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Red State Uprising: Is the New Activism A Plus for Unions?

By Zachary Dowdy
 Special to the Communicator



GAGE SKIDMORE

GCC/IBT LEADERS ARE CLOSELY WATCHING STATEWIDE STRIKES BY TEACHERS in traditionally Republican states and say the action may represent growing disillusionment with anti-labor GOP policies and another sign that organized labor is poised for a rebound.

They said the new militancy in at least six states since February – all but one of which went for President Donald Trump in the 2016 election – could be good news for unionized workers everywhere.

"I haven't seen such a positive development for some time," said Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Atlanta-based Local 527-S. "Anything that gets people to stand up gives a little bit more hope. This is big stuff, these teachers coming together."

The wave of strikes has rocked West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona, North

Carolina, all "red states," and Colorado, which tends to vote Democrat. Teachers have walked out and demonstrated en masse, wearing red T-shirts and carrying banners that said "Red for Ed."

Teachers want better pay – often so low they need second jobs to get by – but also a commitment from states to provide better materials and equipment for students and overall per-pupil spending.

The pay issue is a powerful motivator. Analysts at the Economic Policy Institute said that, on average, teachers in the United States earn 77 percent of what other college graduates earn in weekly wages. The disparity was particularly acute in Republican states like Arizona, Kentucky, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

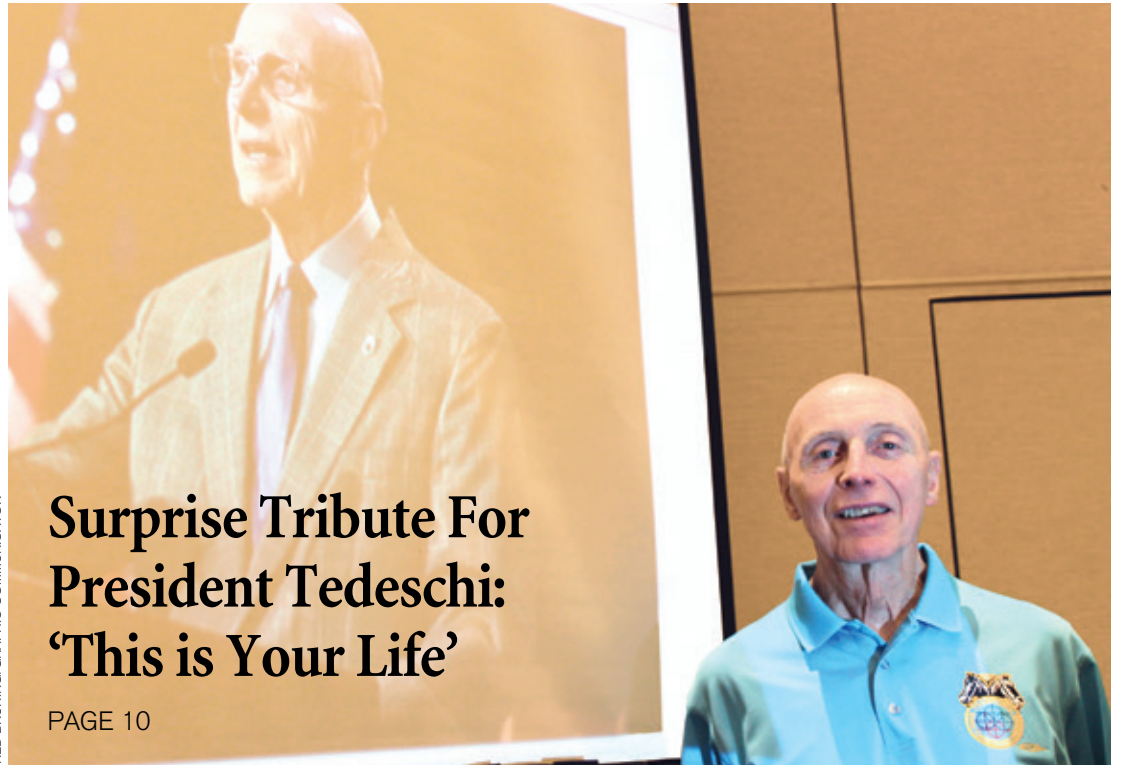
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Solidarity is Theme at NANC 'Family Reunion' In Scottsdale



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Printed in the USA



Surprise Tribute For President Tedeschi: 'This is Your Life'

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FRED BRUNING/GRAPHIC COMMUNICATOR

Unions Should Seize Chance to Build On New Activist Spirit

SOLIDARITY IS MORE THAN A SLOGAN. IT IS A STATE OF MIND.

The idea is that we are in this together – one for all, all for one – and that commitment to common purpose can overcome the great odds.

Nowhere is the spirit of unity more evident than at a GCC/IBT conference.

Old friends exchange heartfelt greetings. There are hugs and handshakes, laughter, and, sometimes, tears, too. It is clear that when dedicated union members address one another as “brother” or “sister,” they mean it.

That’s how it was last month in Scottsdale, Arizona, where our North American Newspaper Conference held its annual meeting.

From leaders and delegates, alike, there were stirring words of support and encouragement.

There was plenty of plain talk about where we stand as an organization, and the future of the union movement. We agreed that nothing is more important than organizing – a consistent, aggressive campaign to build membership.

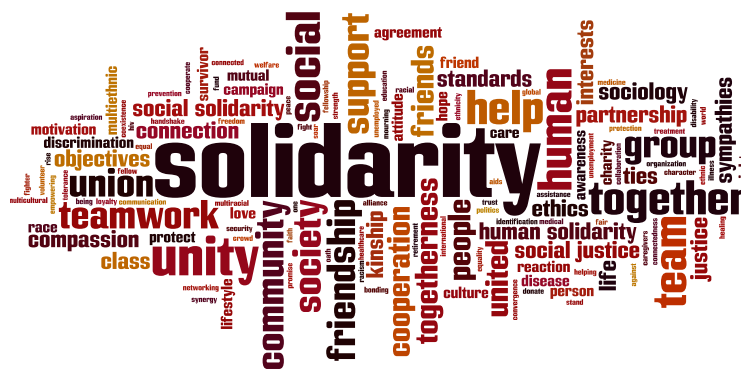
If we don’t grow, we die. That simple.

No sense kidding ourselves – unions have been losing members for a long time.

Attendance at meetings like NANC is way below what it once was. Plants continue to close and newspapers are cutting back in an effort to survive. Powerful forces in corporate America, and in Washington, want nothing more than to bury us.

But, as I told delegates in Arizona, we won’t let it happen.

At the national level, Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Kurt



Freeman and I are working hard to find new opportunities and expand our base. Local leaders are doing the same. We must track down every lead that could bring more members aboard.

Beyond the GCC/IBT, there are signs that something is stirring.

One of the most encouraging signs is the new spirit of activism among teachers – some in very conservative states – demanding decent pay and adequate classroom supplies.

As we report in this edition of the Communicator, teachers from West Virginia to Arizona are confronting authorities. And they are getting results, proving – again – what union members have known all along. Together, we stand. Divided, we fall.

“You can try to intimidate me as much as you want,” an eighth grade teacher in Phoenix told CNN. “I’m marching to the Capitol and I’m not doing it for myself. I’m doing it for 125 kids that walk in my room every day.”

That’s the kind of can-do spirit we all can salute – and perhaps the sign that Americans who once questioned the need for joint action are thinking things over again.

It is clear to me that people in our country are frustrated. Partisan warfare in Washington and chaos in the White House has made meaningful progress on domestic issues almost impossible.

The promised bonanza from Republican tax cuts has fizzled. Most companies haven’t boosted wages or reinvested. They’ve pocketed the money or sent it to shareholders.

Workers everywhere want progress – on plant safety, decent pay, good jobs. Unions know how to get results. We’re ready to help. Let’s go forward – together. ■

OUTLOOK

JAMES P. HOFFA TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

‘Free Riders’ Rob Unions – and Middle Class

MARK JANUS IS AN ILLINOIS SOCIAL worker protesting the reduced union fees he must pay to cover contract negotiation and other business the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) conducts on his behalf. Those backing his efforts are a Who’s Who of anti-union activists who view the lawsuit – now before the U.S. Supreme Court – as an opportunity to disarm collective bargaining in this country.

“Free riders” like Janus rob unions of necessary funds that make them the effective pro-worker advocates and reduce the availability of middle-class jobs.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics earlier this year reported that union members had a median weekly income of \$1,041 compared to non-union workers, who on average earned \$829 a week. That’s a difference of more than \$11,000 a year. And, it should be noted, union workers generally receive better health care and retirement benefits, as well.



For more than 40 years, federal law has provided public employees the right to join together in a union as a way to have a voice on the job with respect to how they are paid, the benefits they receive, and general conditions of employment. That’s why workers across the country are protesting the Janus case. They know hardworking Americans are going to get a raw deal if they don’t stand up for themselves.

If the high court overturns decades of legal precedent by disallowing the collection of “fair share” fees, it will be much more difficult for public employees to have a voice and for labor unions to have the financial resources to protect public employees and safeguard their negotiated wages, benefits and working conditions.

Though the Supreme Court justices will ultimately have the final say in the Janus case, Teamsters can be proactive by speaking about the benefits of a union, increasing membership and remaining unified.

That way, overcompensated corporate executives who want total freedom to rewrite work rules to lower wages and eliminate benefits will realize that workers’ collective voices cannot be silenced. ■



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Are We Seeing a Crack in the Conservative Facade?

THINGS HAPPEN IN UNEXPECTED WAYS. Just ask the tight-fisted lawmakers in a slew of red states faced down by public school teachers who said they were mad as hell and not taking it anymore.



From West Virginia to Arizona, teachers showed that even in the most conservative bastions you can push people just so far before they say enough is enough.

For years, these hard-working public servants struggled with outrageously low pay, tattered textbooks and worn out classroom equipment.

For years, Republican elected officials – the same phonies who give lip service to education during election campaigns – ignored the legitimate needs of teachers and students.

What does the red state uprising mean?

On the local level, teachers made gains and signaled to lawmakers they no longer would be pushed around.

On a broader scale, the spirit of activism could signal a shift in public mood – and perhaps mean good news for organized labor.

As reporter Zack Dowdy notes in his Top Story on Page 1, GCC/IBT leaders – and union officers around the country – are watching developments to see if the strikes led by red state teachers represent a new acceptance of joint effort and communal purpose.

“I haven’t seen such a positive development for some time,” Ralph Meers, president emeritus of Local 527-S, Atlanta told Dowdy. “Anything that gets people to stand up gives people a little bit more hope.”

The hope is that there may be a crack in the conservative façade of national politics and a chance for unions to make progress after years of going nowhere.



OUTSIDETHEBELTWAY.COM

At the North American Newspaper Conference meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona last month, GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi pointed to the emerging grassroots movement. (Pages 8-9)

“More than ever, we have to organize,” he said. “Americans are tired of the same old conservative status quo. Let’s get to work.”

While upstart teachers were making their point, Washington was doing business as usual.

The White House pushed job-killing tariffs, pulled back and then imposed the penalties again as Bottom Line columnist Jerry Morgan points out on Page 7. Meanwhile, the Trump administration’s assault on workplace safety regulations continues in full swing.

For many Americans, just showing up for their

shifts can be a dangerous proposition.

In our story on Workers Memorial Day (Page 4), we give the stark statistics: Nearly 5,200 die each year from workplace injuries and labor leaders say the anti-regulatory zeal of conservatives is sure to put even more at risk.

As a candidate, Donald Trump sought to align himself with blue collar Americans – and it worked. So far, those voters have gotten little for their loyalty – diminished workplace safety, questionable trade policies and a cynical tax program that gives the rich an enormous bonus and everyone else a couple of crumbs.

Bernie Sanders, the Independent senator from Vermont, is behind a program that would really benefit ordinary folks – the Workplace Democracy Act – and protect labor with a variety of measures, including a ban on right-to-work laws (Page 5).

Realistically, the Sanders initiative doesn’t stand a chance with Republicans in control of Congress. But it puts down a marker and makes clear the status quo isn’t good enough.

Red state teachers did the same thing and defied the common wisdom with their success.

The message: Stand up for labor. Vote in fall midterm elections. Keep the faith. You never know. ■

COMMENTARY JIM HIGHTOWER

Megabucks in Hands of Few Still a Danger to Democracy

Many Americans are reluctant to accept that coup conspiracies are part of country’s history. In fact, the country itself was founded on an armed uprising to replace the legal ruler, George III, with a gang of revolutionary upstarts.

One coup that most of us haven’t heard of is The Wall Street Putsch of 1933. It’s a heck of a story about a few Lords of Wealth trying to overthrow the government and enthrone a regime friendly to themselves.

In 1933, the Great Depression was in full force, spreading mass unemployment, waves of bankruptcies, and abject poverty.

The year before, Franklin D. Roosevelt had scored a landslide victory over Wall Street’s man, Herbert Hoover, by promising a New Deal for millions of impoverished Americans. To the horror of bankers, the new President’s policies and programs to help people get back on their feet included taxes on wealth to fund economic recovery.

Wall Street multi-millionaires like Grayson M.P. Murphy, boss of Anaconda Copper, and Robert Sterling Clark, heir to the Singer sewing machine fortune, were enraged. Class war, they wailed, claiming that their “liberty” to grab as much wealth as possible was being shackled.

Calling Roosevelt a traitor to his class, the oligarchs

implemented a plan to oust the President by enlisting a private military force made up of thousands of destitute World War I vets who were protesting the failure of government to pay promised federal bonus payments.

Gerald MacGuire, Murphy’s bond salesman and a former soldier, reached out to retired Marine general, Smedley Darlington Butler, and said financial powers wanted Butler to create a paramilitary corps of 500,000 vets to march on Washington and force FDR from office.

A new group called American Liberty League made up of right-wing corporate bosses would fund the cause to the tune of \$300 million – \$5.6 billion in today’s money – and the Remington Arms company would supply weapons. The conspirators thought FDR would go down without a fight. Once in place, the financiers and militarists would install a “secretary of general affairs” to run the country. And their choice was Smedley Butler.

They picked the wrong general.

Repulsed by the treacherous Wall Street aristocrats, Butler enlisted investigative reporter, Paul Comly French, to help gather proof of the bankers’ intent. With evidence in hand, Butler got the House of Representatives “Special Committee on Un-American Activities” to conduct an investigation which convinced members that Butler’s story was “alarmingly true.”



Wall Street responded by launching a coordinated counterattack assailing Butler and dismissing the idea of a coup as preposterous. But the House committee concluded that it “was able to verify all the pertinent statements made by General Butler” and that there “is no question that these attempts were discussed, were planned, and might have been placed in execution when and if the financial backers deemed it expedient.”

Fortunately, a real patriot was able to expose the traitors, nipping the coup in the bud. Their attempt reveals the threat of concentrated wealth and the ever-present danger that the imperious rich pose to majority rule. Not only should this real-life drama be highlighted in history books, it should be a blockbuster movie. ■

Populist author, public speaker, and radio commentator Jim Hightower writes *The Hightower Lowdown*, a monthly newsletter chronicling the ongoing fights by America’s ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Sign up at HightowerLowdown.org.

Anti-Regulatory Agenda Raises Workplace Risks

The numbers are troubling – and getting worse.

Fatal workplace injuries increased 7 percent in 2016 over the previous year, according to latest figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics – from 4,836 deaths to 5,190.

Labor officials and union members say those lost lives will not be forgotten.

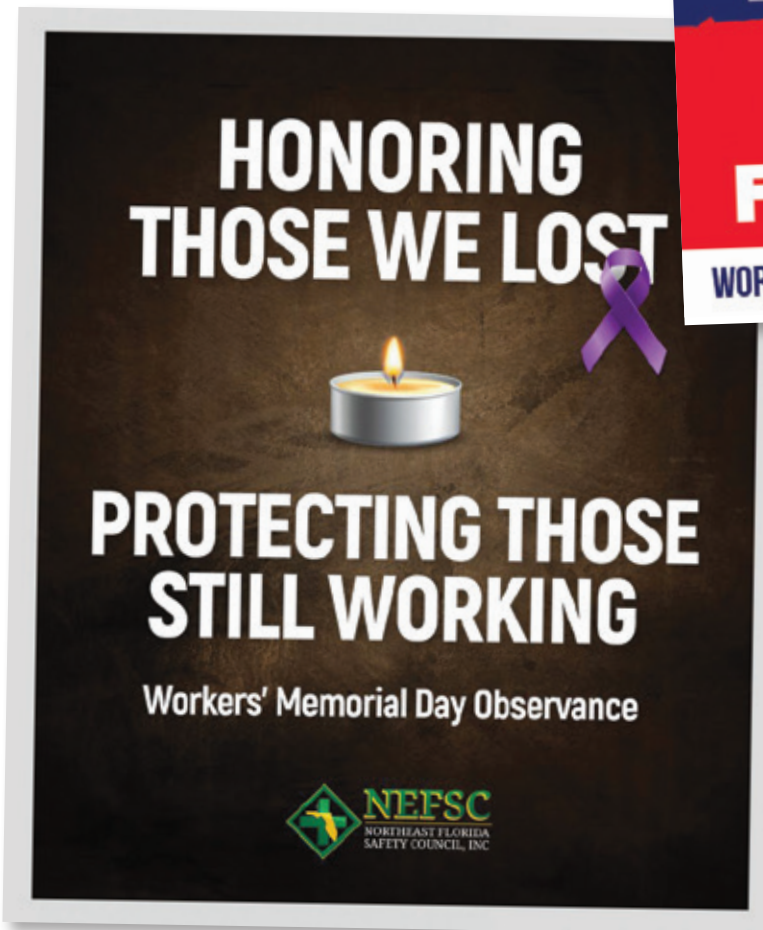
Men and women who have died or been injured on the job are honored each year at Workers Memorial Day observances around the country – a sad reminder that despite progress much remains to be done.

“Losing more than 5,000 people in a year to preventable accidents and unsafe circumstances simply is not acceptable,” said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi in remarks tied to the April 28 memorial event. “We must insist that employers and government do more to protect workers and their families when loved ones are killed or injured.”

Union leaders warn that the anti-regulatory agenda of President Donald Trump – and proposed cuts to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) – could put workers even more at risk.

“Instead of working for stronger protections, too many Republican politicians in Washington, including the Trump administration, are trying to roll back common sense regulations that enable workers to return home safely to their families,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

Action is essential, said Teamsters General President James Hoffa – especially in regard to truth-telling “whistleblowers” who warn of workplace danger and then pay a price.



“Hundreds of workers are fired or harassed by their employers each year simply for voicing job-safety concerns or reporting injuries,” Hoffa said. “Whistleblower and anti-retaliation provisions are not adequately protecting workers who try to exercise their legal rights to speak out on workplace safety issues.”

Since enactment of the Occupational Safety and Health Act in 1970, hundreds of thousands of lives have been saved by increased workplace standards, analysts say. But, as BLS statistics show, significant danger remains. According to one estimate, 150 workers die every day from job-related injuries and illnesses.

“All workplaces – including those in our own print industry – can pose a danger if not carefully regulated,” Tedeschi said. “Union members should tell elected leaders they want more protection where they work, not less.”

In Workers Memorial Day comments, Hoffa vowed to push for badly needed improvements.

“We need to join hands to seek stronger safety and health protections and better standards and enforcement, Hoffa said. The IBT leader quoted legendary labor activist Mary Harris Jones, widely known as Mother Jones: “Mourn for the dead and fight like hell for the living.”

‘Pro-Employer’ Court Snuffs Class Action Rights

A conservative U.S. Supreme Court majority again narrowed workplace protections with a ruling that prohibits non-union personnel who have signed employment agreements from acting together for mutual protection.

The high court decision this spring in a case called “Epic Systems v. Lewis” means workers cannot access existing labor law but must use employer-controlled systems to address workplace inequities, according to GCC/IBT attorney Peter Leff.

“For over 80 years, the nation’s labor laws have allowed all workers to band together to protect their rights,” Leff said. “Now a 5-4 pro-employer Supreme Court says that certain non-union workers no longer have those rights.”

Complaining that they were underpaid, workers at Epic Systems, a Wisconsin health care firm, claimed the National Labor Relations Act gave them the right to file a class action lawsuit but the court held individual contracts signed by employees supersede the nation’s labor laws.

Writing for the majority, Neil Gorsuch, a right-wing favorite appointed to the bench with great fanfare last year by President Donald Trump, said arbitration laws are intended to help businesses avoid steep court costs and “must be enforced as written.”

Analysts and top media outlets blasted the decision – one of several recent Supreme Court rulings that put workers at a disadvantage – and so did GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi who called the ruling “outrageous” and proof that Trump’s court pick was a payoff to conservatives and big business.

In an editorial under the headline, “The Supreme Court Sticks it to Workers, Again,” the New York Times portrayed Gorsuch as a deluded elitist seriously out of touch with reality. Bloomberg legal commentator Noah Feldman said the court’s decision made sense only “if you lived on the moon.” Atlantic magazine said the 5-4 ruling “could weaken work-



Neil Gorsuch, a conservative favorite appointed to the Supreme Court by President Donald Trump, wrote an ‘outrageous’ decision limiting ability of many non-union workers to act together.

place protections—and the justices on both sides knew it.”

A vigorous dissent from Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said the National Labor Relations Act prohibits employers from forcing workers to give up rights even if they had to sign onerous agreements at the time of employment.

“The Court ignores the reality that sparked the NLRA’s passage: Forced to face their employers without company, employees ordinarily are no match for the enterprise that hires them,” Ginsburg wrote.

Tedeschi said the opinion was exactly the sort of dividend the GOP, and Trump, expected when Gorsuch advanced to the court after Congressional Republicans refused to even consider President Barack Obama’s nomination of Merrick Garland, a judicial moderate.

“All that talk about making America great again and lifting

up the little guy means nothing if you’re sabotaging working people with conservative court appointments and agency heads who favor big business,” Tedeschi said.

A few days after the Supreme Court decision in the Epic case, Trump again showed disregard for worker rights by signing executive orders making it easier to fire federal employees and diminishing the role of their unions.

Trump’s action directs federal agencies to seek limitations on the grievance-arbitration procedure related to terminations – a worrisome prospect, according to Leff.

“Once again, Trump showed that his claims of being for working people is all talk, no action,” the union attorney said. “This time by trying to make it easier to fire federal employees without cause.”

Trump’s action also limits the amount of government time federal employees can spend on union duties to no more than 25 percent and requires union members to pay rent for using space in federal buildings. Another Trump order shortens the length of performance improvement periods during which a problem worker cannot be fired to 30 days. Previously the number of days allowed for improvement was 60-120.

“This is more than union busting — it’s democracy busting,” J. David Cox Sr., national president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the largest federal employee union, said in a statement, according to the Washington Post. “These executive orders are a direct assault on the legal rights and protections that Congress has specifically guaranteed.”

Trump, who campaigned as a populist friend of ordinary Americans, is engaged in a “massive bait-and-switch” operation that puts his own supporters at risk, Tedeschi said.

“Union people who voted for Trump believing he’d give workers a break got swindled,” Tedeschi said. “Hopefully, they’ll remember the double-cross when November mid-term elections roll around.”

'We Can Get Things Done'

Continued from page 1

The online site Labor News Up to the Minute reported: "Since the 'Red for Ed' movement started in Arizona, teachers have filled social media with pictures of vermin-filled classrooms and tattered textbooks, improvised air conditioners and globes showing a Soviet Union and two Germans."

The protests are working, with governors yielding to pressure and granting raises. And word of their success is spreading, as more teachers explore the option of protesting to get what they feel they have long deserved.

"I think it's given people a sense that if we pool our resources and we are united and we demonstrate solidarity we can get things done," said Mark Cooper, GCC/IBT Local 727-S member and president of the South Central Iowa Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO.

Meers and Cooper both said that the protests could spark a larger movement with public and private sector unions working toward the same goals.

"It's promoted more solidarity between the private sector and the public sector unions," Cooper said. "The biggest assault on workers has been against the public sector unions. We felt that animosity for a number of years in the private sector. Hopefully, we can build on this."

While red-state workers rallied, the pro-labor push reached Washington. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) introduced the Workplace Democracy Act, an ambitious proposal – sure to be opposed by Republicans – that would end right-to-work around the country and provide a number of other union safeguards.

Endorsed by the IBT, Sanders' measure – introduced in the House by Wisconsin Democrat Mark Pocan – was hailed by Teamsters General President James Hoffa as way to "expand the middle class" and also drew praise from GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi.

"We know Republicans sadly will not back the Workplace Democracy Act but this is a



Teachers in red states ignored years of anti-union propaganda and may be the leading edge of a reformist movement that could herald a resurgence for organized labor. 'It's promoted solidarity,' said Iowa GCC/IBT member Mark Cooper. 'Hopefully, we can build on this.'

common sense proposal that deserves serious consideration and the backing of every union member," Tedeschi said.

Experts say there are signs that anti-union sentiment encouraged for decades by right-wing politicians is beginning to ebb and that strikes in conservative parts of the country may be the leading edge of a reformist movement.

"This is a grassroots uprising made up of people who have done what you were supposed to do to achieve the American dream—they got an education, many of them advanced degrees—and yet in the last 30 years or so, the bottom has been cut out from them by the legislatures," Annelise Orleck, a Dartmouth history professor, told the business magazine Fast Company.

Meers said teachers could prompt a larger movement for change by linking with their co-workers: custodians and bus drivers. That partnership could be a preliminary step toward galvanizing public sector workers to join hands with the private sector.

"I'm thinking they're smart enough to know now that we're all in this thing together," he said.

Zachary Dowdy is a Newsday reporter and editorial unit vice president of Local 406-C, Long Island.

'Common Sense' Proposal that Doesn't Stand a Chance

It has an impressive name and a list of important labor reforms, but the Workplace Democracy Act has about as much chance of surviving as a tax bill that soaks the rich.

Introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont), the proposal is sure to be ignored by President Donald Trump and Republicans on Capitol Hill despite frequent claims by the GOP that working Americans are a top priority.

The measure, sponsored in the House by Rep. Mark Pocan (D-Wisconsin), has drawn support from a number of labor-friendly Democrats, including senators Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York.

Teamster General President James Hoffa backs the bill and so does GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi who said the measure was a "balanced, common sense approach to workplace fairness."

Another measure, this one proposed by Democrats as part of their "Better Deal" campaign, also would strengthen union rights. Like the Sanders initiative, it stands little chance of passage but advances principles labor leaders consider essential.

The Democratic plan, called the Freedom to Negotiate Act, creates a mandatory mediation and arbitration process to aid progress toward a first contract, bans state laws that hamper organizing drives and protects workers against "coercive captive audience" meetings at which management attempts to undercut the union message, among other features.

Sanders told the Washington Post he knew there was little hope his "Workplace Democracy" initiative will prevail with Republicans in control – "literally zero," one expert said – but wanted to prompt a national conversation about the role of unions especially at a time when unemployment is low but wages show only modest gains.

Recent polls show a shift in public attitudes toward organized labor – unions earned a 61 percent approval rating, the highest in 15 years – and Sanders told the Post his bill "is saying the American people believe that unions are a positive force for our economy."



Initiatives by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) and Congressional Democrats have little chance in GOP-controlled Washington but could prompt an important discussion about the role unions play in protecting the middle class.

In order to exert that kind of influence, unions must prevail.

The Workplace Democracy Act seeks to assure the future of organized labor by repealing right-to-work provisions of the 1947 Taft Hartley Act, a move that would nullify so-called right-to-work statutes in 28 states.

Leaders have said for years that no threat to union survival is more profound than regressive "right to work for less" laws that give anti-labor employees the option of ducking union dues while benefiting from contract negotiations and protections.

In addition to revising Taft-Hartley, Sanders' proposal would allow union organizing by sign-up cards – essentially implementing the proposed Employee Free Choice Act that has been stalled for years in Congress – and prevent companies from foot-dragging on a first contract in an effort undercut the bargaining process

Employers would be unable to classify non-

management workers as "supervisors" to avoid overtime pay if the democracy act passed. Unions would gain the right to conduct secondary boycotts and picketing – targeting companies that do business with an employer involved in a labor dispute – and strengthen the Obama-era "persuader rule" demanding that companies reveal contacts with union-busting consultants.

In a press release, Sanders cited figures well known to labor movement officials: Union workers earn 26 percent more, on average, than non-union workers. They are half as likely to be victims of health and safety violations or of wage theft; 18 percent more likely to have health coverage; and 23 percent more likely to have either an employer sponsored pension or 401(k).

"If we are serious about reducing income and wealth inequality and rebuilding the middle class," Sanders said, "we have got to substantially increase the number of union jobs in this country."

What Kind of ‘Friend’ Puts Workers at Risk?

Workplace injuries claimed more than 5,000 lives in 2016, according to latest government figures.

Shocking.

So is this:

In a broad-based report, the AFL-CIO says as many as 60,000 workers die each year from occupational diseases.

As we note on Page 4 of this edition, union members and labor leaders attend Workers Memorial Day events every April to recall the thousands killed and injured. That’s how bad things are.

You’d think a White House that claims a special bond with ordinary Americans would be alarmed and trying to make the shop safer.

The opposite is true.

Tough health and safety regulations imposed during the eight Obama years are under siege.

In his endless attempt to obliterate any evidence that Barack Obama once held the nation’s top office, Donald Trump is unraveling regulations and cutting the budget for government oversight.

Here are a few of the most infuriating anti-worker White House actions, as noted in the AFL-CIO analysis, “Death on the Job: The Toll of Neglect”:

President Trump and hardliners like Environmental Protection Agency chief Scott Pruitt want two safeguards scrapped for every new rule initiated. The administration killed an order requiring employers to keep accurate injury and illness records and another demanding companies disclose violations before securing a federal contract.

Making America Great Again? By proposing to slash the Labor Department budget by more than 20 percent? Cutting safety research



by \$135 million? Weakening the standard for beryllium – a potential cause of chronic lung disease – at construction and maritime sites? Undercutting Occupational Safety and Health Administration standards on workplace violence, infectious diseases and safety management?

The list goes on. And on.

It’s a joke: A President who brags endlessly about support from working class voters now puts those very Americans at risk with an anti-regulatory agenda favored by big business.

A joke, but workers aren’t laughing. They are coughing, fainting, getting sick and dying.

The situation is sad, but not surprising in view of Trump’s labor history.

As a private real estate developer Trump had a questionable record with unions and was known in New York for squeezing every last penny out of even small-time contractors.

Nevertheless, President, Trump loves to buddy-up with labor leaders for White House photo ops and advertises himself as the worker’s best friend.

Really? Let’s see him prove it.

Phony promises about bringing back millions of manufacturing jobs, firing up the nation’s steel mills and reviving a coal industry that experts say can’t compete with natural gas and renewables won’t do the trick much longer.

If Donald Trump and his agency chiefs want to honor working class Americans they should strengthen safety rules and halt the attack on vital, life-sparing regulations.

A real friend of workers would not let them put their lives at risk every time they show up at the job. ■

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Point of View BY ROBERT REICH

‘Rise Up’ Against the Rip-off Of ‘Trickle Down’ Economics

How to build the economy? Not through trickle-down economics. Tax cuts to the rich and big corporations don’t lead to more investment and jobs.

The only real way to build the economy is through “rise-up” economics: Investments in our people—their education and skills, their health, and the roads and bridges and public transportation that connect them.

Trickle-down doesn’t work because money is global. Corporations and the rich whose taxes are cut invest the extra money wherever around the world they can get the highest return.

Rise-up economics works because American workers are the only resources uniquely American. Their productivity is the key to our future standard of living. And that productivity depends on their education, health, and infrastructure. Just look at the evidence.

Research shows that public investments grow the economy.

A recent study by the Washington Center for Equitable Growth found, for example, that every dollar invested in universal pre-kindergarten delivers \$8.90 in benefits to society in the form of more productive adults.

Similarly, healthier children become more productive adults. Children who became eligible for Medicaid due to expansions in the 1980s and 1990s were more likely to attend college than similar children who did not become eligible.

Investments in infrastructure—highways, bridges, and public transportation—also grow the economy. It’s been estimated that every \$1 invested in infrastructure generates at least \$1.60 in benefits to society. Some research puts the return much higher.

In the three decades following World War II, we made huge investments in education,



health, and infrastructure. The result was rising median incomes.

Since then, public investments have lagged, and median incomes have stagnated.

Meanwhile, Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush’s tax cuts on the top didn’t raise incomes, and neither will Donald Trump’s.

Trickle-down economics is a hoax. But it’s a convenient hoax designed to enrich the moneyed interests. Rise-up economics is the real deal. But we must fight for it. ■

Robert B. Reich is Chancellor’s Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and senior fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. He served as Secretary of Labor in the Clinton administration and was named one of the 10 most effective cabinet secretaries of the 20th Century by Time magazine. He has written 15 books, including the best sellers, “Aftershock,” “The Work of Nations” and “Beyond Outrage,” and, his most recent, “The Common Good,” available in bookstores. He is a founding editor of the American Prospect magazine, chairman of Common Cause, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and co-creator of the award-winning documentary, “Inequality For All.” Reich is s co-creator of the Netflix original documentary, “Saving Capitalism,” which is streaming now.

Trade Wars ‘Easy?’ We’ll See

President Trump said trade wars are good and easy to win. Now he is finding there are apt to be casualties on both sides and winning isn’t so easy, after all.

If he had checked, Trump would have known we took a beating the last time stiff tariffs were imposed. That was in 2003 when President George W. Bush slapped penalties on imported steel. The decision cost 200,000 American jobs.

But Trump is a careless and uniformed leader. On the campaign trail, he told admirers he was ready for trade war with China and European allies, too, if necessary.

He said he was going to hit the Chinese with \$100 billion in tariffs on things like cheap steel and aluminum but, in turn, the Chinese warned they would not buy American soybeans and other agricultural commodities. Beijing also hinted it might scrap plans to buy Boeing airliners and instead spend their billions on Airbus jets built overseas.

If the Chinese don’t buy our agricultural products, heartland farmers – who mostly voted for Trump – could turn against the GOP in November’s midterm elections. And if Boeing loses a big Chinese contract, it won’t just be the Seattle coffee house crowd that howls but companies up and down the supply chain.

And what about a possible shortage of cheap Chinese steel and aluminum – how would that benefit the U.S. economy?

Beer companies say the domestic aluminum supply will not keep up with the demand for cans. Car makers say they need imported steel to keep plants productive.

With U.S. companies howling, Trump’s treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin said the administration would delay tariffs. But soon enough Trump overrode Mnuchin – the tariffs were back on -- and the question remains whether the President has the faintest idea of what he’s doing.

There’s plenty of reason for doubt.

Congress was shocked, for instance, when Trump sought relief for ZTE, the Chinese telecom giant banned from the U.S. market after doing business with North Korea and Iran. Republicans sought to keep ZTE sanctions in place despite Trump’s wishes and headline writers said the President was trying to “Make China Great Again.”

What was Trump thinking?

It’s not clear but news agencies reported that China recently pledged \$500 million for a project in Indonesia that included Trump-branded hotels, resorts and golf courses.

Once again, the President who promised to drain the swamp seems only to have plunged into the deep end. ■



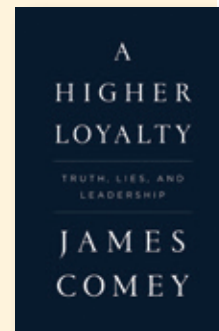
All the Best

Print

A Higher Loyalty: Truth, Lies, and Leadership

James Comey

Say what you will about the former director of the FBI, James Comey can write. His runaway best-seller grabbed most headlines for the author’s insider account of meetings with President Donald Trump but Comey is an astute observer – he once thought of being a reporter – and natural story teller. Comey, whose firing by Trump prompted appointment of a special counsel to investigate possible collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign, reveals pivotal moments in his own life (as a teenager, Comey once was held hostage in his own home by a gunman) and manages to deal with lofty issues of integrity and honor without sounding like a Sunday preacher. Trump loyalists consider Comey a law-breaker and rogue. Ardent backers of Hillary Clinton still insist Comey’s handling of Clinton’s email probe cost her the election. Comey’s book makes a persuasive case that he faced difficult choices dispassionately and with a sense of loyalty to neither Republican nor Democrat but his country, above all. *Flatiron Books, \$17.99, Amazon.com*

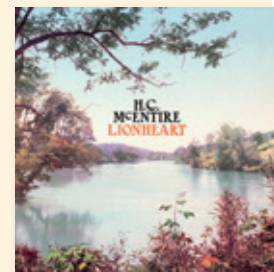


Music

Lionheart

H. C. McEntire

There’s a terrific country-rock band out of North Carolina called Mount Moriah with an equally impressive lead singer, H. C. McEntire. On her first solo album, McEntire delivers one fetching tune after another in a voice that will remind some of Jennifer Warnes and others of Norah Jones – at once soft and strong, and with a deep current of small-town soulfulness. The hymn-like beauty of “A Lamb, A Dove,” and her melancholy recollection of times past in “Red Silo” --“back when this whole town smelled like tobacco, back when we thought this would last forever” – show McEntire’s assuredness and sensibility. Heart of a lion, maybe. Voice of an angel, for sure. *Merge Records, \$10.79, Amazon.com*



Video

Dunkirk

Christopher Nolan, writer/director

In late spring, 1940, the German war machine threatened to wipe out a contingent of 400,000 Allied troops – Belgian, French, Dutch and 200,000 members of the British Expeditionary Force – trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk in northern France. Waters of the English Channel were too shallow to allow a rescue with large vessels. But in one of the most remarkable of all World War 2 episodes, most of the troops were saved by a flotilla of civilian boats and smaller naval ships – a historic undertaking code named “Operation Dynamo.” Director Christopher Nolan captures the fear, chaos and triumph in a film that serves as a reminder of the nobility and courage of ordinary people and the power of common purpose. *Warner Home Video, from \$15.99, Amazon.com*



Internet

Lawfare.com

With endless White House assaults on the U.S. Justice system, intelligence service, FBI and office of the special counsel looking into Russian collusion, Americans need solid reporting and reliable analysis to contend with the torrent of deception and phony “facts” raining down daily on the body politic. Lawfare examines vital issues of national security, cuts through the hype, brings sanity to public discussion and offers shelter from the storm. Long live truth.



Guest Spot

BY RALPH MEERS AND EDDIE WILLIAMS

Quest for Racial Justice Never Ends

There is a new civil rights museum and memorial in Montgomery, Alabama, a couple hours southwest of Local 527-S, Atlanta, where we work.

As a story on Page 14 of this edition notes, the Legacy Museum & National Memorial for Peace and Justice reminds us of hard-won social progress but also of a time when our black brothers and sisters were harassed, terrorized and, too often, killed by white lynch mobs.

More than 4,000 lynchings took place from the late 1800s to 1950 and the Montgomery museum asks us to look at the past honestly, pay respects to those who suffered, and vow to work hard for a more just society.

For southerners like us, the call for reconciliation has special meaning. For union leaders, the campaign for equal justice is never ending.

And that’s why we are proud to represent the GCC/IBT and our colleagues at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The IBT was an early champion for minority and women’s rights. In the 1950s and 60s, the union backed civil rights groups and had a close working relationship with Martin Luther King.

One brave Teamster family member, Viola Liuzzo, wife of a Detroit business agent, was murdered in Alabama while doing support work for the famous 1965 Selma-to-Montgomery march.

As union organizers, we have not faced that sort of danger. But there are times when it is clear we are not welcomed. And, years ago, there were more than a few tense moments when white and black union reps from 527-S visited plants in the Deep South as a team. We kept on coming, though, and we always will.



Equality and fair play are basic union principles. By definition, unions are civil rights organizations.

This is an important idea. We are part of a great tradition. We have stood up for working, men and women of all races for more than a century. We have won the contracts that guarantee economic security and allow members and their families to reach full potential.

Isn’t that what equality is all about – making sure everyone has a chance to make the most of their opportunities? Assuring there are no artificial barriers to advancement and wiping out the threat of prejudice?

The Montgomery museum – in the heart of Dixie – gives us a reason to reflect and recommit. And not just southerners. All Americans should be part of an endless civil rights campaign.

That’s what we do in the union movement – and what makes us proud. ■

Ralph Meers is president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta. Eddie Williams is president of 527-S and the North American Specialty Conference.

Labor Facing Many Challenges but Dele

By Fred Bruning
Graphic Communicator

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA – TECHNOLOGY IS DISRUPTING THEIR INDUSTRY. Print plants are closing across the country. Anti-labor sentiment dominates Washington. The “populist” President is mowing down workers’ rights and – no surprise – management thinks it has the upper hand.

Worry and woe?

Not at the 60th meeting of the North American Newspaper Conference where delegates embraced, celebrated their unflagging spirit of solidarity, vowed to persevere and – most important – support one another in good times and bad.

“This is not a conference,” NANC recording secretary Jim Earley told nearly 100 delegates and guests from 23 locals in the United States and Canada at the Hilton Scottsdale Resort. “It’s more like a family reunion.”

NANC vice president John Heffernan was equally upbeat.

“I love this – don’t you?” he asked as the June 3-6 conference hosted by Local 16-N, Philadelphia, and District Council 9 drew to a close.

The crowd cheered. “Yes!”

Eddie Williams, president of Local 527-S, Atlanta, said: “We should be proud. Sometimes we have to toot our own horn because no one is going to do it for us.”

But these were savvy union pros not inclined to kid themselves.

Surviving industry-wide turmoil, political opposition and an emboldened corporate sector would take fortitude – and plenty of it.

“Prayers are answered by putting your feet on the ground,” said Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, as preamble to an opening day invocation.

And it turned out Meers was doing just that – by running as a Democrat for state representative in Georgia. (See story Page 10.) “As labor leaders, we can’t afford to just sit back,” Meers said.

The role of members is vital, too – and sometimes overlooked.

International representatives Phil Roberts and Nick Caruso said leaders must emphasize the importance of individual commitment.

“Tell your members that we want to involve you in the decisions that affect your lives,” Roberts said.

There is always something to learn, said Caruso – “no matter how good or experienced you are.”

Effective leadership depends on strength and humility, union officials know. “Don’t assume you have all the answers,” Roberts said.

For leaders and members, the pace of change can seem daunting. No one has all the answers.

Technology continues its relentless march – benefiting some and leaving others by the wayside.

The Information Age allows extraordinary opportunity, but brings disruption, too. In the print trade, and many other “legacy” industries, the future is unclear.

Richard Maresca, a financial planner with the firm of Atalanta Sosnoff who helps



FRED BRUNING/GRAPHIC COMMUNICATOR

As NANC meeting came to a close, officers were sworn in – a final statement of solidarity. Front row, left-right, Richard Montesano, Louis Nicosia, Steve Ryan, Michael LaSpina; back row, Patrick Sullivan, Kevin Toomey, James Earley, John Heffernan, Chris Rotchill. Toomey is secretary-treasurer; Early, recording secretary; Heffernan vice president. Others are regional representatives.

unions and union members make sound decisions, told delegates artificial intelligence – “AI,” as it is known – would continue to threaten employment.

Robots are remarkably versatile – some can even remove snow from driveways and mow the lawn, Maresca said – and innovations in the booming health care sector are startling.

Enlisting technology as an ally is the trick, Maresca said. “This is a tremendous revolution,” he said. “How are you going to benefit?”

In the 21st Century, unions are called upon to keep pace with innovation while continuing to provide financial security. The stakes are high, particularly in retirement years.

Larry Mitchell, executive director of the Teamster Members Retirement Fund, formerly the Inter-Local Pension Fund, and fund chairman Pat LoPresti, outlined the plan’s remarkable success since its inception in 1950.

“When members ask, ‘What has the union done for me lately?’ – this satisfies that question,” LoPresti said.

Mitchell and LoPresti urged more locals to subscribe, especially with uncertainty in the pension field. “You have to have an alternative,” Mitchell said. “You can’t wait for a bailout.”

With Donald Trump in the White House, unions face harsh realities, speakers said.

Trump is impulsive and unreliable, many critics say – a leader who serves his own interests first.

“He conned union people” with a pro-worker message during the 2016 campaign, said GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi.

Once in office, Trump backtracked.

Drain the swamp? That’s not how it looks to many in organized labor.

The White House has undercut workplace safety regulations, Tedeschi said, pro-

Freeman Cites Trouble Spots, Urges Political Awareness

Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Kurt Freeman delivered a rapid-fire rundown of tough issues facing the international GCC/IBT and its locals at the 60th North American Newspaper Conference – and assured delegates the union is working hard to counter the threats.

For example, Freeman said, Teamster colleagues and labor-friendly Democratic members of the House of Representatives were able to block a Republican effort to outsource almost all federal print products, a move that would have threatened jobs for some 300 union members at the U.S. Government Publishing Office.

“With the help of the IBT and Democrats on the House Committee on House Administration we were able to fight back against the legislation,” Freeman said.

Other trouble spots mentioned by Freeman:

- In Buffalo, New York, Cascades Containerboard Packaging is refusing to recognize Local 503-M of Rochester while collecting dues and holding the money in escrow. Local 503-M became the bargaining representative for workers after an administrative transfer.
- In St. Louis, Mulligan Printing wants to continue using the GCC/IBT label even though the contract between the firm and the local has expired.



Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President
Kurt Freeman

only get our members to vote, but to provide them with the facts so that they will vote right,” he said. “Everything we and the middle class stand for is at risk.”

–Zachary Dowdy

gates Upbeat at NANC 'Family Reunion'



posed a 20 percent pullback in the Labor Department budget, sliced millions out of safety research, allowed companies to keep labor violations secret and picked pro-management officials for cabinet posts, the National Labor Relations Board and federal courts.

"Hypocrisy," Tedeschi declared.

Killing unions is uppermost on the Republican agenda, and Trump is going along eagerly with the party's conservative, right-to-work agenda, Tedeschi said – a move that will come back to haunt the President.

"Without unions, this country is never going to be 'Great Again,'" Tedeschi said.

Political activism is essential – more so with crucial midterm elections coming up. Study the issues, Tedeschi said. Support labor-friendly candidates. Pay attention. The time is now.

"A lot of members don't care until it affects them and then it's too late," Tedeschi said. If Republicans keep control of government, Trump will be even more emboldened and unions are sure to suffer. "This is very, very important," Tedeschi said.

From the floor, Mike Huggins, a GCC/IBT international representative, said, "We need two Labor Days – one in September and the other on Election Day. If we lose in November, we're done."

Union secretary-treasurer/vice president Kurt Freeman also sounded an alarm. "Shame

on us if we don't get out and vote," Freeman said. "This affects us and our families."

On the campaign trail, Republicans are sure to tout the major tax cut pushed through last year.

Analysts have been warning Americans not to fall for the hype. In the view of many analysts, the GOP plan is an outrageous concession to big business and the rich.

"It gives fractions of pennies to most people and dollars to companies," said Maresca, the union-friendly financial adviser, in an interview. Hard working Americans will benefit little, he said. "They'll get crumbs."

The NANC conference had emotional moments.

President Joe Inemer presented a plaque to Ralph Meers for years of outstanding union service.

A similar award was intended for Jim Sherlock of Local 1-L – but presentation was delayed by a mishap that sent Sherlock to the hospital.

Sherlock fell on hotel grounds and required surgery. But the next day he was well enough to accept the plaque at his hospital bedside and send thanks back to the conference. Friends said the main concern was that Sherlock, a passionate golfer, had missed a day on the links. He'd soon be back, they predicted.

Another tribute came on the second day of the conference – and precisely as planned.

John Heffernan and NANC leaders – and then the full hall – saluted President Tedeschi for his service to the international union and North American Newspaper Conference with a slide show and remarks from Mike LaSpina, president of Local 406-C, Long Island, Tedeschi's home local, and 406 secretary-treasurer Lou Nicosia. (See story Page 10.)

"This is your life," Heffernan said to Tedeschi, who was NANC president from 1980-2000. "We want to honor George while he is still vibrant, still flying all over the country and still right here – no posthumous dedication," Heffernan said.

At the podium, Tedeschi looked over the rows of delegates – trusted friends for many years. "This is something you don't forget," he said. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

Then he told delegates to get to work – organizing, serving the membership and community, becoming politically aware and active.

A former Marine, Tedeschi referred to the grit and determination of U.S. armed forces and said union leaders must demonstrate the same resolve.

"We expect the military to never quit," he said. "You are the military, too – the fighting army of the American workers."

The cause is noble and mission clear, Tedeschi said. Never quit. Carry on.

Suicide: 'Even the Strongest'

GCC/IBT Organizer Rick Street is known for straight talk – no matter the subject.

At the NANC meeting in Scottsdale, Street confronted a particularly painful matter.

His colleague and dear friend, organizer Rickey Putman, killed himself in December, Street said.

Putman's death left family members and union associates bewildered and heartbroken.

Street said the shocking news should serve as a call to action.

"If you think that anybody is feeling down" show concern, Street said. "Sometimes, it's just hearing that somebody cares."

People in despair often do not seek help, Street said. Loved ones should be mindful of warning signs – hopelessness, impulsive and aggressive tendencies, a history of trauma or abuse, a previous suicide attempt, job loss, financial setback, a failed relationship, among others.

He gave the number of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-TALK or 800-273-8255. Encourage anyone in distress to call, Street said.

"Just say, 'look, if you're having a problem or whatever and you need somebody to talk to, call this number,'" Street said.

His advice was important and timely.

Recent suicides by high-profile personalities – fashion designer Kate Spade and chef and television travel host Anthony Bourdain – came as the Centers for Disease Control reported that suicide rates have increased in nearly every state and nearly 30 percent nationally between 1999 and 2016.

Putman's death at age 47 astonished all who knew him, friends and family said.

He was considered one of the union's most successful organizers and hailed by GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi as "great man" with enormous potential. "He was our future," Tedeschi said.

Myth and misinformation often make candid discussions of suicide difficult, said Putman's sister, Robin Cottner, of Hillsboro, Missouri.

"It's such a taboo subject – that you're weak or selfish," she said. "Rickey was none of those things. This can happen to the strongest one in your family."

The best way to honor Putman is by gaining knowledge of suicide and being mindful of the threat, Street said.

"Instead of having memorials for Rickey, let's save a life."

– Zachary Dowdy



NANC OFFICERS

Elected by acclamation at the NANC meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona, were:

Vice president:

John Heffernan,
Local 2-N, New York

Secretary-treasurer:

Kevin Toomey,
Local 3-N, Boston

Recording secretary:

James Earley,
Local 13-N, Detroit

(Two-year terms)

EASTERN REGION REPRESENTATIVES:

Michael LaSpina,
Local 406-C, Long Island

Louis Nicosia,
Local 406-C, Long Island

Patrick Sullivan,
Local 3-N, Boston

WESTERN REGION REPRESENTATIVES:

Richard Montesano,
Local 432-M, San Diego

Steve Ryan,
Local 543-M, Omaha

CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE:

Chris Rotchill,
Local 100-M, Toronto

(Representatives serve one-year terms)

Tedeschi Tribute: 'Something I Won't Forget'

SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA – Why wait?

As planning for the 60th NANC meeting reached its final stage, conference vice president John Heffernan suggested another item for the agenda.

"Let's give George a tribute," he told colleagues. "Let's do it now."

NANC officials agreed – and work on a presentation honoring GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi got rolling.

Tedeschi, 78, who served as NANC president from 1980 to 2000 when he was elected international president of the union, was alive, well and taking care of business – at his office in Washington and in frequent travels around the country.

He deserved recognition – and not "posthumously," Heffernan figured. "Now."

Heffernan rounded up photos and background material. On the second day of the NANC meeting, Heffernan hailed Tedeschi as one of organized labor's "great leaders" and "the backbone of the international."

On a large screen, photos of Tedeschi appeared – including a couple from days when the GCC/IBT leader had hair, or a reasonable facsimile.

"This is your life," Heffernan said.

Praise came from Tedeschi's home local, 406-C, Long Island, where Tedeschi recently helped negotiate an impressive severance package for union members displaced by the company's decision to outsource production to the New York Times.

"It's been a privilege and learning experience working with you," said Mike LaSpina, 406-C president.

Lou Nicosia, 406-C secretary-treasurer, said Tedeschi demanded only excellence from officers.

"You are professionals," he told us," Nicosia said. "Act like it." Nicosia said he was grateful for Tedeschi's dedication and loyalty. "He was always there for us. Thank you, George."

Surprised by the tribute, Tedeschi looked and listened – and waited his turn to speak.

"I really appreciate this," he said. "A lot of the work we do as union leaders never gets recognized. This is something you don't forget."

As the tribute concluded, Tom Donnelly, former president of Local 100-M, Toronto, went to a microphone and said he wanted to add his praise for Tedeschi.

But first Donnelly asked: "Is he retiring?"

"No!" Heffernan said. "That's the idea!"

– Fred Bruning



'You are the backbone of the international,' NANC vice president John Heffernan, far left, told GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi, second left. Also celebrating Tedeschi's career were Lou Nicosia and Mike LaSpina, officers from the president's home local, 406-C, Long Island.



A true Teamster down to his t-shirt, Tedeschi greeted delegates in Scottsdale and expressed gratitude for their commitment. 'A lot of the work we do as union leaders never gets recognized,' he said.



Tom Donnelly, former president of Local 100-M, Toronto (left photo), asked "Is George retiring?" (Answer: He's not.) NANC delegates, including Mike Desola (right photo), another colleague from Local 406-C, gave Tedeschi a standing ovation. 'I really appreciate this,' Tedeschi said.

PHOTOS BY FRED BRUNING/GRAPHIC COMMUNICATOR

Meers Running for Georgia Seat to 'Protect our Values'

By Dawn Hobbs

Special to the Communicator

After serving 50 years as a GCC/IBT local president in Atlanta, Ralph Meers just can't seem to settle into retirement. Instead of taking it easy, he's preparing for political combat and running for a seat in the Georgia House of Representatives.

Meers, a Democrat, wants to employ the skills and labor expertise gained as the long-time leader of 527-S in advancing a statewide agenda that includes better workers' compensation coverage, expanded Medicaid coverage and a push for affordable health care.

"The Republicans have destroyed all the good that the Democratic leaders had done," said Meers, 78, in an interview. "Duty dictates that I fight for our values and positive change."

Meers said his political priorities are consistent with those of the national Democratic Party: living wage legislation, immigration reform, tuition-free education at public universities, community colleges and technical schools, stricter gun control with mandated background checks.

He will not duck controversial issues, Meers said. And, he made clear, that means funding Planned Parenthood, supporting environmental measures to combat climate change, and seeking to overturn Georgia's right-to-work legislation.

"There's a lot of law that needs to change in Georgia," Meers said. "We have so much that needs to be done."

The seat in Georgia State House District 17 became open when Republican Howard Maxwell announced his retirement. Opposing Meers in the fall election will be Martin Momtahan who describes himself on a campaign website as a "Christian, a Republican and operator of a small business who believes in the conservative values..."

Meers said he is prepared for the challenge he is likely to meet as a progressive candidate in a traditionally red state – though one, he notes, that many political



PHOTO BY PATRICIA MITCHELL/LOCAL 527-S



As a Democratic candidate for the Georgia House of Representatives, Ralph Meers, 78, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, said "duty dictated" that he enter the political arena.

observers say soon may turn "purple" as demographic changes bring more Democrats to the polls.

Taking on tough assignments is nothing new for Meers.

A union member since he was 17, Meers served 527-S as sergeant-at-arms, vice president and finally president, a job he held for more than a half-century until retirement earlier this year. As an organizer in the Deep South, he often met hostility – especially on occasions when he teamed with black colleagues.

Meers never relented, said GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi. "Ralph is as courageous and determined a union official as I have known," Tedeschi said. "I wish him the best of luck in his election bid."

Eddie Williams, who succeeded Meers as 527-S president, said his old friend and partner never gives up – and never "really retired." Now secretary-treasurer of the local, Meers still comes to the office every day, Williams said. "I tell him to take a day off, but he won't do it."

Meers will be effective in the state legislature because he has the skill set necessary to deal with both sides of the aisle, Williams said.

"He knows how to get things accomplished," Williams said. "He's used to dealing with opposite ends – union and management. It's the same thing dealing with Republicans and Democrats. He has the skills to sit across the table from anyone and negotiate what's best for the people."

Backed by the Georgia AFL-CIO and various GCC/IBT locals, Meers promised he would be a forceful advocate for organized labor and working people, generally. "We're ready to fight and to give it our all."

Meers estimates that it will take approximately \$25,000 to run a successful campaign. Donations may be sent to Ralph M. Meers, P.O. Box 2585, Dallas, Georgia 30132. For more information, check www.ralphmeers.com or email ralph.meers@gmail.com.

QUAD CITIES PLANT CLOSING POSES 'HARDSHIP' FOR FAMILIES

Another long-time GCC/IBT print shop has closed its doors, putting nearly 150 members out of work in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

The telephone book production plant shut down June 1 at Quad Graphics, where employees first became represented by the GCIU in 1993.

The future of many of the workers remains uncertain.

"Some places are hiring in the area, but they'd be making significantly less money," said Paul Grey, who has worked at the plant for 18 years as lead first press operator and served as chief shop steward for GCC/IBT Local 735-S. "And the closest print shops are two hours away. I'm sure this will be a hardship for some families."

Grey, who entered the print trade after high school graduation 38 years ago, was forced to take a job with Gatorade as a machine operator to be able to stay in the area near family and friends.

The closure came as no surprise, however, to workers who have experienced a slowdown in production since telephone directory use has plummet-



ed in recent years owing to the ease of directory searches through cell phone and home computer links to the Internet.

"The reduction of this volume of work has made it more attractive for the company to move the work to their mega plants in Wisconsin," Grey said. "This has absolutely no reflection of the quality of work performed here. As a matter of fact, we were so efficient that we produced the work faster than any other plant."

It will cost Quad Graphics more to produce the same work in Wisconsin, Grey said, "but the volume just didn't justify keeping our doors open."

The Hazleton plant opened around 1988 as North American Directories Company. It was then bought by Quebecor, Quebecor World and Worldcolor. In 2007, it was purchased by Quad Graphics.

Many are now concerned about the Quad Graphics union shop in Waukee, Iowa, that produces phone books.

"It is fully expected they will be next on the list to close," Grey said. "It's not a good situation."

NEW QUARTERS FOR ST. LOUIS LOCAL

In a sign of the times, dwindling membership and increased costs prompted leaders of GCC/IBT Local 6505-M to sell their long-time union hall and move into smaller digs.

They moved out of their 12,000 square-foot building in Maryland Heights, Missouri, to the 4,700 square-foot former Kinder-Care building about two miles away and opened doors for business in mid-May.

"It's a lot smaller because the size of the membership is smaller," said Mike Congemi, Local 6505-M president. "Our meeting room is smaller, but it's large enough to handle about 95 percent of our events. And the storage is better."

The former union hall was built in 1973 following a merger of several locals into GCIU 505. The spacious building had a large banquet room and auditorium that seated 500 people. After a remodel in the 80s, leaders began to rent the auditorium out to large groups. One of their primary clients was the Edward Jones investment firm until about 2010.

"We didn't have their big rentals any more and as the years went on, both the rental business and union membership went down," Congemi said. "We got to a point where we needed to make a decision before we got into financial trouble."

Congemi said sale of the larger building allowed Local 6505-M to buy smaller quarters with one-third of the proceeds, invest another third to generate revenue for taxes, insurance and maintenance and use the final third to boost the local's general fund.

CONFERENCES OFFER EDUCATION, INSIGHT

Two important conferences were held recently – the Midwestern states and the Eastern – and another, the North American Specialty Conference, is scheduled for early fall.

The specialty conference, scheduled for Sept. 20-22 in Atlanta, will focus on bargaining practices and networking.

"We'll be discussing different tactics we can use in negotiations," said Eddie Williams, who is president of the conference and Local 527-S. "We need to learn how to become better at this."

The Midwestern States Conference, held April 26-28 in Des Moines, Iowa, was attended by more than 30 delegates representing 16 locals.

"We offer more education than any other conference," said Steve Nobles, conference secretary-treasurer and president of District Council 3. "The information sharing is phenomenal."

In addition to round-table discussions on large employers, such as the Bemis Company, West Rock and Graphic Packaging, presentations on social media, workplace violence and suicide prevention were offered, as well as leadership training.

Another important conference took place May 6-8 in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

The Eastern Conference featured speakers from the GCIU-Employer Retirement Fund, Teamster Members Pension Fund (formerly the Inter-Local Pension Fund) and Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

"It's an entertaining and educational conference," said Harry Selnow, conference vice president and president of Local 612-M, Caldwell, New Jersey.

Selnow said speakers provided essential insights.

"Dean Burrell, an arbitrator-mediator who addressed the issue of sexual violence and workplace violence so much in the news these days, pension officials gave us an update on important issues and we got a briefing on health care concerns from an expert in the field," Selnow said. "I'm sure delegates took away a lot of information."

UNION LEADER WINS TOWN BOARD SEAT

Fed up with the hardline – and, at times, outrageous – approach of his Republican-dominated town board, GCC/IBT Local 503-M President Mike Stafford decided to run for office – and won.

This marks the first time since 1983 that a Democrat has won a town council seat in Henrietta, a suburb of Rochester, New York, with a population of about 44,000.

"I want to see the employees of the town treated fair and with respect," said Stafford, who joined the GCIU in 1983 and was elected as president of 503-M in 2003 after first serving as secretary-treasurer. "I also want to see that the residents are heard and not given a back seat to business."

Stafford attended his first town council meeting four years ago and walked out "appalled" at how the supervisor treated residents. But he kept going back – every meeting.

"As time went on," Stafford said, "the town supervisor went on to say racist, sexist and homophobic things to and about employees."

The alleged incidents resulted in headlines, grievances, EEOC charges and lawsuits that are still pending, Stafford said.

That scandal – combined with Stafford's concern that big business and developers had too much influence with the council – are the factors that spurred him into running for office.

Stafford initially ran in 2015 and lost, but made a successful bid for the seat in November 2017.

"I'm just trying to keep the town running efficiently," said Stafford, who was elected to a four-year term. "The old supervisor was spending money faster than it came in."

Issues he hopes to tackle include the encroachment of industrial lands onto agricultural lands and the lack of affordable housing in the area.

"We always hear we should elect union-friendly candidates," Stafford said. "How about electing union people?"

But he wanted to make clear: This is just his part-time job.

"My full-time gig is my union job – that's for sure," said Stafford, who noted he has no aspirations for higher office: "I love my union job and like working for the town."



Mike Stafford

Local Stops wants to hear from you. If your GCC/IBT local has been involved in organizing efforts, community outreach or volunteer work, e-mail a brief summary to reporter Dawn Hobbs at dawnhobbs@cox.net or call 805-284-5351.

Le soulèvement des États rouges est-il le signe d'un rebond des travailleurs syndiqués?

Par Zachary Dowdy
Collaboration spéciale au
Communicator

Pour les dirigeants de la CCG-FIT qui suivent attentivement les grèves des enseignants touchant des États entiers traditionnellement républicains, ce mouvement traduit sans doute une désillusion grandissante à l'égard des politiques républicaines antisyndicales et pourrait être un signe de plus que les travailleurs syndiqués s'apprentent à rebondir.

Selon eux, le nouvel esprit militant qui règne dans au moins six États depuis février – tous sauf un avaient voté pour Donald Trump lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2016 – pourrait être une bonne chose pour l'ensemble des travailleurs syndiqués.

« Cela fait un certain temps que je n'avais vu un tel changement positif, a déclaré Ralph Meers, président émérite de la section locale 527-S d'Atlanta. Tout ce qui pousse les gens à réagir apporte un peu plus d'espoir. Ces enseignants qui s'unissent lancent un signal fort. »

La vague de grèves a déferlé sur la Virginie-Occidentale, le Kentucky, l'Oklahoma, l'Arizona, la Caroline du Nord –des « États rouges » – et le Colorado, qui tend à voter démocrate. Les enseignants sont sortis dans la rue pour manifester massivement, avec des T-shirts rouges et des bannières portant l'inscription Red for Ed.

Les enseignants veulent être mieux payés – leurs salaires sont parfois tellement bas qu'il leur faut un deuxième

emploi pour joindre les deux bouts – mais ils attendent aussi des États qu'ils s'engagent à mieux équiper les élèves en matériel et à dépenser globalement davantage pour chacun.

Les enseignants de ces États ont un point critique en commun : ils sont payés une fraction du salaire moyen des autres diplômés universitaires. Selon l'Economic Policy Institute, leur rémunération, comparée à ceux qui sont passés par l'université, est de 63 pour cent en Arizona, 79 pour cent au Kentucky, 67 pour cent en Oklahoma et 75 pour cent en Virginie-Occidentale.

Comme l'a fait remarquer le site en ligne Labor News Up to the Minute, « depuis que le mouvement Red for Ed a été lancé en Arizona, les enseignants ont déversé sur les réseaux sociaux des photos de classes remplies de vermine et des manuels en piteux état, de climatiseurs improvisés et de globes montrant l'Union soviétique et deux Allemagnes ».

Les protestations donnent des résultats, car les gouverneurs cèdent à la pression et accordent des augmentations. Le succès obtenu commence à se répandre, car d'autres enseignants envisagent de protester pour obtenir ce qu'ils estiment mériter depuis longtemps.

« Je pense que les gens ont réalisé que si nous mettons nos ressources en commun, sommes unis et faisons preuve de solidarité, nous pouvons faire bouger les choses », a déclaré Mark Cooper, membre de la section locale 727-S de la CCG-FIT et président de la Fédération

des travailleurs du Centre-Sud de l'Iowa affiliée à la FAT-CIO.

Selon R. Meers et M. Cooper, les manifestations risquent déclencher un mouvement plus vaste de syndicats des secteurs public et privé poursuivant les mêmes objectifs.

« Cela a suscité une plus grande solidarité entre les syndicats des secteurs privé et public, a indiqué M. Cooper. La charge contre les travailleurs a surtout visé les syndicats du secteur public. Nous avons ressenti cette animosité pendant un certain nombre d'années dans le secteur privé. Heureusement, nous pouvons en tirer parti. »

Pendant que les travailleurs des États rouges s'unissaient, le mouvement pro-syndicat a atteint Washington. Le sénateur Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) a présenté le projet de loi sur la démocratie au travail, une proposition ambitieuse – à laquelle les républicains vont à coup sûr s'opposer – qui en finirait avec le droit au travail dans le pays et fournirait d'autres protections syndicales.

La mesure proposée par Sanders – appuyée par la FIT et introduite en Chambre par le démocrate Mark Pocan du Wisconsin – a été saluée par James Hoffa, président général des Teamsters, qui y voit une façon d'« agrandir la classe moyenne » et applaudie par George Tedeschi, président de la CCG-FIT.

« Nous savons que les républicains ne vont malheureusement pas appuyer la Loi sur la démocratie au travail, mais il s'agit d'une proposition censée qui

mérite d'être sérieusement prise en considération et soutenue par tous les syndiqués », a déclaré G. Tedeschi.

De l'avis des experts, le sentiment antisyndical encouragé pendant des décennies par les politiciens de l'aile droite commence à s'estomper et les grèves dans les parties conservatrices du pays pourraient être le début d'un mouvement réformiste.

« Il s'agit d'un soulèvement par la base de personnes qui ont agi comme il faut pour vivre le rêve américain – elles ont bien souvent fait des études supérieures – et qui se voient pourtant couper l'herbe sous les pieds depuis une trentaine d'années par les législatures », a indiqué Annelise Orleck, professeure d'histoire à Dartmouth à la revue d'affaires Fast Company.

Selon R. Meers, les enseignants pourraient déclencher un mouvement plus vaste en faveur d'un changement en s'unissant à leurs collègues : les concierges et les chauffeurs d'autobus. Un tel partenariat pourrait être une démarche préliminaire pour exhorter les travailleurs du secteur public à donner la main au secteur privé.

« Je pense qu'ils sont assez intelligents pour comprendre que nous sommes maintenant tous dans le même bain », a-t-il fait remarquer.

Zachary Dowdy est journaliste à Newsday et vice-président de l'unité de rédaction de la section locale 406-C à Long Island.

Las huelgas en los estados rojos pueden ser buena noticia para el sindicalismo

Por Zachary Dowdy
Especial para The Communicator

Los líderes de GCC/IBT están siguiendo muy de cerca las huelgas de los maestros de escuela en estados tradicionalmente republicanos, y dicen que este movimiento podría representar una creciente desilusión con las políticas antisindicales del partido republicano y ser también signo de que los sindicatos están en camino de recuperación.

Dicen que este nuevo activismo manifestado desde febrero en al menos seis estados, de los cuales todos menos uno votaron por el presidente Donald Trump en las elecciones de 2016, podría ser buena noticia para todos los trabajadores sindicalizados.

«Hace mucho tiempo que no he visto un acontecimiento tan positivo», dijo Ralph Meers, presidente emérito de la local 527-S basada en Atlanta. «Cualquier cosa que haga que la gente levante la voz nos trae un poco más de esperanza. El que los maestros actúen unidos es algo muy importante.»

La ola de huelgas ha sacudido West Virginia, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona y Carolina del Norte, que son todos «estados rojos», y Colorado, que tiende a votar demócrata. Los maestros se han declarado en huelga y han llevado a cabo manifestaciones masivas, vistiendo camisetas rojas y llevando pancartas con el lema «Red for Ed.» («Rojo por la Educación»).

Los maestros quieren aumento de sueldo, que en muchos casos es tan bajo

que necesitan un segundo empleo para sobrevivir; pero también que los estados se comprometan a proporcionar mejores materiales y equipo para los estudiantes y, en general, a aumentar el presupuesto por alumno.

Una de las quejas que han conducido a las protestas es que en esos estados la paga de los maestros es muy inferior al sueldo medio que reciben otros profesionales con títulos universitarios. El Economic Policy Institute informa que comparado con lo que ganan otros graduados universitarios, en Arizona los maestros ganan el 63 por ciento, en Kentucky el 79%, en Oklahoma el 67 por ciento y en West Virginia el 75 por ciento.

El sitio en línea Labor News Up to the Minute publicó la siguiente información: «Desde el principio del movimiento «Red for Ed» en Arizona, los maestros han inundado los medios sociales con fotos de aulas infestadas de insectos y libros de texto deteriorados, acondicionadores de aire improvisados y globos terráqueos tan viejos que mostraban la Unión Soviética y dos Alemanias.»

Las protestas están dando resultados y los gobernadores están cediendo a la presión y aumentando los sueldos. Y la noticia de su éxito está cundiendo entre los maestros que cada vez más consideran la opción de protestar para obtener lo que creen que llevan mucho tiempo mereciéndose.

«Creo que le ha dado quizás a la gente la idea de que si combinamos nuestros recursos y nos unimos y demostramos

solidaridad podemos conseguir nuestros objetivos», dijo Mark Cooper, miembro de la local 727-S de GCC/IBT y presidente de la Federación del Trabajo de Iowa Central, AFL-CIO.

Tanto Meers como Cooper han dicho que las protestas podrían dar origen a un movimiento más amplio en el que los sindicatos de los sectores público y privado trabajaran con los mismos fines.

«Han fomentado mayor solidaridad entre los sindicatos de los sectores público y privado», dijo Cooper. «El mayor ataque contra los trabajadores se ha dado en los sindicatos del sector público. En el sector privado hemos sentido esa hostilidad durante años. Esperamos poder aprovechar este impulso.»

La movilización de los trabajadores de los estados rojos hizo sentir en Washington la fuerza del impulso pro laboral. El senador Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) introdujo la llamada Workplace Democracy Act (Pro Democracia en el Lugar de Trabajo), una ambiciosa propuesta a la que sin duda se opondrían los republicanos, que marcaría el fin del «derecho a trabajar» en todo el país y aseguraría varias otras protecciones sindicales.

La medida de Sanders, presentada en la Cámara por el demócrata de Wisconsin Mark Pocan, fue secundada por IBT y mereció la aprobación del presidente general de los Teamsters, James Hoffa, como manera de «expandir la clase media», y la del presidente de GCC/IBT, George Tedeschi.

«Sabemos que, tristemente, los repub-

licanos no apoyarán el proyecto de ley Workplace Democracy Act, pero es una propuesta de sentido común que merece ser considerada y el apoyo de todos los trabajadores sindicalizados», dijo Tedeschi.

Los expertos dicen que hay señales de que el sentimiento antisindical fomentado durante décadas por los republicanos de derechas empieza a perder fuerza, y que las huelgas en las partes conservadoras del país pueden ser la vanguardia de un movimiento reformista.

«Esto es un levantamiento popular impulsado por gente que ha hecho todo lo que se supone que hay que hacer para conseguir el sueño americano, como terminar sus estudios, con titulaciones avanzadas en muchos casos, y sin embargo durante los últimos 30 años se ha visto desamparada por las legislaturas», dice Annelise Orleck, profesora de historia de Dartmouth, en la revista de negocios Fast Company.

Meers dijo que los maestros podrían inspirar un movimiento mayor a favor del cambio incorporando a sus compañeros los empleados de mantenimiento y los conductores de autobuses escolares. Esta asociación sería un paso preliminar para animar a los trabajadores del sector público a unir fuerzas con el sector privado.

«Creo que son inteligentes y se habrán dado cuenta de que estamos todos en el mismo bote», dijo.

Zachary Dowdy es reportero de Newsday y vicepresidente editorial de la local 406-C, Long Island.

Walter Martin, 'Passionate' Champion of Print Industry Workers

Walter L. Martin, a GCIU international representative who believed "unexpected" tactics often gave union negotiators an edge in labor disputes and told family members his mission was to ensure a "fair shake" for print industry workers, died Jan. 25 at his home in Russells Point, Ohio. He was 82.

Cause of death was related to a heart attack, according to Martin's younger son, Walter Lee Martin.

After finding work at a business forms company in Dayton, Ohio, Martin was initiated into Local 199-B of the International Brotherhood of Bookbinders, a GCIU predecessor union, in 1953. He served as assistant steward, sub-chapel chairman and chief steward before assuming duties as local vice president.

In August, 1968, Martin was appointed a GCIU international representative and served until retirement on Dec. 31, 1997.

"He loved his job," said his son, Walter, 41, who is known as Lee. "He had a sense of fairness of what was right and wrong and wanted to make sure the working man and woman got a fair shake and were not screwed over by companies. He was very passionate about that."

In an interview with the Communicator before retirement, Martin said he sometimes used the element of surprise in dealing with management.

He recalled a strike in Columbus, Ohio, during which bosses threatened to fire union members and hire replacement workers. In consultation with Gerard Deneau, then a GCIU vice president, Martin sent union members back to their jobs – "to attack from the inside rather than the outside."



Walter L. Martin

As he did with union members at shops around the country, Martin showed unfailing commitment to his wife and family, Lee Martin said. "He was always there for us."

Martin is survived by Walter Lee Martin of Hopewell, Ohio, an older son, Robert of Huntsville, Ohio; seven grandchildren; 13 great grandchildren; and a great-great grandchild.

By rounding up community support for the union, Martin and Deneau prevailed. "We were finally able to bring [the dispute] to a conclusion in something like two months," Martin told the Communicator.

Martin, known as a tough but cordial negotiator, emphasized that "mutual respect" was essential when dealing with company officials and "more often than not resulted in finding a satisfactory solution."

In retirement, Martin devoted time to family – Martha "Marty" Martin, his wife of nearly 65 years died in 2017 – and travel, fishing and outings on the pontoon boat tied up at the dock outside the Martins lakeside home.

His parents loved to be on the move, Lee Martin said, and often would "just get in the car" and head to a state park or anywhere "off the beaten path."

Zajac: A 'Tireless Leader'

Mike Zajac, a leading advocate for the GCIU and its predecessor unions in Canada for more than 40 years and "total professional" who viewed the labor movement as a transformative power that provided members the security and confidence to reach full potential, died April 14. He was 79.

Cause of death was related to a heart attack, said nephew Jeffery Zajac of Etobicoke, Ontario, the westernmost part of Toronto.

"He firmly believed in giving people – young and old – opportunities to make something of themselves," Jeffery Zajac said. "He saw leadership as a responsibility to ensure 'the team' felt included and recognized."

Mike Zajac was initiated into the Amalgamated Lithographers of America, Local 12-L, in September, 1958. He served as executive vice president of the Graphic Arts International Union, Local 211-M, Toronto, and, following mergers, president of GCIU Local 500-M from 1987-2003.

He was appointed to the GCIU general board in 1987 after board member Alan Wheatcroft retired and elected to full term the next year. Zajac continued to serve on the general board until December, 2003, when he retired.

"Mike was an outstanding officer," said GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi. "He saw unions as a force for good that guaranteed fair treatment and a secure future. In all ways, he was a total professional."

Zajac was serious about union business but often showed a playful side. "He was always looking for a way to make you laugh," Tedeschi said.

At a Canadian training program one year, Zajac gave tote bags to each participant – not the usual subdued blue or black, but shocking pink. "It was comical to hear delegates complain about the color and see those big guys carrying pink bags," Tedeschi recalled. Zajac was elated. "Now I can tell if they're sneaking out because I can see those bags," he said.

Away from his GCIU responsibilities, Zajac was an ardent follower of the Toronto Blue Jays baseball team and a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs of the National Hockey League, according to Jeff Zajac. Current events and politics in Canada and United States demanded his attention, too, and Jeff Zajac said his uncle also loved animals – particularly birds and horses – and had an interest in classic cars and antiques.

Mostly, though, Zajac devoted himself to the greater good – during his union years, and after. In retirement, he led a retirees social group, Jeff Zajac said, and served as president of a residents organization at Woodbridge Vista Care Community in Woodbridge, Ontario, a senior living facility north of Toronto.

"He was a tireless selfless, leader, who thought of the welfare of others before himself," Zajac's nephew said.

Zajac is survived by a brother, Ed; sister-in-law, Irene; nephew Jeffery and Jeffery's wife, and the couple's sons, Jazper and Julius; and another nephew, Jim Zajac, and Jim's wife, Lisa, and son, Henry.

Because Zajac delighted in hearing about the scouting adventures of Jazper and Julius, the family has asked that donations in his memory be made to Scouts Canada, Greater Toronto Council, 10 Kodiak Crescent, North York, Ontario, Canada M3J 3G5.



Mike Zajac

Northup: 'Integrity' Meant Most

By Dawn Hobbs
Special to the Communicator

From picking up hitchhikers – and their pet monkey – to keeping the books for a mom-and-pop donut shop at no charge, Steve Northup earned a reputation for being as thoughtful a neighbor as he was a talented and dedicated union official.

A labor and minority rights advocate for more than 50 years, Northup, who died April 1 at the age of 71, made his mark as a skilled GCC/IBT negotiator, generous colleague and advocate for low-income elderly in the Bay Area of San Francisco.

"His work over the years meant the world to him," said Jacqueline Bailey, one of Northup's two daughters. "He was passionate about fighting for workers up until he died."

Northup, former vice president of District Council 2 and GCC/IBT General Board member from 2004-08, suffered a heart attack in his home in Pleasanton, California.

Recipient of a GCC/IBT Honorary Lifetime Member Award, Northup began his union career in 1970 when he was initiated into Printing Specialties & Paper Products Union Local 653 in Modesto, California, which later merged with several others to form GCIU 777-M, Oakland.

Friends, family and union associates said Northup was a role model in the union hall and larger community.

"Steve was a mentor to me for more than 20 years and he was a huge asset to DC2 over the 50 years he was a member with Local 653," said Clark Ritchey, DC2 secretary-treasurer. "He was one of the good guys, someone you could count on."

Joe Rando, a DC2 business representative, said Northup was a big man – with a spirit to match. "He was kind of burly-looking, but always soft-spoken and a really gentle person," Rando said.

A favorite story involved Northup befriending a Vietnamese couple who owned a donut shop where he regularly stopped for coffee. When Northup learned the couple needed help on contracts and paperwork, he offered to help – without pay.

"That's the kind of guy he was – always available," Rando said.

It was a strong sense of community spirit



Steve Northup

that led Northup to serve on the board of Northgate Terrace, a union-backed, low-income apartment complex for the elderly in Oakland. He had been president of Northgate since 1995 and served as vice president for 25 years before that.

"Steve did a great job at Northgate," said GCC/IBT president George Tedeschi. "He cared deeply about the residents and gave generously of his time and expertise. We will miss him greatly."

The 200-unit Northgate complex, financed by the GCC/IBT in the late 60s, had been recently sold, but Northup made certain the new owner agreed not to evict long-time residents.

"The current residents were very concerned if we sold to a conglomerate that they'd turn it into condos and price them out," Northup said in an interview last summer. "We were very selective with who we wanted the buyer to be."

Julie Wang, who served on the Northgate board, said Northup always kept others in mind. "You learned from him -- how he treated people, his contributions, his wisdom."

Northup sought to pass those high ideals on to his daughters, Jacqueline and Nancy.

Jacqueline Bailey said her father instilled a sense of "integrity" and was an essential presence in their lives and was sure to make time for family outings despite a busy union schedule.

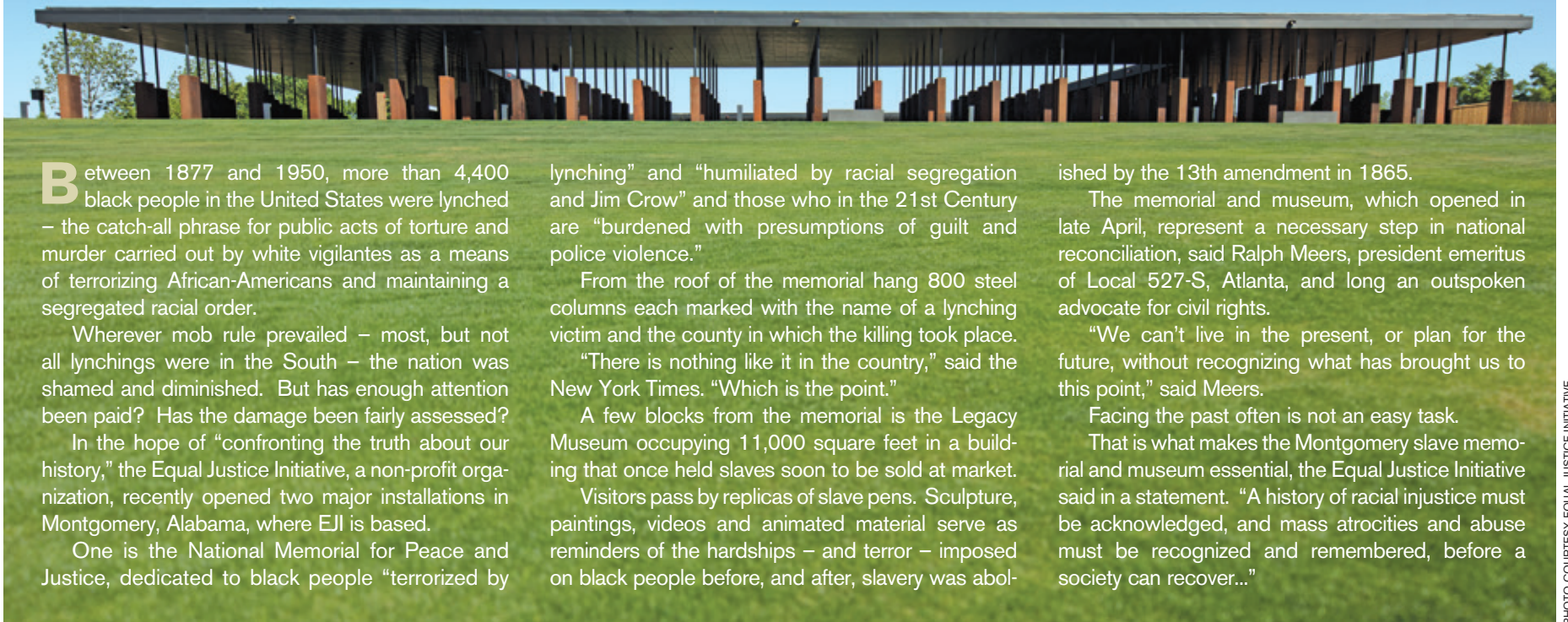
On one motor trip, Bailey said, Northup picked up hitchhikers who had an unusual traveling companion – "a monkey who fell in love with our Dad." There also were happy days digging clams, she recalled, and Labor Day picnics with union friends. "The list goes on and on."

Best summing up Northup's outlook on life is one of his own quotes, Bailey said: "May the work I have done speak for me."

Northup is survived by daughters, Jacqueline Bailey and Nancy Kostelny; sister, Elizabeth Dills; brothers, John and Nate Northup; and a granddaughter, Abigail Bailey. Northup's second wife, Kaaren, died in 2017 after 18 years of marriage.

Donations honoring Steve Northup can be made to the American Cancer Society, according to the family's request.

Montgomery Civil Rights Museum Asks Nation to ‘Confront the Truth’



Between 1877 and 1950, more than 4,400 black people in the United States were lynched – the catch-all phrase for public acts of torture and murder carried out by white vigilantes as a means of terrorizing African-Americans and maintaining a segregated racial order.

Wherever mob rule prevailed – most, but not all lynchings were in the South – the nation was shamed and diminished. But has enough attention been paid? Has the damage been fairly assessed?

In the hope of “confronting the truth about our history,” the Equal Justice Initiative, a non-profit organization, recently opened two major installations in Montgomery, Alabama, where EJI is based.

One is the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, dedicated to black people “terrorized by

lynching” and “humiliated by racial segregation and Jim Crow” and those who in the 21st Century are “burdened with presumptions of guilt and police violence.”

From the roof of the memorial hang 800 steel columns each marked with the name of a lynching victim and the county in which the killing took place.

“There is nothing like it in the country,” said the New York Times. “Which is the point.”

A few blocks from the memorial is the Legacy Museum occupying 11,000 square feet in a building that once held slaves soon to be sold at market.

Visitors pass by replicas of slave pens. Sculpture, paintings, videos and animated material serve as reminders of the hardships – and terror – imposed on black people before, and after, slavery was abol-

ished by the 13th amendment in 1865.

The memorial and museum, which opened in late April, represent a necessary step in national reconciliation, said Ralph Meers, president emeritus of Local 527-S, Atlanta, and long an outspoken advocate for civil rights.

“We can’t live in the present, or plan for the future, without recognizing what has brought us to this point,” said Meers.

Facing the past often is not an easy task.

That is what makes the Montgomery slave memorial and museum essential, the Equal Justice Initiative said in a statement. “A history of racial injustice must be acknowledged, and mass atrocities and abuse must be recognized and remembered, before a society can recover...”

PHOTO COURTESY EQUAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

Ruling Limits Contractor Scam

It’s a favorite front office trick – hire workers as independent contractors and beat the rules on overtime and minimum wage requirements.

But a recent California Supreme Court decision makes it tougher to take advantage of employees – at least in the Golden State, according to a story in the Los Angeles Times.

In order to treat a worker as an independent contractor, management must show the person is not being controlled by the employer, the Times reported.

For example, said the court ruling, a plumber temporarily hired to make repairs is an independent contractor. A person sewing dresses at home with materials and patterns supplied by a company must be considered an employee.

The ruling – against a delivery company that treated drivers as independent operators, not employees – was hailed by Julie Gutman Dickinson, a lawyer representing the Teamsters in the union’s ongoing efforts on behalf of truck drivers unfairly denied employee status.

“This is an effort to level the unequal playing field,” Gutman Dickinson told the Times. “Misclassified workers have been taken advantage of for decades.”

More Jobs? Root for Unions

President Donald Trump pledges to “Make America Great Again” – but what does that mean?

If Trump is talking about bringing significant manufacturing back to the United States, he should be rooting for organized labor.

That was the assessment of Louis Uchitelle, author and economics correspondent for the New York Times.

Until union membership began a steep decline three decades ago, Uchitelle notes, organized labor used its clout – including a threat of strikes – to halt plant closings and protect good-paying jobs.

When unions lost members, they surrendered influence, too – on Capitol Hill and at the bargaining table.

“As union membership declines, labor has less leverage to intervene in the management of a corporation or to galvanize the public into boycotting the products of manufacturers who put too many factories overseas...” Uchitelle says.

Though he does not urge strikes as a first option, Uchitelle says businesses often are slow to act without fear of a walkout.

Will organized labor ever regain the strength it once wielded? Uchitelle doesn’t offer an answer.

But GCC/IBT officials say at every opportunity there is only one way forward: Organize, organize, organize.

Chi Trib: Better Late Than Never

Editorial workers at the Chicago Tribune are following the lead of their blue collar brothers and sisters: They organized.

Affiliating with the NewsGuild-CWA are approximately 300 journalists at the Tribune and several affiliated community newspapers.

NewsGuild said a 46-member organizing committee collected authorization cards from the vast majority of eligible employees and asked ownership, once called the Tribune Company but now known as Tronc, to voluntarily recognize the bargaining unit.

At first, Tronc refused – throughout the paper’s 171-year history, Trib owners have been fiercely anti-union – and NewsGuild representatives prepared to petition Washington for a vote.

But in early May, the company relented and agreed to recognize what will be called the Chicago Tribune Guild.

According to a story in the Tribune, Tronc said there would be three units – one for the Trib and its associated “Redeye” publication; another for the Spanish language Hoy newspaper and suburban papers; and a last for Trib’s design and production studio.

“This is an extraordinary development that has evolved quickly,” organizers said in an email after the company pledged to recognize the Guild, according to the Tribune article.

Newsroom workers said a number of factors led to the union victory.

“Regular raises, cost-of-living adjustments and job security are non-existent,” organizers wrote online. “The cost of our health care has significantly increased. Our maternity and paternity policy is inadequate.”

Committee members also said the opportunities to “enrich” news coverage editorial product had been missed because “talented colleagues” were leaving for better jobs. In addition, they said, management had not taken sufficient steps to make certain the staff reflects “a racially and ethnically diverse city and state.”

The union organizing drive at Tribune, where press operators are represented by GCC/IBT Local 458M, District Council 4, follows successful Guild campaigns this year at the Los Angeles Times and three small-market news operations.

“There’s an uprising among journalists,” said NewsGuild President Bernie Lunzer. “A fight for the heart and soul of the profession.”



CHICAGO TRIBUNE GUILD



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In Memoriam

Listed here are GCC/IBT members for whom death benefits were paid, according to the Membership Department of the office of the GCC/IBT secretary-treasurer. Locals wishing to list members who died but did not participate in the death benefits program should contact the Graphic Communicator.

Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death
Death Benefit Claims Paid June 2016			
1L	Richard E Avvenire 02-10-16	600M	Edward A Thomas 09-23-15
1L	Howard Gold 04-23-16	600M	Joseph A Wholey Jr 04-25-16
1L	John P Perrone 04-18-16	612M	Martin E Cooke Jr 08-02-14
1L	Salvatore P Pino 03-04-16	619M	Robert Moberly 04-10-16
4B	Robert M Moss, Sr 12-03-12	747M	Francis D Emerson 04-15-15
4C	Robert J Evans 04-28-16	853T	Andrew J Suniga 06-25-15
4C	Ray R Shaak 05-09-16	999ML	James D Buening 05-13-16
14M	Phyllis J Novia 05-15-16	999ML	Arlene L Fritsche 02-26-16
16N	Thomas J Aaron 05-01-16	999ML	Mary J Hubbard 03-28-16
24M	Louis Ludloff 01-24-16	999ML	Roman E Porembski 04-28-16
24M	Dorothy A Wiegler 05-14-05	2289M	Rudolph R Garcia 05-13-16
72C	Harold E Vaden 04-12-15	2289M	Gerald D Hardy 04-07-16
77P	Elwyn T Long Jr 04-09-16	2289M	Richard W Kuschel 05-04-16
77P	Fredrick F Rutten 04-12-16	6505M	Floyd L Bauer 04-16-16
100M	Dusan Kruzliak 03-21-16	Death Benefit Claims Paid July 2016	
119B	Abraham Fishman 04-06-16	1B	June C Hill 03-10-16
119B	Rausuli Q Perez 05-04-16	1C	Lewis J Egnatovich 03-18-16
137C	Thomas J Kelly 05-05-16	1C	Donald F Kraft 05-19-16
241M	Anna Tyler 01-04-16	1C	Thomas E Powell 05-09-16
285M	Edward M Frohlich Jr 04-26-16	1L	Robert J Benz 05-07-16
285M	Vernon L Haslacker 03-04-16	1L	Lawrence J Browne 05-27-16
355T	Gene E Hoffman, Sr 02-14-16	1L	John T Murphy 02-02-16
367M	Billy D Mitchell 04-15-16	1L	Thomas A O'Brien 04-22-16
458M	John G Buzas 05-12-16	1M	Gary David Aho 05-23-16
458M	John A Cronin, Jr 05-12-16	2N	Edward R Perkins 05-11-16
458M	Willie J Lott 01-21-14	3N	James B Malnati 02-15-16
458M	Joseph G Orzechowski 05-09-15	3N	Francis A Montecalvo 06-15-16
458M	Daniel F Rubino 04-17-16	3N	Donald P Santini 07-23-15
458M	William G St Louis 03-30-16	3N	Oresto J Sinapi 05-23-16
458M	William G Walt 03-12-16	4B	Ralph E Miller, Sr 01-26-16
514M	Martha L Demike 02-08-16	4C	Edward J Quinn, Jr 06-02-16
527S	Charles Paul Morrison 04-29-16	8N	John Aquino 06-12-16
543M	Carl E Gauff 03-13-16	14M	Harry E Bender 05-22-16
546M	Nel E Darnall 04-19-16	14M	Thomas J Murray 05-26-16
546M	Richard L Robinson 12-19-12	14M	James O'Donnell, Sr 06-12-16
555M	Kenneth I Davis 10-14-15	16C	Harold J Bergmann 06-17-16
555M	Marcel Miron 05-01-16	16C	Donald R Cox 05-24-97
555M	Jacques Raymond 03-25-16	16C	Ernest H Emery 05-05-16
572T	George P Ostoich 04-28-16	16C	Robert H Maupin 04-16-16
577M	Robert L Franz 04-28-16	16C	Larry D McGinnis 05-11-16
577M	Rose M Gergel 07-28-15	16C	Kenneth E Taylor, Sr 06-08-16
577M	Robert J Liedtke 05-09-16	16N	Robert F Johnson 07-08-13
577M	James R Velk 06-15-14	17M	Robert R Kaiser 05-24-16
577M	Michael F Veloskey 03-29-16	24M	Russell E Herman 04-26-16
600M	Isabelle L Rania 03-01-16	27C	Ronald F Brill 04-18-16

Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death	Local	Date of Death
72C	Elmer C Kinsler 05-05-16	853T	Reno A Traversi 05-19-15	119B	John B Melendez 06-26-16
72C	John E Wells 06-07-16	999ML	Ardell H Alms 06-13-16	119B	William Cotto Ortega 01-18-16
77P	Jerome J Deschaine 06-14-16	999ML	William J Foley 06-13-16	119B	Joseph Schwartz 07-17-16
77P	Donald E Popp 06-07-16	999ML	Louise Oczowski 06-02-16	119B	Esther R Thompson 04-14-16
77P	Gerald D Rink 06-16-16	999ML	Rolland J Paulin 02-15-16	197M	Tony Dale Bittle 07-19-15
119B	Rose Defeo 06-10-16	999ML	William J Sunday 05-02-16	235M	James J Casey, Jr 01-18-16
119B	Antoinette Scro 05-28-16	2289M	William A Eckerle 03-26-16	235M	Lillian P Miller 12-08-15
119B	Charlie M Watson 06-09-16	2289M	Russell J Smith 05-03-16	285M	Fred J Hurley 01-03-16
128N	John R Gaal 06-07-16	6505M	Robert A Bokermann 05-29-16	285M	Clarence M Walls 06-16-16
128N	Glenn H Little 05-13-16	6505M	Nathaniel Bonner 12-29-15	388M	Lino Cesca 06-08-16
135C	Thomas B Sechrist 04-24-16	6505M	Mary L Dirks 05-11-16	388M	Marvin J Robinson 04-26-13
137C	Edward V Jimison, Sr 09-30-15	6505M	Joseph C Gorla, Jr 05-20-16	388M	Michael D Wakefield 04-22-16
206T	Paul E Zeleznik 03-20-16	6505M	David A Lindsey, Sr 05-26-16	444C	Brian S Cameron 03-01-16
235M	Bruce E Archer 06-06-16	6505M	Nancy L Liszewski 05-20-16	458M	Ralph C Arndt 06-12-16
235M	Robert C Palmer 05-12-16	6505M	Robert L Matthews 06-14-16	458M	George P Badame 06-25-16
241M	Joseph Pstrak 06-26-16	6505M	Edward L Parks 05-03-16	458M	Robert R Basile 02-29-16
388M	William C Brennan 05-12-16	6505M	Theodore J Schmidt 05-17-16	458M	Dennis Budzinski 07-16-16
388M	Roland C St Claire 05-17-16	6505M	Thomas L Traber 06-29-16	458M	Chester P Cocat 07-10-16
458M	Geraldine M Babula 02-27-16	6505M	Rosetta M White 06-20-16	458M	William C Fiedler 06-29-16
458M	William C Eberle 06-11-16	Death Benefit Claims Paid August 2016		458M	Leonard T Gerloski 07-03-16
458M	George W Houchin 04-30-16	1C	William E Snider Jr 06-24-16	458M	Vincent Gutierrez 11-21-15
458M	Patricia J Jenkins 05-03-16	1C	Albert J Stahly 08-26-13	458M	Arthur Olsen 07-07-16
458M	Louise A Kubinski 12-22-13	1L	Joyce A Cook 05-13-15	458M	David M Reyes 07-04-16
458M	Charles J Pirelli 05-24-16	1L	Jerry Gavarian 04-06-16	458M	Fulvio Ruzzier 07-22-16
458M	Donald A Prodehl 12-10-15	1L	John R Keating 06-14-16	458M	Eugene M Solem 07-01-16
458M	William G Sim 05-14-16	1L	Richard J Kennerknecht 07-26-16	458M	John R Webb 01-22-16
458M	Joseph C Skembare 05-07-16	1L	George E Liebl 05-18-16	458M	Violet M Zupancic 07-21-16
458M	Arthur Slomski 05-22-16	1L	Santo C Lopalbo 06-04-16	508M	William E Baker 06-27-16
458M	Melvin S Spejcher 06-05-16	1L	Nicholas L Maselli 07-04-16	508M	Jerry L Cross 07-29-16
458M	Dorothy E Terrell 04-19-16	1L	Leslie J Miller 11-09-14	514M	Gerhard A Huenecke 07-09-16
458M	Melvin M Timmons 05-10-16	1L	Walter W Sebert 06-17-16	527S	Wilma L Harper 07-03-16
458M	Grace L Turner 04-22-16	1L	Leo Serian 06-30-16	546M	Norman J Brindza 07-19-16
458M	Howard J Weber 05-17-16	1L	John J Sugrue 09-22-12	546M	Hershel D Epperly 04-17-16
458M	Richard G Wettour 05-13-15	1M	Robert A Bonacorda 06-27-16	546M	John F Fihe, Sr 04-30-16
503M	Scott D Green 03-30-16	1M	Daniel F Freeborn 05-25-16	546M	Duane E Law 06-21-16
508M	Ben Cole 03-24-16	1M	James E Sullivan 06-02-16	555M	Noel Bedard 06-22-16
508M	Meredith A Naayers 05-31-16	1M	Russell A Troiden 07-02-16	555M	Gordon E Empey 06-21-16
508M	Pauline M Pack 06-21-16	1M	Daniel J Wilharber, Sr 06-05-16	568M	Roger E Funk 03-07-16
508M	Alva L Port 05-02-16	2N	Robert D Ciocco 06-24-16	571M	Albert F Martin 05-24-16
508M	Frank N Vassolo 06-13-16	3N	Albert I Sinewitz 06-24-16	572T	William K Hardwick 07-01-16
518M	Ronald H Webster 05-11-16	3N	Robert F Sloane Jr 06-19-16	577M	Anne M Gerve 03-19-16
527S	Harold W Farmer 05-13-16	3N	Reynold Miller 05-15-16	577M	Wade Peterson 02-10-15
527S	Robert W Strickland 06-04-16	4C	William E Schwenck, Sr 07-01-16	577M	Robert E Rollins 05-20-16
546M	Duane R Ewbank 06-23-16	14M	William L Craig 06-30-16	577M	Patricia A Royce 04-14-12
546M	Raymond Konik Jr 05-17-16	14M	Leon P Wright 12-28-13	612M	Robert L Neuendorff 07-01-16
546M	Robert H Peters 06-14-16	16N	David Plewinski 04-29-16	735S	Robin J Gambone 06-28-16
555M	Yves Fortin 05-31-16	17M	Janice A Epling 06-12-16	853T	Alvin B Harrison 06-20-16
555M	Jean-Claude Lantin 05-14-16	17M	Clarence E Money 05-04-16	853T	Stanley H Hart 07-16-16
555M	Nicole Vaillancourt 01-21-16	17M	Lola P Pierce 06-14-16	853T	Joseph Nasowitz 05-19-16
568M	Ronald L Nickle 04-25-16	17M	James C Smith, Sr 06-06-16	853T	Charles Strong 07-06-16
572T	Lester H Grant 05-06-16	24M	Paul M Cervenak 06-17-16	853T	William R Wignall 06-26-16
572T	Rafaela E Soto 06-07-16	24M	Richard H Rastetter 06-11-16	999ML	Virgil W Blind 06-22-16
600M	Germaine A Chateaufort 06-16-16	24M	David E Bigelow Iii 05-26-16	999ML	Claude G Christensen 07-05-16
600M	James L Conlin Jr 05-29-10	28N	Richard A Grider 07-04-16	999ML	Carl T Fischer, Iii 07-20-16
600M	Renzo Franzini 03-03-16	72C	Charles R Armstrong 07-26-16	999ML	Helga M Opitz 07-15-16
600M	Warren E Garrison 05-03-16	77P	Susanne Kuhr 06-29-16	2289M	Robert J Ogdan 07-13-16
600M	Joseph A Getek 05-31-16	119B	Philip A Leone 07-16-16	6505M	Truman E Brewer 06-15-16
600M	Edward V Haroutunian 05-10-16	119B	Corrado Magi 06-26-16	6505M	David T Viggers 07-06-16
853T	Edson Y Lee 04-15-16			6505M	Jack K Whitnell, Jr 06-16-16
853T	Roy H Okumura 05-14-15				



2018 Teamster Women's Conference

Orlando, FL, September 16-18

The Teamster Women's Conference will be held in Orlando, Florida, this year and will feature workshops about organizing, rights on the job, leadership and more.

Over 1,000 rank and file members and elected leaders participated last year and we expect an even larger group this year.

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All participants should register at: <http://ibt.io/2018WC>
(Please make your hotel reservations by August 16)

