP senators are vulnerable and can also be recalled, the Walker recall people may get a signature and then suggest, "Oh, by the way," and offer the chance to sign a separate recall for the Walker obedient senator who should have known better.

In the Walker case, the organizers want 700,000 signatures as a cushion because they also know they can't control the schedule, the challenges, the games the GOP loves to employ.

Frankly, no one could be sure of stalling the independent recall enthusiasts from gathering signatures as soon as possible (November) so it made sense to combine the momentum.

Minority Assembly Leader Peter Barca in an interview suggests the GOP was certainly clever and successful in running fake Dems to stall the recall elections a month this summer, but he adds that they are now paying a price with the public for looking "way too slick and opportunistic."

"The fury about Walker is real and now, so let's not shoot ourselves in the foot by acting

too clever and say, oh well, what can he do if we wait," noted state AFL-CIO leader Phil Neuenfeldt. "Frankly, he can do a heck of a lot."

The other argument for delay was also rejected - wait until a strong opponent steps forward and then try to time signature collection to the most advantageous moment (which might be next November, when Obama is on the ballot, a Senate seat is open and all the Assembly and half the Senate are on the ballot.) But timing is the one thing that can't be controlled and recall people trust Walker would do everything possible to avoid being on the ballot in November.

Should there be enough signatures, which is not quite the stretch the GOP pretends, the likely election would be in May or June, and there could well be primaries. Several Democrats may compete and even Walker may face a real or manufactured challenger.

"Look," one Republican operative said privately to me, "When the iron was hot, the Democrats could have run Howdy Doody against him and have a chance. But now they need a big name that independents in particular can flock to." By his reasoning, Walker survives by default.

The recall organizers disagree - and not just because, as one argued, "it is hard to think of a Democrat the Wisconsin public wouldn't trust right now more than Walker." The others have a more convincing "build it and they will come" view.

"As the recall grows and awareness of Walker's limitations grows with it," said one member of United Wisconsin, "you'll be amazed at the responsible recognized politicians who will prove willing to be recruited. If we do our job, they'll be there"

"Better this way. If we try to anoint a chosen ahead of gathering signatures," said a leader of the state AFL-CIO, "we're just giving the Republicans and the media a target. It's the Republicans who like to manipulate and control events. Let's trust in the people and the process."

But isn't that scary?
"Only if you fear the people" came the rejoinder.



Rep. Sandy Pasch, interviewed for article Oct. 12. Her arm is in a cast because of a jogging accident during family vacation.

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Turns out Congress has loused up, not US Postal Service

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

Flawed media coverage, expensive political rhetoric, misunderstood social trends and partisan simplicities. Those can create a 2+2=5 economic math myth so pervasive that it fools average citizens, Tea Party mavens and liberals alike.

Here's a big one. A continuing example of false conclusions. It's based on how few of us write letters anymore, how literacy seems to be dying, how United Parcel Service in ads and actuality delivers big and small packages around the globe (but to limited parts of the US) and how the planes of FedEx provide faster and costlier delivery, as countless commercials inform us.

How modern it all seems, if you don't look at the poor pay forced on many privatized van drivers, or other shortcuts that allow big-bucks companies to deliver to the door.

And how much we complain that postal rates, still much cheaper than the alternatives, have crept up in all categories; how so many post offices seem antiquated by today's aluminum and glass standards and how daily mail delivery seems old-fashioned manual work, like needing 19 actors to perform "Hamlet."

So, in a world where email has grown omnipresent and even recycled green sounds like just more dead trees, most citizens believe these are the reasons the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is losing money.

They are amazed to learn that's not so. In cost and delivery of services, the USPS has made money since the 1970s. Management and labor (despite conflicts) have often



Labor lawyer Mark Sweet was spotted in a surging crowd demonstrating on Milwaukee St. Sept. 27 to restore the US Postal Service from impossible financial burdens imposed in 2006 by Congress.

worked together on efficiencies, marketing, contracts and mechanization while quietly providing passports and other special services. And millions still check daily for the convenient arrival.

The public is further amazed to learn that USPS doesn't cost the taxpayers, unless you stretch to include the few millions allocated for mail to the blind and mailed election ballots. In 1970 USPS was changed from Ben Franklin's vision to a semi-independent federal agency, much like a private business but mandated to be revenue-neutral (supposed to break even, not make a profit.)

And it did, except for an act of the GOP administration in 2006, which demanded something that UPS, FedEx - in fact no business nor government agency in the nation must do: Pay its pension costs for workers, even future workers, 75 years into the future! That's not good business, that's a killer. And that's \$80 billion, now an added \$5.5 billion weight each year. That would cripple any business but, given the lack of public information in the face of technological change, it makes

the USPS sound out of date when it's not.

As a result of this goofy imposition by a pension-illiterate Congress, several things have happened. Fear of fiscal collapse has flooded the airwaves in every discussion of USPS. This media-generated fear of the future, without explaining the facts, has emerged as the crippling reality of our times.

The management and the unionized workforce, which always had some conflicts but harmoniously worked out contracts and adjustments, have now been put at loggerheads because management pushed by worried Congress wants to shut down post offices around the nation and seems to have settled in large measure on communities lacking electoral clout, such as rural and inner city areas.

Look for a ferocious battle to erupt in Milwaukee over that idea, led by Rep. Gwen Moore and Mayor Tom Barrett, who promised to fight at an Oct. 17 press conference.

The modernizing routes that both labor and management have long worked on creating has

become a concept turned ugly because of those dropped post offices, removal of convenient as well as excess mailboxes around town -- and now the effort to drop Saturday mail delivery. (That idea prompted a hilarious New Yorker cartoon cover Sept. 19 of a government edifice sporting that famous historic motto about how neither snow nor gloom could stay these "couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds" - but now amended to add "EXCEPT ON SATURDAYS.")

Worse, plans now include laying off 120,000 workers, with no guarantee that this would change red to black, only mollify those slavish Wall Street goons who think fewer workers will provide bigger profits. How about simply not asking USPS to prefund the health and pension costs of workers not yet born? That would make the financial woes disappear and keep employment strong.

Such a ready solution is in front of Congress. Not to say competitive pressures aren't real and USPS will have to work hard to keep winning the battle and provide delivery options for all citizens. But Congress could wipe away that artificial mountain it created simply by passing H.R. 1351, introduced by Rep. Stephen Lynch (D-Mass.) to undo what the GOP imposed.

Management insiders quietly agree with this bill though dare not say so aloud. Because the GOP is back in the saddle, however briefly, and the party powers sure seem to resist any idea the Democrats support. Nor do they balk at wiping away 120,000 jobs even as the nation

screams for more jobs.

This is the background for the eruption September 27 by thousands of protesters at 492 locations around the US including hundreds gathered Downtown on Milwaukee St. for the national "Save America's Post Office" day of action.

Four USPS employee unions-the postal workers (APWU), letter carriers (NALC), mail handlers affiliated with Laborers (LIUNA) and the rural letter carriers- would be damaged by staff cutbacks, but the protest drew far more than unions. Citizens concerned about loss of Saturday mail, closed post offices in their districts, erosion of a principle of American democracy and the outlandish anti-enterprise pension costs spoke up at these rallies, including rural communities that would be hit especially hard.

AFL-CIO itself in the form of Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker told Congress through an Oregon crowd: "Get off the dime and start fixing problems instead of making things worse. America has a jobs crisis. Cutting 120,000 jobs is nothing but another bad idea."

We are about to find out if the GOP majority in Congress cares. But this is also a valuable teaching moment for citizens who may assume they know what is wrong with America from what they hear on TV -- only to discover, as Pogo once said in a cartoon, "We have met the enemy and they is us." Now a mixture of misguided observations and ideological fibs could keep the mail from going through.

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D.C.'s crazy dance of training and trade deals

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

Analysis

For fair trade advocates and unions that opposed the three free trade bills, the passage in the House Oct. 12 was bad news. For Congress watchers it was an odd schizophrenic moment of accord between two parties usually in gridlock - and came a day after the GOP in lock step voted against Obama's most important initiative, the American Jobs Act, which now will have to be submitted piecemeal.

Only Beltway insiders can comprehend what happened in both chambers after five years of delay and tinkering with the trade bills and the strange coupling with the training money and other assistance for dislocated workers, whose need to land so many new jobs with new skills was necessitated by previous similar trade deals such as NAFTA.

That's only one of several ironies of the affair. Unions that strongly opposed the trade bills also support training dollars for dislocated workers - the various Trade Adjustment Assistance bills (TAA) that had enjoyed bipartisan support for nearly a half century. Only today's GOP has taken a turn to viewing every help for workers as a social program the nation can't afford and moved to block renewal.

Knowing the GOP wanted the trade deals while resisting the full TAA, the White House in effect offered to split the baby.

The deal used Speaker John Boehner's pledge to include renewal of aid for workers hurt

by foreign competition and tariff preferences for developing nations if he got the trade packages.

Such extension will include service workers whose benefits expired in February. The Bush era TAA only covered displaced workers in manufacturing. But, recognizing how global changes in technology were sending as many service jobs out of the US as manufacturing (such as call centers and bill paying services), Obama added service workers to the TAA. The GOP seemed particularly resistant at first to including those workers, but finally did, with some negotiated compromises and reductions.

The service workers and general TAA extension runs only through 2013 and the bill also cuts the weeks of extended unemployment insurance that participants can receive to 130 from 156, and reduces the health-care tax credit.

Under an agreement with the Senate and the White House, House GOP leaders agreed to vote on a renewal of TAA immediately after the House approval of trade agreements with South Korea, Colombia and Panama. It provides \$575 million for TAA to train workers over the next two years. The cost over three years, offset by spending cuts elsewhere, is put at \$900 million.

Another bothersome change. Public sector workers who were eligible for TAA benefits under the 2009 law will no longer qual-

ify. But others made eligible remain so. They include those who held service jobs; workers whose companies shifted production to China, India and other countries that are not free trade partners with the US and secondary workers such as suppliers whose jobs are affected when a plant closes.

While a majority of Democrats wound up voting against the trade bills - including Milwaukee's Rep. Gwen Moore - many did not. The GOP was largely united for passage. So even the most controversial bill, involving Columbia, which has the worst human rights record including killings of union activists, still passed that chamber with 267 votes. The other two deals, Panama and South Korea, had much larger margins and more Democratic crossover.

Fair trade advocates consider all the bills that President Obama supported badly flawed in labor and environmental protection, and not good enough on building American jobs and protecting the price of American exports while also protecting the living conditions of the most vulnerable foreign workers in agriculture and crafts.

Supporters argue that more foreign trade can propel economic growth and exports - and consider accord a political victory for the president since there was rising protectionist sentiment in both parties. But despite high hopes and the White House's belief that it worked hard to address union concerns, even federal analysis anticipates minimal economic benefits, an increase of one-tenth of a percent in gross domestic product (about \$14 billion).

Even economic experts at respected think tanks criticize the trade deals as ineffective and ill-timed. The Economic Policy Institute noted Oct. 14: "With fourteen million unemployed, these deals will only further burden our domestic economy, which is already teetering on the brink of another recession."

Those are among reasons fair trade activists and unions criticize the trade deals as yet another example of one step forward and two steps backward. They are weighing a president who is still completing deals made during "his overly compromising phase" as one critic put it, even as he turns in public speeches to a more defiant, "pass the jobs bill" stance. But the deal-making roller coaster he was on still causes vertigo among progressive supporters.

As to explaining the current GOP, who can? Their needless delay of the much needed renewal of the TAA was intellectually dumfounding to desperate laid-off workers.

The TAA provides financial

aid and retraining to help workers displaced by foreign competition. In Milwaukee, the remarkably effective HIRE Center, staffed in large part by union workers who know how it feels to lose their jobs and are committed to helping clientele, has emerged as the principal training center for dislocated workers, TAA grants and assistance here, using the federal funding siphoned through the state's Department of Workforce Development, which is legally responsible for parceling out funds to regional centers.

In recent months, the failure to extend TAA - and the GOP use of service worker assistance as a pawn in renewal -- seems to have played into the anti-federal aid attitude of Wisconsin's freshman governor.

It remains to be seen whether state impediments continue. If they do, if the federal



Conflicting emotions hit Alba Baltodano, the manager of the HIRE Center listening to the stories of the jobless (opposite page), the same day she learned that Congress has passed the TAA so vital to HIRE's work, but lashed it to trade bills whose dislocation of workers causes so much of that retraining.

funds are further delayed or diffused despite strict rules for implementation, Walker and the DWD are sure to be scrutinized by local and federal officials.

City bolsters jobs access



Several of the sponsors of the Milwaukee jobs efforts also organize the marches by and for the homeless and out of work at freeway spans. This recent candlelight march took place on North Avenue over the I-43 bridge.



It was a great slam dunk but it was only a start on a better path to Milwaukee jobs. On October 11 in a 14 to 1 vote with Mayor Tom Barrett promising to sign aboard, the Common Council passed an ordinance requiring 25% of city contracts be awarded to people of color, women, and small businesses.

The legislation was opposed only by Ald. Dudzik, who complained that previous such efforts hadn't worked. But instead of the Emerging Business Enterprise ordinance that many called vague, this legislation was carefully crafted by Ald. Ashanti Hamilton aided by Ald. Milele Coggs to address contract disparities by providing more access to diverse vendors and contractors and more jobs for women and minorities.

Calling it a "strong piece of legislation that's narrowly tailored for what our community needs," Hamilton said it will stand up to legal challenges; "it pushes back against the belief that government doesn't create jobs We do create jobs," in this case minority participation in construction and professional services, along with tight monitoring.

It was a major victory for happy diverse sponsors, including Citizen Action of Wisconsin and its Good Jobs coalition, MICA, 9to5, Urban Underground and the NAACP, but the sponsors headed back to City Hall the next week to fight for another jobs centered ordinance, this one to directly address unemployment by revitalizing the Milwaukee Jobs Act.

To learn more and to help, contact organizer Jennifer Epps at (414) 213-7574 or jennifer.epps@citizenactionwi.org. -- D.P.N.

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Forum

From Page 1

ected to power, who can't be moved by the human tragedy they have helped engender -- largely because they don't show up to hear it.

Staff for some concerned officials heeded the invitation (Sen. Kohl, Rep. Moore and the mayor) but not Sen. Ron Johnson's people- and on that very afternoon he called police to his downtown office to arrest 19 people protesting the senator's vote against President Obama's American Jobs Act. It is no wonder that Johnson was among those named by the unemployed as important people who could help but are AWOL.

The surprise for the crowd was another hard luck and hard-to-hear case from one who was long among the influential employed in the community but now says all those big shots "did not care about us."

It was the moderator, Cassandra Cassandra, known for years as the morning interviewer of the troubled and famous on WMCS 1290 but let go a few years ago by the station.

Having lost her son in a shooting, about to lose her house of 28 years because of foreclosure, faced with evicting her working daughter and grandchild-

Walker team adds condition for unemployment insurance

Many of the desperate job hunters seeking to survive interpret a new condition from Gov. Walker's administration as simply another bureaucratic barrier, a rationale to check up on whether people who have lost jobs are really looking for work.

Wisconsin residents have just learned that filing new claims for unemployment insurance requires registering through Wisconsin Job Service.

The theory is that they can find resources and matching skills, including posted job openings at www.JobCenterofWisconsin.com

according to a press release from the new secretary of the Department of Workforce Development, Scott Baumbach.

The dilemma comes for those who feel they can meet search requirements and find jobs through other methods - apparently they then can't file.

The DWD website, inspected on a recent visit, does list more than 1,600 jobs from all around the state.

But that number also includes jobs in Minnesota and Illinois (so much for adding state jobs) -- and does not yet reflect several new job creation and availability efforts mentioned recently in the Labor Press.

Economic experts also point out that the high number of unemployed requires new efforts rather than new restrictions.

That new requirement is in addition to following the current



Martin

dren, trying to find doctors for a severely ailing mother while battling illness herself, Cassandra recounted how the HIRE Center has been retraining her in computer skills, setting up algebra hurdles for her and helping her acquire the knowledge and the confidence that can combat the tears and depression crowding in for those who want jobs, would be talented at jobs and can't get hired.

"I have to work on my math," she started to explain, "but my mom is sick and needs care. But I have to work on my math ..." her voice trailed off, and many in the crowd wondered why more of the officials who could make a difference seem uninterested in hearing these stories.

Representatives from the HIRE Center were there, despairing at how even their high suc-

cess rate wasn't enough to handle the thousands upon thousands in trouble.

requirement to make an active search for work, which involves contacting at least two employers each week. The department notifies people of the requirements when they file their initial claims.



Rose

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Folks from United Way and service agencies wondered aloud if even their skills could cope with the growing need and the emotional tragedy ("You must never give up hope," said one noted counselor, Vanessa White, known for connecting the dots of community support).

Jack Norman of the Institute for Wisconsin's Future first said he felt like "fish out of water" in the face of the painful human stories but then the economic researcher cut right through the right-wing smokescreen about job creators who just don't create jobs but still take the profits.

He leveled with facts the myth about taxes as the core problem, noting taxes are not even close when Wisconsin's rich families and corporations, as his research confirms, currently escape without paying state income taxes.

(Norman's points landed the same week as a national study called "The Wrong Target" refutes myths that public sector unions play any role in the crisis in many state budgets, which are caused most by such factors as



Andrea

falling housing prices.)

"The economy isn't complicated," Norman said during his own analysis "We need jobs. When business doesn't create them, government must step in and help. It's madness to hear the intractability on the other side."

Nor are solutions as complicated as the opposition pretends. But even if they don't listen, Norman pointed out, there are really about 65 people in the state who are causing the problems and could solve them. He named the governor and the Assembly and Senate majority.



Cassandra

"Change who they are and we're on the road to recovery."

The entire afternoon didn't just elevate the title of "unemployed" to the most important rank in our society, justifying why there is so much turmoil and frustration on the streets and in the neighborhoods. The testimony put faces and family on that gaping empty space in American values.

The nation requires more than jobs; it requires a reminder of the humanity and sharing that America is supposed to be about.



Carrie Geenen of Working America and Jack Norman of the Institute for Wisconsin's Future were among the dozens of intense listeners to the daily pain of the unemployed.



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