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Across Nation, Labor Activists Show Renewed Determination



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Acclaimed Film Recalls 'Haunting' Arizona Incident



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Labor Candidates Sweep into Office on 'Blue Wave'



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Leaders Say Dems Now Must Promote Issues Essential to American Workers



By Zachary Dowdy
Special to the Communicator

AS DEMOCRATS AND PRO-LABOR CANDIDATES GAINED DOZENS OF SEATS TO control the U.S. House of Representatives, GCC/IBT leaders said they hope lawmakers make headway on critical issues – health care, the environment, trade and infrastructure – and others matters affecting the working class that were either ignored or derailed for the past two years.

“I would like to see them concentrate on labor and especially health care,” said John Noone, president of GCC/IBT Local 241-M, Scranton, Pennsylvania. “I’d also like to see them work on the pension crisis.”

Noone, who leads a 120-member local, joined other leaders in celebrating the victories on the national level but he was just as excited about the results in the statehouse in Pennsylvania which retained its Democrat governor, Tom Wolf, a friend of labor.

“I was really happy with the results,” he said. “I think Pennsylvania did a good job, turned around a few seats.”

Pennsylvania, like several other states where GCC/IBT locals operate, experienced a “blue wave” anticipated by analysts who foresaw a backlash to the policies of President Donald Trump.

In fact, a significant portion of the union members who had voted for Trump in the 2016 presidential election might have had a change of heart after two tumultuous years, according to a Reuters-Ipsos study released in May that found the billionaire’s popularity had dropped 15 percentage points among union members from 62 percent to 47 percent.

continues on PAGE 8

Union Candidates Ran to Advance The 'Greater Good'



Devyn Denton, Local 226-M, Tulsa, was one of two GCC/IBT members seeking state office in midterms.

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PHOTO COURTESY DEVYN DENTON

'Let's Give a Helping Hand' To IBT Wildfire Victims Facing Long Recovery



PAGE 4

GEORGE TEDESCHI GCC/IBT PRESIDENT

Is Labor Headed In Right Direction? Signs Look Good

IT'S THE NEW YEAR.

Good health and happy days to all – hardworking members in the rank-and-file and tireless leaders at the local and national levels.

The GCC/IBT is a family – strong, united, forward-looking. In good times and bad, we pull together. That spirit of solidarity is what makes our union great.



But, as we enter 2019, it's worth asking: Where are we headed? For the union movement, in general, there are hopeful signs. Activism is alive around the country.

Even in the deepest conservative states, teachers and other public service workers are demanding a voice and putting elected leaders on notice that the status quo is not satisfactory. Fast food employees are organizing. The number of union members is up. Young people are showing renewed interest in organized labor.

And – what do you know? – the public is beginning to turn around.

The Gallup polling organization found that 62 percent of Americans approve of unions, up from 54 percent in 2013, and three-quarters of respondents in the 18-29 age group say they view organized labor “favorably.”

Here's a little more good news based on the midterm election of a couple of months ago:

More than 700 – yes, 700! – union members were elected at every level of government.

Four Teamsters won seats in their home state legislatures.

Two GCC/IBT folks also showed the courage to enter the political arena. Ralph Meers, president emeritus of Local 527-S, Atlanta, and Devyn Denton of Local 226-M, Tulsa, lost to Republican opponents, but they drew thousands of votes and argued for the union agenda on the campaign trail. Well done. We salute you.

Midterm elections were largely a victory for working people and their allies.

Democrats convincingly took back the House of Representatives, providing a check on the conservative policies of the Republican Party and often intemperate actions of President Donald Trump.

There are signs that many union members who favored Trump in 2016 are having second thoughts.

And why not? The Republican tax plan put little in the pockets of ordinary Americans. Environmental safeguards have been shattered endangering American families. The so-called “swamp” was not drained but merely re-stocked. Even health care protection for pre-existing conditions is under assault by the GOP.

But we shouldn't get stuck in the past.

Ahead, I see prospects for success.

Yes, unions remain under pressure, including ours. Technology is a serious challenge for print industry workers and that membership has been falling for years.

Still, we continue to negotiate admirable contracts at shops across the country with the good work of staff and local leaders. We emphasize organizing in an effort to bring more members aboard. Our new secretary-treasurer/vice president Kurt Freeman got up to speed immediately after the retirement of Bob Lacey. Kurt is an innovator with boundless energy and fresh ideas. He's been 100 percent productive since Day One. We're lucky to have him on the job.

In the end, though, nothing matters more than our outstanding individual members – the diligent, decent folks who work hard every day to support their families, give back to the community and proudly represent the GCC/IBT.

We made progress in 2018. This year, let's do it again. ■

OUTLOOK

JAMES P. HOFFA TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

Workers Sent a Message in Midterm Election

FROM COAST-TO-COAST, A HISTORIC number of hardworking Americans showed up and had their voices heard at the polls last November. And taken together, they made it clear that the status quo that has favored the powerful in government is no longer acceptable.

Whether it was the defeat of virulent anti-union GOP governors like Wisconsin's Scott Walker and Illinois' Bruce Rauner; the onslaught of inspiring victories by women candidates such as Gretchen Whitmer for governor of Michigan or Jacky Rosen for U.S. Senate in Nevada; or the retaking of the House of Representatives by Democrats, Americans have sent a message that lawmakers haven't been standing up for them. That has to change.

Not only did Teamster-backed candidates prevail at the top of the ticket, but it trickled down to the statehouse level as well.

Democrats flipped the Colorado Senate, Maine Senate,



Minnesota House, New Hampshire House, New Hampshire Senate and New York Senate yesterday and now have full control of government in Colorado, Illinois, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico and New York because of it.

Our own members helped lead the way, with key victories by Teamsters like retired BLET Division 391 President Jeff Kurtz in the Iowa House; Susan Martinez in the Nevada House; and David Dellosa and Steve Malagari in the Pennsylvania House, among others.

Too many elected officials have chosen to attack unions in recent years. But that's going to stop right now. Workers first proved in Missouri last August that terrible laws like so-called right to work can't be shoved through by elected officials against the will of the people. Yesterday's vote reinforces that position.

Hundreds of Teamsters mobilized across the country to get these new union-endorsed lawmakers elected. Now, the Teamsters stand ready to help chart a new course for this nation, one that prioritizes workers by advocating for better pay, respect on the job and a secure retirement. Let's get to work! ■



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Be Engaged, Aggressive and Lose the Winter Blues

SOMETIMES THERE'S AN EMOTIONAL SLUMP AT THIS TIME OF YEAR.

The holidays are over, winter looms, it's a long time before Opening Day at the local ball yard.

But for working people, January could mark the beginning of better times.



Democrats roared back into relevance, gaining control of the House of Representatives in November midterms with a promise to bring some sense of balance to Washington where Republicans and President Donald Trump have been unchallenged for two years.

In his post-election piece on Page 1, reporter Zack Dowdy says GCC/IBT officials are hopeful that Democrats will quickly adopt an agenda emphasizing health insurance, pension protection and labor rights.

The IBT devoted significant resources to help get out the vote and, as Dowdy says, Teamster General President James Hoffa is convinced the investment paid off.

"From coast-to-coast, a historic number of hardworking Americans showed up and had their voices heard at the polls,"

Hoffa said. "Together, they made it clear that the status quo that has favored the powerful in government is no longer acceptable."

The idea, said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi in his Page 2 "As I See It" column, is to be aggressive, engaged and forward-looking. Don't get "stuck in the past," Tedeschi said.

Unions are under pressure – nothing new there – but public sentiment seems to be swinging back in favor of organized labor and there is a vibrant spirit of activism in the air as we report on Page 4.

Even the woeful Supreme Court decision in the Janus "free rider" case may not wound public sector unions as deeply as anti-labor forces had hoped. A story on Page 10 indicates that in New York, for instance, fewer state employees than expected are dropping union membership – a sign that workers know who has their backs.

The long history of unions sticking up for ordinary people – and of powerful forces seeking to crush the labor movement – is powerfully re-told in a new movie called, "Bisbee '17."



As we recall in a Page 5 story, copper barons in Bisbee, Arizona, loaded nearly 2,000 striking miners – most immigrants – onto boxcars in 1917 and left them to languish in the desert. In an interview with the Communicator, director Robert Greene said the need for unions is as great now as a century ago. "We will always find value in coming together and speaking up for human rights and workers' rights," he said.

And the GCC/IBT is doing just that. Our Local Stops roundup on Page 11 highlights two outstanding contract victories – at the Los Angeles Times and Newark Star-Ledger – significantly upgrading pay and winning other benefits.

Negotiators were fair but fearless, said Pat LoPresti, president of Local 1-L, New York, in regard to the Newark settlement. "This is the stuff that makes members realize, 'I gotta' stay with the union.'"

COMMENTARY **JIM HIGHTOWER**

Fast-Buck Profiteering Puts 'Real' Journalism in Danger

A two-panel cartoon I recently saw showed a character with a sign saying: "First they came for the reporters." In the next panel, his sign says: "We don't know what happened after that."

It was, of course, a retort to Donald Trump's campaign to demonize the news media as "the enemy of the people."

But when it comes to America's once-proud newspapers, their worst enemy is not Trump – nor the rising cost of newsprint or "free" digital news on websites.

Rather, the demise of the real news reporting by our city and regional papers is a product of profiteering owners – not the families and companies that nurtured true journalism but the new breed of hucksters who've scooped up hundreds of newspapers from the bargain bins of media sell-offs.

The buyers are hedge-fund scavengers who know nothing about journalism and care less. They are ruthless Wall Street profiteers out to grab big bucks fast by slashing journalistic and production staffs, voiding benefits, shriveling news content – then declaring bankruptcy and moving on to plunder another town's paper.

By 2014, America's two largest media chains were not venerable publishers who believe that a newspaper's mission includes a commitment to truth and a civic responsibility but firms named GateHouse and Digital First Media, whose managers believe that good journalism is measured by the personal profit they can squeeze from it.

As revealed in American Prospect magazine, GateHouse



executives demanded that its papers cut \$27 million from operating expenses. Thousands of newspaper employees suffered that \$27 million cut in large part because one employee – the hedge fund's CEO – had extracted \$54 million in personal pay from the conglomerate, including an \$11 million bonus.

The core idea of the "civic commons" in the United States is that we are a self-governing people, capable of creating and sustaining a society based on common good.

But achieving it requires a basic level of community-wide communication – a reliable resource that digs out and shares truths so people know enough about what's going on to be self-governing.

This is the role Americans have long expected their local and regional newspapers to play – papers that



are not merely in our communities, but of, by, and for them.

A town's daily makes for a more robust civic life by devoting journalistic resources to truth telling.

But local ownership matters, as scores of our towns learned after the demigods of greed seized their papers and devoured assets.

For example, Digital First Media, a huge private-equity profiteer, snatched the St. Paul Pioneer Press, demanded a ridiculous 25 percent profit margin and cut the newsroom staff from a high of 225 journalists to 25!

Our right to a free press is meaningless if Wall Street destroys our community journalism. The good news is that many enterprising people are devising ways to rescue their newspapers. For more information, go to dfmworkers.org, the website of News Matters, a project of The NewsGuild-CWA which represents nearly 1,000 employees of Digital First Media.

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.

Spirit Renewed, Workers Press Demands

One Job Should be Enough.”

With that urgent message, Marriott workers in Boston – from bartenders to bellboys – hit the streets in hopes of forcing the company to treat workers with the same respect shown hotel guests.

“Many workers – including many unionized employees – struggle to live just above or below the poverty line,” said Steve Sullivan, president of Local 3-N, Boston, who has marched in solidarity with Marriott strikers. “This shouldn’t happen in the richest country on Earth. Every worker deserves a livable wage and quality affordable health care.”

The gutsy resolve of Marriott strikers in Boston and other cities is not an isolated demonstration of courage and conviction.

Around the country, experts say, there are signs that workers, and their unions, are showing a new spirit of resolve – and that the country is behind them.

A recent Gallup poll showed that 62 percent of Americans approve of unions, up from 54 percent in 2013. Particularly encouraging, said a report by the Pew Research Center, three-quarters of those in the 18-29 age group “view labor unions favorably.”

“I think we may have turned a corner,” said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. “Public opinion is on our side and young Americans are rejecting the anti-union views so often heard on the political right. We should take advantage of this moment and organize with more determination than ever before.”

There is ample evidence around the country that workers are shaking off years of complacency and adopting a more militant tone when demanding long-overdue concessions.

Teachers in otherwise conservative states – Oklahoma, Kentucky, West Virginia, among them – have struck for better pay and more classroom resources. Poorly paid workers in the fast food industry are pressing political leaders to boost the minimum wage. Union organizers report an upswing in interest, particularly among younger workers.

“People are worried about long-range economic security and realize that unions are essential to protecting the middle class,” said Kurt Freeman, GCC/IBT secretary-treasurer/vice president. “Our message is getting through because organized labor represents the best hope for a better future.”

Providing further evidence of an energized American working class is the decision of many union members to seek elective office.

In the GCC/IBT, Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, made a bid for the Georgia House of Representatives and Devyn Denton, of Local 226-M, Tulsa, ran for a House seat in the Oklahoma legislature (See story, Page 9). Randi Weingarten president of the American Federation of Teachers says 300 AFT members entered midterm contests. “We have a movement building,” Weingarten told the Christian Science Monitor.



Increasingly, employees across the country are making a case for better pay and conditions – and it looks like public opinion is moving their way.



Analysts say a reason for the re-energized work force may be the strong economy set in place by President Barack Obama and inherited by his successor, Donald Trump. With ample employment opportunities, workers may be less wary of standing up for their rights, experts say.

In addition, anti-worker action by the U.S. Supreme Court – the Janus “free rider” case, in particular – also may have animated workers. And union members may be encouraged by public support for their cause as indicated last year when voters in Missouri, a conservative state, rejected a right-to-work law that had been passed by the legislature.

Steve Sullivan of 3-N noted that when the local held a large rally outside the Boston Globe last summer more was accomplished toward a contract resolution for press operators than months of “contentious” negotiations.

“It’s an example that member mobilization and solidarity are keys to success,” said Sullivan. “My view on union ‘militancy’ is – ‘Hell, yeah. More please!’”

Union Seeks Aid for IBT Families Hit by Calif. Fires

Wildfires that devastated huge areas of California last year left thousands in despair – including many members of the IBT family.

Approximately 2,000 Teamsters under the jurisdiction of Joint Council 7 live in 2,600 square miles ravaged by the historic blazes – an expanse five times the size of Los Angeles.

At least 100 members lost their homes and many more are among the 52,000 displaced. The entire town of Paradise, where many Teamster members lived, was consumed by the inferno.

Recovery will be long and arduous and members are in great need of assistance, said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi.

“These are the times when we must show what union solidarity really means,” Tedeschi said. “I urge all GCC/IBT members and locals to give generously to our brothers and sisters in California who have been victimized by these terrible fires. They are struggling to put their lives together. Let’s give a helping hand.”

Donations can be made online to the Teamsters Disasters Relief Fund at <http://tdr.teamster.org/> or by mail. Send checks to: IBT Disaster Relief Fund, 25 Louisiana Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20001. The charity fund is a 501(c)3 and donations are tax deductible. ■



“I urge all GCC/IBT members and locals to give generously to our brothers and sisters in California who have been victimized by these terrible fires. They are struggling to put their lives together. Let’s give a helping hand.”

– George Tedeschi
GCC/IBT President



JARRED ALTERMAN/4TH ROW FILMS

Bisbee '17: Story That Shows How 'Labor Can be Crushed'

By Fred Bruning
Graphic Communicator

The men with white arm bands arrived and meant business.

Acting on orders of the local sheriff and corporate bosses, enforcers rounded up nearly 2,000 striking copper mine workers in their homes and marched them at gunpoint to a baseball field.

From there, the miners – mostly Mexican and European immigrants represented by the International Workers of the World, the “Wobblies” – were herded onto cattle cars in a grim foreshadowing of the Nazi purge of Jews a quarter-century later.

But this was not Hitler’s Germany in the early 1940s. It was Bisbee, Arizona, 1917.

The besieged copper miners – who were demanding better pay and working conditions – were not doomed to perish in concentration camps. But their fate was bad enough.

Carried over the Arizona border into New Mexico, workers were forced from boxcars and left in the desert. How many survived never was determined.

Over the years, what is known as the Bisbee Deportation has lost none of its drama – or power to prompt debate.

Touching on issues of immigration, police conduct and organized labor, the episode still summons strong feelings in Bisbee and has particular relevance to political debate in the United States more than a century later.

For documentary movie maker, Robert Greene, the Bisbee saga offered rich subject matter – a story that related as much to the present as the past.

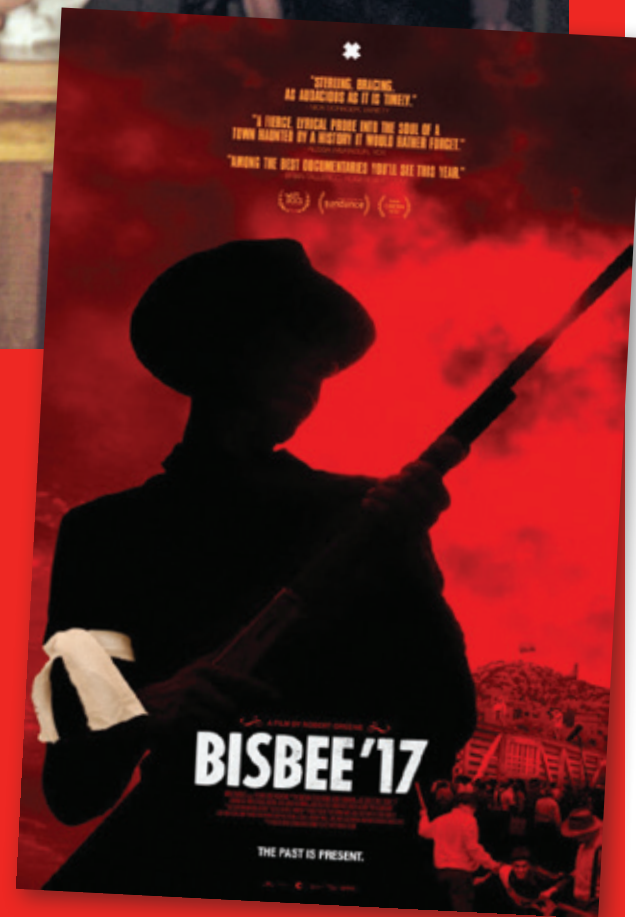
In 2016, Greene started work on “Bisbee ’17,” now a highly praised documentary that the New York Times hailed as a “haunted and haunting” film. “Every important thing this movie is about is still alive,” said critic A. O. Scott.

Greene’s idea was to “hear personal stories from families of deportees, company men, artists, historians and other locals and then work with them” to better understand “what many consider Bisbee’s darkest day.”

But he also saw powerful parallels to contemporary events, including attacks on workers’ rights that continue in the 21st Century.

“This is a story of how labor got crushed,” Greene told the Communicator in a telephone interview. “It’s hard to hear it happened in America.” But, said Greene, there is hope of a union comeback.

The director, who teaches journalism and film studies at the University of Missouri in Columbia, pointed to a number of encouraging developments: failure of a right-



to-work law in Missouri, an activist uprising by public school teachers in several conservative states, efforts by low-wage workers in service industries to press for a better deal.

“I think we are experiencing a resurgence,” Greene said. “We will always find value in coming together and speaking up for human rights and workers’ rights.”

The story of Bisbee a century ago – its harsh treatment of workers and immigrants at the behest of Phelps Dodge and other corporations – is a reminder of the divisive politics of 2018, and particularly the often intemperate tone of President Donald Trump.

Greene says he did not make the film because of Trump or his “disastrous immigration policies.” But Greene noted in an earlier statement, the Bisbee debacle shows “what potential calamities await us if we don’t heed the lessons of history.” ■



JARRED ALTERMAN/4TH ROW FILMS



ROBERT KOLODNY/4TH ROW FILMS

One-Party Rule is Over So What Happens Now?

Every new year begins with a sense of hope and urgency but 2019 promises to be especially eventful for union members – and the nation.

With Democrats regaining the House of Representatives in November midterm elections, working people can expect at least to get a fair hearing on Capitol Hill.

Republicans claim endlessly that Democrats are without ideas but that is an empty critique. Democrats have an impressive agenda. The real problem is that Republicans don't like anything on it and are quick to stand in the way of progress.

A short list of broad-based Democratic goals includes:

- Assuring health insurance for persons with pre-existing conditions under terms of the Affordable Care Act, lowering the cost of prescription drugs and containing price increases for health insurance, overall.

- Advancing voter reform legislation that would make registration easier, increase early voting and guard against tactics that, according to critics, are used to suppress voting.

- Lobbying reform that would give big money less clout in Washington.

On the labor front, here are Democratic priorities:

- Ban right-to-work laws nationwide because such measures drive down union membership and assure less pay and benefits for workers.

- End the practice of using replacement workers to subvert union goals when there is a strike.

- Limit the ability of management to undercut union drives by holding “captive audience”

meetings for the purpose of intimidating workers and smearing the union.

There is no assurance of Democratic success in any area, of course. An obstinate and highly partisan Republican majority still rules the Senate and Donald Trump is, at the moment, secure in the White House.

Trump is an exasperating and unpredictable public figure who often seems to have no understanding of the principles of governing – and allegiance only to himself.

When first in office, he made a show of cozing up to labor leaders. He doesn't do that much anymore. And why would he? Nothing he has done strengthens the union movement. He backs regressive legislation, supports anti-labor Republican candidates and is a cheerleader for the GOP's conservative agenda.

But now the time of one-party rule is over.

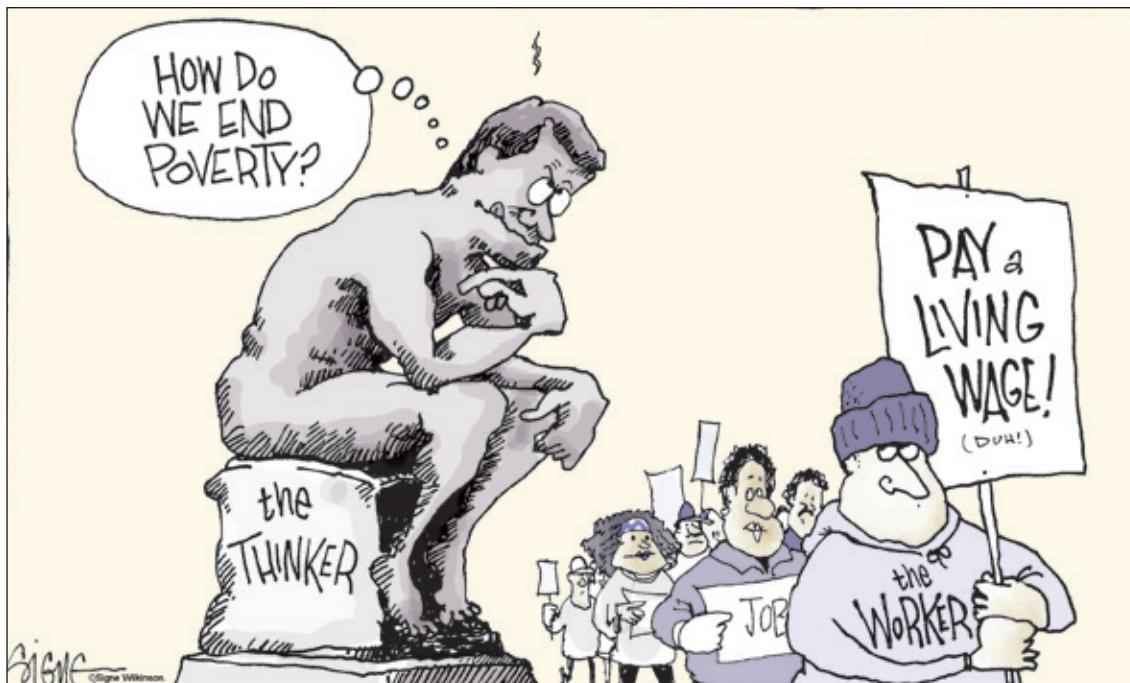
With impressive wins nationwide, Democrats regained House control and have put their Republican colleagues on notice that the high-handed GOP tactics employed in the first two years of the Trump presidency won't work any longer. Negotiation and compromise are back in style.

The Democratic House majority – a thrilling coalition that includes many new female representatives and minority group members – will be able to block the worst of Republican initiatives and advance measures that benefit ordinary Americans not just the corporate elite.

Of course, nothing will prevent Trump from being himself – from shaving the truth, insulting his opponents, promising the world and never delivering. And nothing is likely to stop the GOP from providing him cover.

Victories on Election Day – not only at the federal level but the state and local, too – have given Democrats a chance to counter the Republican agenda and confront Trump.

Voters helped restore a measure of sanity to Washington. Let's root for the friends of labor, tell them we're watching, and work hard to keep unions, and the country, going forward. ■



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Point of View BY ROBERT REICH

Boom Times for the Wealthy Is Sound of Silence for Most

I keep hearing that although Donald Trump is a scoundrel or worse, at least he's presiding over a great economy.

Really? Look closely at the living standards of most Americans and you get a very different picture.

Yes, the stock market has boomed since Trump became president. But it's looking increasingly wobbly as Trump's trade wars take a toll.

Over 80 percent of the stock market is owned by the richest 10 percent of Americans anyway, so most Americans never got much out of Trump's market boom to begin with.

The trade wars are about to take a toll on ordinary workers. Trump's steel tariffs have cost Ford \$1 billion so far, for example, forcing the automaker to plan mass layoffs.

What about economic growth? Data from the Commerce Department shows the economy at full speed, 4.2 percent growth for the second quarter.

But very little of that growth is trickling down to average Americans. Adjusted for inflation, hourly wages aren't much higher now than they were forty years ago.

Trump slashed taxes on the wealthy and promised everyone else a \$4,000 wage boost. But the boost never happened. That's a big reason why Republicans didn't campaign on their tax cut in midterm elections.

Yes, unemployment is down. But jobs are less secure than ever. Contract workers – who aren't eligible for family or medical leave, unemployment insurance, the minimum wage, or worker's compensation – are now doing one out of every five jobs in America.

Health care costs continue to rise faster than inflation. Trump's response? Undermine the Affordable Care Act.

Pharmaceuticals are also out of control. Trump's response? Allow the biggest pharmacist, CVS, to merge with the one of the biggest health insurers, Aetna, creating a behemoth with the power to raise prices even further.

Climate change is undermining the standard



of living of ordinary Americans as more are hit with floods, mudslides, tornados, droughts, and wildfires. Trump's response? Allow more carbon into the atmosphere and make climate change even worse.

Too often, discussions about “the economy” focus on overall statistics about growth, the stock market, and unemployment.

But most Americans don't live in that economy. They live in a personal economy that has more to do with wages, job security and the costs of housing, health care, drugs, education, and home insurance.

Instead of an “economic boom,” most Americans are experiencing declines in all these dimensions of their lives.

Trump isn't solely responsible. Some of these trends predated his presidency. But he hasn't done anything to reverse them.

If anything, he's made them far worse.

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, written 15 books, including the best sellers “Aftershock,” “The Work of Nations,” and “Beyond Outrage,” and, most recently, “The Common Good.” Reich is a founding editor of the American Prospect magazine, chairman of Common Cause, a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He is co-creator of the award-winning documentary, “Inequality For All,” and the Netflix original documentary, “Saving Capitalism,” which is streaming now.

Trump Economy: Not So Hot



The good 2018 economy was a carryover from Obama policies and President Donald Trump's unpaid-for \$1trillion tax cut giveaway to the 1 percent and corporations.

The tax-cut made consumers feel like they had more money to spend but it will be short-lived and the middle-class tax cut that Trump kept promising before the midterm elections seems to have disappeared along with the GOP majority in the House.

By the end of the year, the trade wars that Trump said were easy to win took a toll on the stock market which hates uncertainty and has become highly volatile.

So Trump now owns the 2019 and 2020 economies, which, like many things he has owned, don't look so good.

Multiple economic forecasts say growth will slow from 3.7 percent to 3.5 or lower this year, then drop off to about 2 percent in 2020 – not much to brag about for a guy who wants another term.

The huge increase in the national debt caused by the tax cut will also be a factor in slowing the economy, as will the Federal Reserve Bank raising interest rates to slow the economy.

The GOP thought they would pay for that tax cut by cutting Social Security and Medicare benefits but that won't happen with Democrats in charge of the House.

Tariff increases, which draw punitive action from other countries, amount to a tax on

American consumers and raise the cost of selling American goods abroad.

Chinese retaliatory tariffs have already had a negative effect on American agriculture and, according to the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, bankruptcies of family farms have increased

Steel and aluminum tariffs imposed on Mexico led to a 20 percent drop of cheese exports to our southern neighbor.

At the G20 meeting in Argentina, Trump and Chinese Premier Xi declared a temporary truce of sorts and Trump backed off a threat to raise the levy to 25 percent.

If the truce fails, American consumers will feel the pain.

The price of smart phones and other electronic products will jump – big time – and the non-partisan Tax Foundation says there could be a long-term loss of 300,000 American jobs.

When announcing Ohio and Michigan plant closings in November, General Motors cited \$1 billion in increased costs from steel and aluminum tariffs. As many as 8,000 white collar positions and 6,000 factory jobs were lost.

It is a peculiar way for Trump to repay the people in the Midwest who put him in office – and surely no way to get re-elected. ■

Guest Spot

BY SAM PIZZIGATI

Don't Be Afraid to Rattle the Rich

Tony Maxwell, a retired naval officer, was trying — without much success — to get a neighbor in Jacksonville, Florida, to vote in the midterms. The neighbor had no interest. "Voting," the young man declared, "doesn't change anything."

After a taking back the House of Representatives can Democrats reach that dispirited young man in Jacksonville?

That all depends on their eagerness to think big and bold and willingness to challenge the concentrated wealth and power that's keeping things from changing.

Democrats may have the House but right-wing Republicans will still control the Senate and have a like-minded pal in the White House. Over the next two years, getting any big and bold initiatives into law will be next to impossible.

But just pushing for innovative ideas could move us in a positive direction.

Just holding hearings on legislation that challenges the economic status quo would send all of America the empowering message that meaningful change can conceivably happen.

This sort of aggressive action would depart from the Democrats' sometimes cautious approach and hesitancy to offend wealthy contributors.

But fear of rattling the rich may be easing.

A number of leading Democrats with eyes on the 2020 presidential election — and the increasing size of the party's activist base — have advanced proposals that could help spark real change in who owns and runs America.

Among those ideas:

Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts is

sponsoring an act that would require corporations to set aside 40 percent of corporate board seats for directors elected by company employees. Corey Booker, the New Jersey senator, would hike capital gains taxes to finance a program improving the economic wellbeing of poor children. Legislation creating a tax credit for struggling families is on the agenda of Sen. Kamala Harris of California.

The new House Democratic majority could give exciting concepts like these an airing and debate.

And that majority's new freshman class — symbolized by the youngest woman ever to be elected to Congress, 28-year-old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of New York — certainly has the charisma to attract wide swatches of America into that discourse.

If all this action materialized, would large numbers of our politically dispirited sit up and take notice? We will never know unless we try. ■

Veteran labor journalist Sam Pizzigati co-edits *Inequality.org*, a project of the Institute for Policy Studies. His latest book, "The Case for a Maximum Wage," was published last year. This piece was abridged from the original distributed by PAI Union News Service.



All the Best

Print

Fear: Trump in the White House

Bob Woodward

Since Watergate in the 1970s, Bob Woodward of the Washington Post has been reporting about power, and its abuses, but perhaps never has one of his deeply researched works been this alarming. President Donald Trump emerges as might be expected — headstrong, provocative, impulsive, shameless and, too often, uninformed — and at the center of a wacky White House operation that Chief of Staff John Kelly called "crazytown." But of particular concern is Trump's notion of how to gain and exercise power. "Real power — I don't even like to use the word — is fear," Trump once said in an interview with Woodward and another reporter. Now the nation watches in dismay as the President puts that worrisome principle into practice on a daily basis. Always unapologetic, Trump complains that Woodward's portrayal is "fiction." Really? If we've learned anything in the last two years it's that, when it comes to Donald Trump, you can't make it up. *Simon & Schuster, 39.99*



Video

22 July

Paul Greengrass, director

With increasing evidence that right-wing extremism is on the rise worldwide — including, sadly, in the United States — this film by director Paul Greengrass demonstrates what can be the horrifying results. On July 22, 2011, an anti-immigrant zealot set off a bomb in a Norwegian city and then raided a progressive youth camp he considered an apt target. By the end of the day, 77 had died and the killer, Anders Behring Breivik, was proudly announcing to authorities his acts were merely the first stage of a coming conservative apocalypse. Greengrass tells the story unsparingly and with a sense of urgency. It's a chilling tale, taken from real life. The radical right is increasingly emboldened. Our job: Resist. *Netflix streaming.*

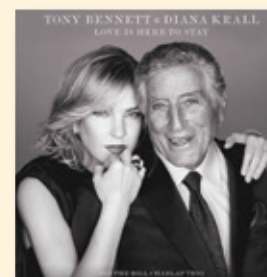


Music

Love is Here to Stay

Tony Bennett and Diana Krall

If there's room on Rushmore, let's consider Tony Bennett. At 92, the noble troubadour is still belting out favorite tunes from the American songbook — and doing it with style. Bennett never embarrasses himself — the voice won't do all it once did, and he knows it — but, harmonizing with the glorious Diana Krall (age, 53), he still delivers in the familiar and sophisticated fashion that has delighted audiences for decades. In these weird and tumultuous political times, let's hope that love is, indeed, "here to stay" — and Tony Bennett, too. *Verve. \$12.95, Amazon*



Internet

labor411.org

Want to buy products made right here in the good, old U.S.A. by union workers? Not so easy, right? Seems like everything in the discount outlets — not to mention upscale department stores — is manufactured overseas. The folks at Labor 411, a research organization that promotes union jobs and ethical business practices, have a plan. Their labor411.org website directs customers to merchants specializing in union-made products — everything from backpacks to bowling balls. Some 17,000 people use the directory, Labor 411 says. Join the crowd. Buy union!



'Buyer's Remorse' After Two Tumultuous Years?

Continued from page 1



"From coast-to-coast, a historic number of hardworking Americans showed up and had their voices heard at the polls," said Teamsters General President James Hoffa. "Together, they made it clear that the status quo that has favored the powerful in government is no longer acceptable."

Union members not only contributed to Democratic victories across the country – they ran for office themselves, and made an impressive showing.

According to a survey conducted by the AFL-CIO, at least 743 union members nationwide – including four from the IBT – were elected to public office, most prominently Tim Walz, a former high school history teacher and member of Education Minnesota who won the governorship in Minnesota.

Two GCC/IBT members entered the political arena – Ralph Meers, president emeritus of Local 527-S, Atlanta, and Devyn Denton of Tulsa Local 226-M. Both ran as Democrats for seats in the House of Representatives of their respective states and lost in heavily Republican districts but raised important working class issues.

"Ralph Meers and Devyn Denton demonstrated courage and commitment," said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. "They took a powerful message to voters and showed pride in their union and the principles of organized labor. We owe them thanks – and a hearty round of applause."

The Reuters-Ipsos study jibes with what Tom Trapp, secretary-treasurer of Rochester-based GCC/IBT Local 503-M has been observing on the national front.

"Some of those people who were Trump supporters are having buyer's remorse," he said shortly after General Motors announced the layoff of some 14,000 workers at several plants in the United States and Canada.

Trump's promise to bring back hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs – always viewed with skepticism by economists – sounds especially hollow now, Trapp said and suggests Democrats will continue to gain ground in the industrial sectors of the country. "Obviously, this blue wave is going to continue until we get to the top," he said.

Trapp was most excited about Democrats' takeover of the state Senate in New York, a body long dominated by Republicans who he said have been unresponsive to labor's needs. And he said he'd like to see progress on infrastructure and health care, both nationally and locally.

Janice Bort, secretary of the 320-member GCC/IBT Local 72-C in Washington D.C., said the new Congress should work hard on climate issues, though she saw dim prospects for Trump and a Republican-controlled Senate to reach a compromise with Democrats.

"The number one issue for me is the environment," she said, adding that labor and health care also are top priorities. Bort said, however, that she feared major pro-labor legislation was unlikely with the Senate and White House remaining in GOP control.

Tedeschi said that even if Republicans seek to obstruct worker-friendly issues advanced by House Democrats, voters will have a chance to see which party cares most about protecting the middle class.

"If the GOP and Trump beat back every initiative aimed at lifting up ordinary Americans, they will be punished at the polls in 2020," he said. "We should begin now to make our case to voters. Re-election of Donald Trump is unthinkable."

Newly elected Democrats include many from the party's progressive wing who have pledged to vigorously advance a labor-friendly agenda.

For Oscar Lopez, president of the 150-member GCC/IBT Local 4535-M in Houston, Texas, a Democratic priority must be hiking the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour – a goal he considers even more important than health care guarantees and trade issues.

"There's a lot of people that are working for 10, 11, 12, 13 dollars an hour," he said. "That's not enough money to pay rent for a one-bedroom apartment and buy food and gas and all the essentials."

Lopez said the solidly "red" state of Texas appeared to be changing its political character as more young people and minority members exercised political clout. He pointed to Houston and metropolitan Harris County where, he said, Democrats – with union support – defeated a number of incumbent Republicans.

"A lot of the union people down here were upset with Trump and knew they got sold a bill of goods," he said. "And they retaliated and swept the Republicans out of office." ■

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



Union Candidates Shatter Status Quo in Midterms

What is being recalled as "Blue Wave" of Democratic victories in the 2018 midterm elections might also be tagged a "Blue Collar Wave."

More than 740 union members won office, from Congress to county commissioner, according to the AFL-CIO – a rousing daily double for working people who also saw Democrats take back the House of Representatives and end Republican one-party rule in Washington.

"From coast-to-coast, a historic number of hardworking Americans showed up and had their voices heard at the polls," said Teamsters General President James Hoffa. "Together, they made it clear that the status quo that has favored the powerful in government is no longer acceptable."

Hoffa had reason to be proud. The union devoted considerable resources to getting out the vote and IBT members were on the winning team.

Jeff Kurtz, Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers-IBT, won an open Iowa House seat. In Nevada, Susan Martinez, a shop steward and 30-year Local 986 member at Las Vegas's Flamingo Hotel, won in Nevada Assembly District 12.

Dave Dellosa, Local 312 in Chester, Pa., and Steve Malagari, Local 830, Philadelphia, won open seats in the Pennsylvania House, which also flipped Democratic. And in Chicago, Luis Arroyo Jr., a member of IBT Local 700, easily won re-election to the Cook County Commission.

In GCC/IBT ranks, Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, and Devyn Denton, a member of Local 226-M, Tulsa, vied for seats in their respective state houses of representatives. Neither won but ran spirited campaigns in Republican districts and drew impressive vote counts.

"We are proud of these civic-minded union members," said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. "They accepted the challenges that come with running for public office – not an easy thing to do – and deliv-

ered a message based on workers' rights. Whatever the results, they are winners in my book and deserve our respect and gratitude."

Notable victories by unionists around the country include:

- Tim Walz, a high school history teacher and member of Education Minnesota – an affiliate of the National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers partnership – became organized labor's highest-ranking elected official when

he beat Republican Jeff Johnson in the Minnesota governor's race. Julie Blaha, the former Minnesota AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer and also a former teacher and AFT member, won the state auditor's post and joins Walz as one of Minnesota's top four officials.

- In New Hampshire, the state legislature flipped to pro-worker Democratic control despite the re-election of

GOP Gov. Chris Sununu.

- Democrats picked up enough seats in the North Carolina legislature to deny the GOP a veto-proof majority – important because Republican lawmakers have sought to undercut Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper since he won the statehouse in 2016. It won't be so easy to override Cooper's vetoes now.

- Maria Elena Durazo, longtime Unite Here official and executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, won her state senate race 62-37 percent and will go to Sacramento representing East Los Angeles.

- Elissa Silverman, a News Guild member, kept her seat on the Washington, D.C. City Council and Ruth Wattenberg, a former AFT official, was re-elected to the capitol's school board.

"The success of candidates with union ties in the midterms is significant," Tedeschi said. "It shows that voters are not happy about a system that only rewards the rich and throws crumbs to working people. We should begin working now to keep the momentum and elect even more union members to public office in 2020." ■

– PAI Union News Service contributed to this story.



They Fought the Odds for ‘Greater Good’

By Dawn Hobbs
Special to the Communicator

Devyn Denton was determined to run for public office. Some people weren't happy.

Her family received death threats and Denton says her 17-year-old daughter was forced off the road by another car.

"We had to increase security at our home and always stay together – if something was going to happen to us, we wanted to be together," said Denton, who also has a 22-year-old son.

Denton, 41, a member of GCC/IBT Local 226-M, Tulsa, since 2017 when her three-person t-shirt and print shop, Bizy Kickz, affiliated with the union, refused to be intimidated.

She ran a spirited campaign as a Democrat, hoping to become the first woman of color from her district – Denton is African-American, Native-American and Hispanic – to win a seat in the Oklahoma House of Representatives.

Denton fell short, losing 61 percent to 39 percent to Republican Ryan Martinez, but has no regrets.

"We did this for the greater good," said Denton, also a registered trauma nurse, whose platform focused on medical care, workers' rights, fair wages and social security.

She will continue to fight for working people, Denton said – and is ready to make another bid for office. Recently, Denton, who lives in Edmond, Oklahoma, the state's sixth largest city, announced plans to run for city council this year.

Denton was one of two GCC/IBT members to take the political plunge in 2018 midterm elections.

Running at the state level was Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, who campaigned for a Georgia House of Representatives seat.

Meers competed in a deep red Republican district and could not overcome the odds. But, like Denton, Meers said he was eager to deliver a working class message to voters and register dismay at Washington politics and the conduct of President Donald Trump.

"I absolutely had to do this because I've been extremely disappointed and unhappy with the moral bankruptcy of the leadership of our country – and with how the state leaders of the Republican Party are being so complacent about it," Meers said.

The fact that Denton and Meers lost was disappointing, GCC/IBT leaders said, but what matters most is that union



PHOTO BY PATRICIA MITCHELL/LOCAL 527-S



PHOTO COURTESY DEVYN DENTON

Ralph Meers, president emeritus and secretary-treasurer of Local 527-S, Atlanta, and Devyn Denton, a member of Local 226-M, Tulsa, came up short but fought courageously for seats in their respective state houses of representatives. 'We couldn't be more proud of these two people,' said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. 'They put themselves before the public and never quit.'

"I absolutely had to do this because I've been extremely disappointed and unhappy with the moral bankruptcy of the leadership of our country – and with how the state leaders of the Republican Party are being so complacent about it."

– Ralph Meers, president emeritus, Local 527-S



members stood up against powerful adversaries and gave them a run for their money.

"We couldn't be more proud of these two people," said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. "They fought the odds, put them-

selves before the public and never quit. They are model citizens and outstanding union members who deserve our thanks."

Denton, who has been breaking barriers since she tested out of high school at 13 and became a college student the next year, said she wants to make a difference.

"We need to leave things better than we found them," Denton said.

In Georgia, Meers – past president of GCC/IBT 527-S who served in that role 50 years – was the first Democrat in more than two decades to run for the Georgia House of Representatives from his district.

"I call it duty to my family and my country," he added.

Meers lost 73 percent to 27 percent to Republican Martin Momtahan, but reeled in 6,200 votes in a district where Democrats usually pull about 1,000. Meers attributes the impressive showing to a vigorous get-out-the-vote effort.

"We went door-to-door and really pushed on voter registration," said Meers, 78. "Folks were saying they hadn't heard from the Democratic Party in years and were very excited about voting."

His platform focused on improving unemployment benefits and workers' compensation coverage, expanding Medicaid coverage and pushing for affordable health care.

Meers also was deeply concerned about white supremacist activity in his part of Georgia where, he says, the Ku Klux Klan remains a concern. "This place is all messed up and needs a lot of work."

For now, Meers plans to remain active with the Democrats at the county level to build the party.

"I really want to thank all of my union friends who gave their support," Meers said. "I've had my day. Now we need to develop the new people coming in. I enjoy getting out and fighting the fight, but we need new blood and people who are anxious to do what's right." ■

Did Trump Mislead Working People By Claiming to be 'Self-Made' Man?

Is Donald Trump the self-made billionaire he claims?

Not according to an exhaustive investigative report by the New York Times.

For two years, Times reporters examined more than 100,000 pages of documents related to the finances of Trump and his late father, Fred, a New York real estate baron.

The conclusion – presented in an article of more than 13,000 words – was stark and unequivocal:

As a New York developer, Donald Trump participated in what the Times called "dubious tax schemes in the 1990s, including outright fraud..." based on false claims of business losses that allowed him to avoid significant tax liability.

In a subsequent story published last month, the newspaper revealed that Trump and his siblings



WHITE HOUSE PHOTO VIA FLICKR

The New York Times

After reviewing thousands of documents, reporters for the New York Times concluded that Trump financial schemes amounted to 'outright fraud.' The President dismissed the Times account as a 'hit piece' without merit.

"worked a hidden scam" to improperly raise the rent on tenants in rent-regulated apartment buildings owned by Fred Trump.

The Times initially reported that while the President often claims he parlayed a one-time loan from his father into a real estate dynasty, Trump was a "multimillionaire by age 8."

Trump dismissed the Times story as a "hit piece" without merit but the account by reporters David Barstow, Susanne Craig and Russ Buettner has drawn wide praise and prompted examinations by New York State and New York City tax regulators.

For working people, the Times report is relevant.

Trump sold himself in 2016 as a financial genius who would reshape government in favor of ordinary Americans.

But, analysts note, he has, instead, advanced a familiar conservative Republican agenda that gave the rich an enormous – and unaffordable – tax break, reduced workplace safety requirements and seeks to dismantle the Affordable Care Act.

David Jolley, a former Republican congressman from Florida who has become a major Trump critic, summed up what he described as a self-serving relationship between Trump and the GOP.

"He used the GOP for his own purpose," Jolley wrote in an NBC News online publication, "and the GOP used him for its own agenda in return." ■

Enemies of Labor May Be Surprised at Janus Blowback

Opponents of organized labor who expected wholesale defections from union ranks after the Supreme Court's controversial ruling in the Janus "free-rider" case last year may be disappointed.

The court decided, 5-4, in June that public service employees covered by union contracts need not pay what are known as "fair share fees" – that is, the portion of union dues that cover contract negotiations and other basic union services.

Enemies of labor cheered and many union officials feared setbacks could be significant.

But in New York, with a huge contingent of civil service workers, the losses have been far less than expected, according to a story in Newsday of Long Island, and could point to similar encouraging results around the country.

"Despite the Janus decision, the overwhelming response from our members is that they're sticking with our union," Shannon Hutton, communications director of the Civil Service Employees Association, told Newsday reporter Michael Gormley.

The CSEA has a membership of 300,000. More than twice as large is the New York State United Teachers union which also gained remarkable support from the rank-and-file. NYSUT lost only 90 members, according to president Andy Pallotta, Newsday said. "It's a pretty good showing," Pallotta told the paper.

In support of organized labor, New York governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, barred government agencies from disclosing employee contact information as reports circulated that anti-union forces were targeting workers in hopes of persuading them not to pay dues.

Blowback on the Supreme Court decision is likely to continue – from worker-friendly politicians, labor leaders and individual members.

Teamster power was on display last September when more than 100 IBT members



and supporters in Minneapolis picketed a pro-Janus celebration at a local hotel.

"Minneapolis is a union town and Minnesota is a union state – we're here to keep it that way," Teamsters Local 320 secretary-treasurer Brian Aldes told a crowd protesting a gathering of the Center of the American Experiment, a right-wing Minnesota think tank set up by the billionaire Koch brothers.

Filling a city block, protesters chanted "Who are we? Union!" and "What's disgusting? Union busting!"

Despite union efforts to counter the Janus decision, any loss of membership and revenue is certain to weaken public service labor organizations. And, many labor leaders fear anti-union forces will be emboldened by the Janus ruling and try to undercut private sector unions.

"We must keep our guard up," said GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi. "The right-wing is relentless in its attacks on labor and would like nothing more than to rob us of support and revenue."

Tedeschi said with confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh as a justice, the Supreme Court now has a reliable conservative majority. "Our job is to make the advantages of union membership clear to everyone in the shop, every day," Tedeschi said. "We have to build loyalty. That's something even the Supreme Court can't defeat."

Until its Janus decision, the high court had held for 40 years that unions, which are obligated to represent all workers in a bargaining unit whether or not they are members, could collect "fair share fees."

The ruling was widely denounced by union leaders, including IBT General President James Hoffa, who vowed to work even harder for workplace justice.

"The Teamsters and our allies in the labor movement will redouble our efforts to ensure that working men and women have a voice on the job," Hoffa said. ■

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SOLID CONTRACT WINS IN LOS ANGELES, ST. PAUL

The Los Angeles Times pressroom scored big with a three-year contract that guaranteed more than a 30 percent wage increase for some workers.

There was good news for GCC/IBT members in St. Paul, Minnesota, too.

The Los Angeles agreement, which eliminates a two-tier structure, will bring lower-paid journeymen up to full scale – a pay boost of nearly one-third.

All GCC/IBT Local 140-N employees will gain a 1.5 percent hike in each year of the contract.

Negotiations started in December, 2017, before the Chicago Tribune Co., now known as TRONC, sold the paper to a private individual.

“Labor relations with the former management had been extremely bitter over the years,” said GCC/IBT representative Nick Caruso, who served

Los Angeles Times

as lead negotiator. However, Caruso said, with a new owner, Los Angeles surgeon Dr. Patrick Soon-Shiong, came a “willingness to invest in the relationship between labor and management.”

The company addressed most of the workers’ concerns in the first few meetings and union members ratified the contract by an overwhelming majority.

In addition to a wage increase and elimination of the two-tier system, the company agreed to match employee contributions to the Times 401 (k) plan – a benefit TRONC had refused.

In St. Paul, another GCC/IBT local won a hard-fought struggle for a fair contract.

After negotiating for more than two years and winning four unfair labor practice cases in federal court, workers reached a three-year settlement with Brown & Bigelow, a printer of promotional products.

Members will receive 4 percent retroactive back pay for 2018 and a 3 percent increase in 2019 and again in 2020. They also negotiated a 5 percent co-pay on health benefits.

“This is a fantastic win,” said Marty Hallberg, president of GCC/IBT Local 1-B, Twin Cities. “I give a lot of credit to members because the company actually tried to get them to decertify.”

GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi also applauded Local 1-B members. “They hung in with the union and it paid off,” Tedeschi said.



Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Ohio), center, wearing tie, joined GCC/IBT workers at Cubbison Co. who walked off their jobs at the Youngstown, Ohio, plant to protest 10 months of stalling tactics.

UNFAIR PRACTICES SPUR WALKOUT

After 10 months of contract negotiations without results, workers at the Cubbison Co. printing plant in Youngstown, Ohio, said enough is enough.

The company had five unfair labor practice charges on the books with the National Labor Relations Board when 34 workers walked out for a week.

Employees, represented by GCC/IBT Local 508-M, Cincinnati, are back on the job but the situation remains unchanged.

On two trips to Youngstown, GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi found the company unwilling to talk seriously despite participation of a federal mediator. “We’ll keep trying until we get a fair settlement,” said Tedeschi. Another meeting is scheduled for February.

Since the strike, Cubbison has accumulated a total 19 unfair labor charges, including complaints of regressive bargaining, which involves reducing a previous offer, and “surface” bargaining – simply going through the motions without genuine intent.

Previously, negotiations had been amiable but the relationship changed when the company hired an anti-labor law firm, said Steve Nobles, secretary-treasurer of GCC/IBT District Council 3.

GCC/IBT leaders hailed the solidarity of Cubbison workers. “They showed great courage and determination,” said Tedeschi.

Israel Castro, president of District Council 3, said the work action drew encouraging support – including a visit from Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan, whose district includes Youngstown.

“The unity shown by members around the clock was a huge factor in so many trucks turning away and honoring our picket line,” Castro said.

B-R-R-R! LABOR DAY?

Ok, it’s January and no one is marching down Fifth Avenue in shorts to show union solidarity. But shouldn’t every day be Labor Day?

We pulled this photo of last year’s event in New York City from our files as a reminder that unions protect workers and middle-class life throughout the year – and that union pride is never out of season.

GCC/IBT members at the Labor Day parade in the Big Apple were, left to right, John Heffernan, president of Local 2-N, New York; Lou Nicosia, secretary-treasurer of Local 406-C, Long Island; Paul Tedeschi, Local 406-C; his dad, GCC/IBT President George Tedeschi; Pat LoPresti, president Local 1-L, New York; and, John Zoccali, Local 1-L secretary-treasurer.



‘HUGE VICTORY’ AT STAR-LEDGER

Press operators at the Star-Ledger in Newark, New Jersey, are celebrating a three-year contract that boosts pay, cuts hours in the work week and shows that solidarity pays off.

“It’s a huge victory – and contracts like this only come when the members stand united,” said Pat LoPresti, president of Local 1-L, New York, which recently began representing 20 Star-Ledger pressroom employees who were members of Local 8-N, Newark, until a recent merger.

The new contract decreases the work week from 40 to 35 hours and awards a \$15,000 signing bonus to each worker. In addition, the pact provides pay increases of 2.5 percent in the first year; a \$5,000 bonus in the second with a 2 percent increase; another \$5,000 bonus in the third with a 2.5 percent boost.

“This shows that there is strength in numbers,” LoPresti said. “Everyone needs to remember that we will always overcome difficult times with strength and solidarity.”

LoPresti cited the outstanding work of union negotiators, including members Bill Korines, as lead, Mike Tague, John Masterson and Ron Violand and Local 1-L Secretary-Treasurer John Zoccali.

“They spoke on behalf of their members and did not feel intimidated,” LoPresti said. “This is the stuff that makes members realize, ‘I gotta’ stay with the union.”

LETTER PERFECT

Determined to help get out the vote in critical midterm elections, GCC/IBT Representative Mike Huggins made phone calls, rallied union members – and wrote an impassioned letter to his local newspaper.

His call to civic responsibility was published in the Muncie, Indiana, Star Press and made a powerful case.

Huggins’ words were direct and persuasive.

He warned readers that conservative Republican attitudes were undermining working people and that President Donald Trump could not be trusted.

“Trump offers the GOP an opportunity to achieve its long-sought agenda of benefiting the wealthiest Americans, tearing apart environmental regulations, affording enormous tax breaks to big business and destroying the labor movement,” Huggins wrote.

He reminded voters of the major reforms won by organized labor with the help of Democratic allies: the 40-hour work week, employer-based health coverage, an end to child labor and creation of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Riding a “blue wave,” Democrats regained a majority in the House of Representatives and now will be able to hold the White House accountable – an encouraging sign, Huggins noted.

“The millions of people who worked to get out the vote in this election can give themselves a pat on the back for putting Democrats back in charge of Congress and getting the momentum going for the 2020 election,” Huggins said.

Read the full letter by Mike Huggins at: <https://www.thestarpress.com/story/opinion/readers/2018/10/20/letters-editor-oct-21/1657993002/>

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.

La « vague » de mi-mandat laisse espérer des avancées sur les enjeux essentiels

Par Zachary Dowdy
Collaboration spéciale au Communicator

Alors que les démocrates et les candidats pro-syndicats ont remporté des dizaines de sièges leur assurant le contrôle de la Chambre des représentants aux États-Unis, les dirigeants de la CCG-FIT ont dit espérer que les législateurs pourraient faire des avancées sur les enjeux essentiels – soins de santé, environnement, commerce et infrastructures – et d'autres questions touchant la classe ouvrière qui ont été ignorées ou qui ont déraillé ces deux dernières années.

« J'aimerais qu'ils se concentrent sur les travailleurs et surtout les soins de santé, a indiqué John Noone, président de la section locale 241 de la CCG-FIT à Scranton, en Pennsylvanie. Je voudrais aussi qu'ils s'occupent de la crise des retraites. »

J. Noone, qui dirige une section locale de 120 membres, s'est joint à d'autres dirigeants pour célébrer les victoires au niveau national, mais il était tout aussi excité par les résultats au siège du gouvernement en Pennsylvanie, où le gouverneur démocrate Tom Wolf, un ami des travailleurs, a conservé son poste.

« Je suis vraiment content des résultats. Je pense que la Pennsylvanie a fait un bon travail en rebrassant quelques cartes. »

La Pennsylvanie, comme plusieurs autres États où la CCG-FIT a des sections locales, a connu une « vague bleue », annoncée par les analystes, en réaction aux

politiques du président Donald Trump.

Il se pourrait en fait qu'une large portion des syndiqués ayant voté pour Trump lors de l'élection présidentielle de 2016 ait changé d'avis, comme le laisse entendre une étude Reuters-Ipsos dévoilée en mai, qui montre que la popularité du milliardaire a baissé de 15 points de pourcentage dans le milieu syndical, passant de 62 à 47 pour cent.

Les syndiqués n'ont pas seulement contribué aux victoires que les démocrates ont enregistrées partout au pays – ils se sont présentés eux-mêmes comme candidats et ont fait une entrée en force.

Selon un sondage de la FAT-CIO, au moins 743 syndiqués à l'échelle du pays – dont quatre de la FIT – ont été élus; c'est notamment le cas de Tim Walz, un ancien professeur d'histoire au secondaire et membre d'Education Minnesota qui a reporté le poste de gouverneur du Minnesota.

Deux membres de la CCG-FIT sont entrés dans l'arène politique : Ralph Meers, président émérite de la section locale 527-S d'Atlanta, et Devyn Denton de la section locale 226-M de Tulsa. Les deux se sont présentés comme candidats démocrates pour la Chambre des représentants dans leurs États respectifs; ils ont perdu dans les districts majoritairement républicains, mais ils ont soulevé des enjeux importants pour la classe ouvrière.

« Ralph Meers et Devyn Denton ont fait preuve de courage et de détermination,

a indiqué George Tedeschi, président de la CCG-FIT. Ils ont apporté un message puissant aux électeurs, et montré qu'ils étaient fiers de leur syndicat et des principes du syndicalisme. Nous leur devons des remerciements – et des applaudissements bien sentis. »

L'étude Reuters-Ipsos confirme ce que Tom Trapp, secrétaire-trésorier de la section locale 503-M de Rochester, a observé sur le front national.

« Certaines personnes qui soutenaient Trump ont des regrets, a-t-il ajouté peu après que General Motors a annoncé le licenciement de quelque 14 000 travailleurs dans plusieurs usines aux États-Unis et au Canada.

La promesse faite par Trump de ramener des centaines de milliers d'emplois dans le secteur manufacturier – que les économistes considèrent toujours avec scepticisme – sonne particulièrement creux maintenant, a dit T. Trapp, et porte à croire que les démocrates vont continuer à gagner du terrain. « De toute évidence, cette vague bleue va se poursuivre jusqu'à ce que nous parvenions au sommet. »

Selon G. Tedeschi, même si les républicains cherchent à faire obstruction aux questions pro-syndicales avancées par les démocrates de la Chambre, les électeurs auront l'occasion de voir quel parti cherche le plus à protéger la classe moyenne.

« Si le parti républicain et Trump repoussent chaque initiative destinée à améliorer la situation des Américains

moyens, ils seront punis lors de l'élection de 2020. Nous devrions commencer dès à présent à faire valoir notre position auprès des électeurs. C'est impensable que Donald Trump soit réélu. »

Il y a, parmi les démocrates nouvellement élus, beaucoup qui sont issus de l'aile progressiste du parti et qui se sont engagés à promouvoir vigoureusement un programme pro-syndical.

Pour Oscar Lopez, président de la section locale 4535-M de Houston, au Texas, qui compte 150 membres, les démocrates doivent avoir pour priorité de faire passer le salaire minimum fédéral à 15 \$ l'heure – un objectif qu'il considère encore plus important que les garanties à propos des soins de santé et les enjeux commerciaux.

« Il y a beaucoup de gens qui travaillent pour 10, 11, 12 et 13 \$ de l'heure. Ça ne suffit pas pour payer le loyer d'un appartement d'une chambre, la nourriture, l'essence et les dépenses de première nécessité. »

Selon O. Lopez, l'État du Texas, pourtant très « rouge », semble être en train de changer sa position politique – en grande partie grâce aux membres des syndicats.

« Beaucoup de syndiqués de là-bas sont mécontents de Trump et savent qu'on leur avait vendu des salades. Ils ont réagi et se sont débarrassés des républicains. »

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

La “ola azul” de mitad de mandato da esperanzas de avanzar en cuestiones críticas

Por Zachary Dowdy
Especial para *The Communicator*

Viendo como los candidatos demócratas y favorables a los trabajadores iban ganando docenas de escaños para controlar la Cámara de Representantes de EE.UU., los líderes de GCC/IBT dijeron que esperaban que los legisladores lograran avances en las cuestiones críticas, como la atención médica, el medio ambiente, el comercio y la infraestructura, y otras cosas que afectan a la clase trabajadora y que en los últimos años se han descarrilado o han sido ignoradas.

«Me gustaría verlos concentrarse en cuestiones laborales y especialmente en la atención médica», dijo John Noone, presidente de la Local 241-M de GCC/IBT en Scranton, Pennsylvania. «También me gustaría verlos trabajando en la crisis de las pensiones».

Noone, líder de una local con 120 afiliados, celebró con otros líderes las victorias a nivel nacional, pero se mostró igualmente entusiasmado con los resultados de la Cámara Estatal de Pennsylvania, que conservó su gobernador demócrata, Tom Wolf, amigo de los sindicatos.

«Me sentí muy complacido con estos resultados», dijo. «Creo que Pennsylvania lo hizo muy bien, se consiguieron unos escaños más».

Pennsylvania, como varios otros estados donde operan locales de GCC/IBT, experimentó una “ola azul”, como habían previsto los analistas que esperaban una reacción de

rechazo a las políticas del presidente Donald Trump.

De hecho, una apreciable proporción de miembros que votaron por Trump en las elecciones presidenciales de 2016 puede haber experimentado un cambio de actitud, según un estudio de Reuters-Ipsos publicado en mayo, que indicaba que la popularidad del multimillonario había descendido 15 puntos porcentuales entre los sindicalizados: de un 62 a un 47 por ciento.

Los trabajadores sindicados no solo contribuyeron a las victorias democráticas en todo el país, sino que ellos mismos se presentaron como candidatos y consiguieron resultados relevantes.

Según una encuesta realizada por AFL-CIO, al menos 743 afiliados de todo el país, cuatro de ellos pertenecientes a los Teamsters, resultaron elegidos para ocupar cargos públicos. Entre ellos destaca Tim Walz, anterior profesor de historia en escuelas secundarias y miembro de Education Minnesota, que fue elegido gobernador de Minnesota.

Dos miembros de GCC/IBT se lanzaron a participar activamente en la política: Ralph Meers, presidente emérito de la Local 527-S, de Atlanta, y Devyn Denton, de la Local 226-M de Tulsa. Ambos se presentaron como demócratas a las elecciones para la Cámara de Representantes de sus respectivos estados y, aunque perdieron en distritos de gran predominancia republicana, consiguieron poner de relieve asuntos importantes para la clase trabajadora.

«Ralph Meers y Devyn Denton demostraron valor y dedicación», dijo George Tedeschi, presidente de GCC/IBT. «Llevaron a los votantes un poderoso mensaje y demostraron sentirse orgullosos de su sindicato y de los principios del movimiento laboral. Les debemos agradecimiento y fuertes aplausos».

El estudio realizado por Reuters-Ipsos coincide con lo observado a nivel nacional por Tom Trapp, secretario-tesorero de la Local 503-M de GCC/IBT basada en Rochester.

«Algunos de los que apoyaron a Trump se arrepienten ahora», manifestó poco después de que General Motors anunciara el despido de cerca de 14,000 trabajadores de varias plantas de Estados Unidos y Canadá.

La promesa de Trump de recuperar cientos de miles de puestos de trabajo en el sector manufacturero, que los economistas siempre vieron con escepticismo, nos suena hoy especialmente a hueco, dijo Trapp, quien predice que los demócratas continuarán ganando terreno. «Obviamente, esta ola azul va a seguir creciendo hasta que lleguemos a la cumbre», añadió.

Tedeschi dijo que, incluso si los republicanos tratan de obstaculizar las medidas favorables a los trabajadores que proponen los demócratas, los votantes tendrán la oportunidad de ver a cuál partido le importa más la protección de la clase media.

«Si el Partido Republicano y Trump rechazan todas las iniciativas para mejorar la situación de la población común, serán castigados en las elecciones de 2020», dijo.

«Debemos empezar ahora a presentar nuestros planteamientos a los votantes. Es impensable que se pueda reelegir a Donald Trump».

Entre los demócratas recién elegidos se encuentran muchos pertenecientes a las fuerzas progresistas del partido, que se han comprometido a impulsar vigorosamente los programas favorables al sindicalismo.

Para Oscar Lopez, presidente de la Local 4535-M, de Houston, Texas, que cuenta con 150 miembros, una de las prioridades de los demócratas debe ser la subida del salario mínimo federal a \$15 por hora, un objetivo que considera más importante que las garantías de atención médica y los acuerdos comerciales.

«Hay mucha gente que está trabajando por 10, 11, 12 y 13 dólares por hora», dijo. «Ese dinero no basta para pagar la renta de un apartamento de un cuarto, comprar comida y gasolina, y cubrir las demás necesidades».

Lopez dijo que Texas, un estado sólidamente “rojo”, parece estar cambiando de carácter político gracias, en gran parte, a los trabajadores sindicalizados.

«Muchos de nuestros afiliados estaban descontentos con Trump y sabían que les habían vendido gato por liebre», dijo. «Y tomaron represalias retirándoles el voto a los republicanos».

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

Bridging Racial Wealth Gap

Still hampered by racial discrimination, minority Americans make far less than their white counterparts – unless they are union members.

“Data show that the racial wealth gap is much smaller among union members than non-union members,” said Christian Weller, a public policy professor at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

In a piece for Forbes online, Weller said “widespread unionization is one...mechanism that has the added advantage that it directly empowers people in their work.”

Weller says that in non-union ranks, black workers have about one-tenth the wealth of their white counterparts. Even among union members, white wealth is five times that of black colleagues because minority workers historically have suffered discrimination in the workplace that affects their overall financial well-being.

To shrink the “wealth gap” the nation must “create a level playing field,” Weller said, adding that unions have “proven to lift up all workers.”



Free Speech Lesson for Bezos

When Amazon founder and Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos asked the public for ideas on how to spread around his billions, Fredrick Kunkle had an idea: How about paying Post employees what they deserve?

Kunkle, a staff writer on the Post’s metro desk and co-chair of the Washington-Baltimore News Guild’s collective bargaining unit, had seen Bezos – widely regarded as the richest person in the world – try to stiff workers in the areas of pension, health insurance and severance.

In an op-ed, Kunkle hailed Bezos’ charitable giving, but added the boss “should remember that his vast wealth came in part from labor and he should do more to share that wealth with workers.”

Kunkle offered the opinion piece to the Post. When the paper declined, Kunkle published the essay in the online Huffington Post and promptly drew a warning from his employer. The Post threatened further “disciplinary action” if Kunkle again wrote for another publication “up to and including the termination of your employment.”

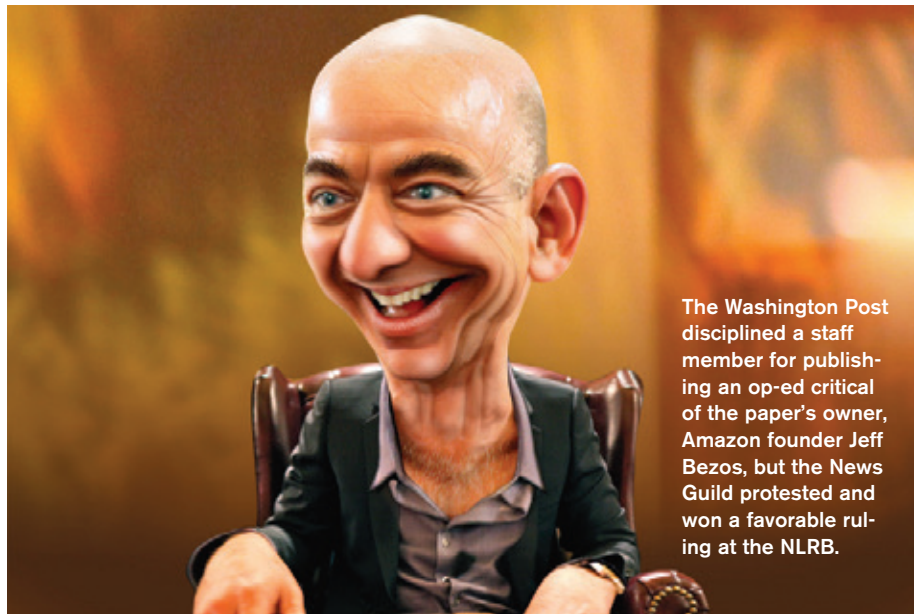
Not so fast, said the Guild.

The union complained to the National Labor Relations Board – and won.

Kunkle’s “conduct was no different from that of any employee speaking out about working conditions in a letter to the editor of a newspaper or other communication with the public,” said an NLRB memo. The disciplining of Kunkle was illegal.

To Bezos, whose Amazon business is booming so nicely that the company will employ 50,000 at new corporate centers in suburban Washington, D.C. and New York City, the message should have been clear. As a newspaper owner, he should encourage free speech – not try to squelch it.

And, Kunkle says, Boss Bezos should stop nickel-and-diming Post employees, too.



The Washington Post disciplined a staff member for publishing an op-ed critical of the paper’s owner, Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, but the News Guild protested and won a favorable ruling at the NLRB.



New NAFTA? Not So Fast

The “new NAFTA” is not a done deal.

With labor-friendly Democrats now holding a majority in the House of Representatives, the renegotiated North American Free Trade Act agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States, faces an uncertain fate on Capitol Hill in its present form.

Union leaders and pro-worker elected officials want to make certain fewer American jobs are lost to outsourcing and that terms of the pact are strictly enforced.

“Without enforcement, you don’t have anything,” said Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, according to a story in the New York Times. Pelosi described the new NAFTA as “a work in progress.”

Teamsters General President James Hoffa voiced similar concerns.

While pleased with “progress” on a revised NAFTA pact, Hoffa said unless there is “swift and sure enforcement, we cannot endorse this renegotiation.”

Caution also was expressed by IBT legislative representative Mike Dolan.

At a hearing of the U.S. International Trade Commission, Dolan said the three-party agreement could serve as a “new paradigm” but that worker protections remained an issue. Vestiges of secret, corporate-friendly trade courts finally must be eliminated, Dolan said, and job security continues a “bottom-line interest” for the IBT.

Though the new pact – renamed the “United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement” – must be approved by Congress, President Donald Trump participated in a signing ceremony with leaders of Canada and Mexico at the November G20 international forum in Buenos Aires. Subsequently, Trump threatened to toss the existing agreement if Congress did not cooperate.

Despite the stagecraft, union officials and allies on Capitol Hill have put Trump on notice that they will not back the deal until safeguards are strengthened. As Rep. Bill Pascrell, Democrat of New Jersey, told the Times: “...there is a long, long way to go.”

BIGGER PAY BUT STILL PEANUTS

Are wages going up at last? Sort of.

After decades of stagnant pay, President Donald Trump told workers they could rejoice: wages had grown by more than 3 percent.

“Worker pay rate hits highest level since 2008,” Trump celebrated in a tweet.

But there’s a catch.

The 3 percent raise was not adjusted for inflation.

“...the result is mostly a wash for workers,” said Washington Post writer Tory Newmyer. “Rising consumer prices are all but wiping out the gains in their paychecks.”

There are several reasons why workers can’t demand more, experts say – including a decline in union membership.

“Workers just don’t have the bargaining clout that they had in the past to go into their boss’s office and say, ‘Hey – It looks like our company is doing great, how about a pay raise?’” former labor department economist Jared Bernstein told CNBC.

The \$1.5 trillion Republican tax bill passed last year isn’t helping much either. Typical workers at large companies gained only \$225 in salary or bonuses, according to figures cited by the New York Times.

In other words, workers still are getting nowhere. Someone should notify the President.





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Change Made to the Benevolent Trust Fund

The Graphic Communications Benevolent Trust Fund (BTF) provides a Death Benefit to Participants' Designated Beneficiaries. The current maximum Death Benefit payable by the BTF is \$3,250.00. Participants are entitled to a Death Benefit from the BTF if they are active contributors to the Fund at the time of their death and are members in good standing of their Local Union or if they have satisfied one of the criteria for being exempt from paying the contribution to the BTF ("Exempt Participant"). The current contribution for non-exempt BTF Participants is \$1.00 per month.

Effective for Death Benefits paid by the Fund on and after October 1, 2018, the criteria for being exempt has been changed to replace the requirement that Participants cease work in the graphic communications industry with a requirement that Participants cease work in a Union bargaining unit. Provided you are no longer working in the bargaining unit, and you meet the age and membership requirements set forth below, you will qualify as exempt. Following are the requirements for exempt status:

Participants who are actively serving in the armed forces of the United States or Canada who have one or more years of membership in good standing with a Participating Local Union;

Participants who retire or cease working in a GCC/IBT or Unifor Graphical Local Union bargaining unit on or after January 1, 2017, and who, at the time of retirement or cessation of working in a GCC/IBT or Unifor Graphical Local Union bargaining unit, met one of following age and membership requirements: (See Chart 1, top center)

Participants who retire or cease working in a GCC/IBT or Unifor Graphical Local Union bargaining unit before January 1, 2017, and who, at the time

Age at Retirement or Cessation of Work in Bargaining Unit	Years of Continuous Membership in a Participating Local Union or their Predecessor Unions
50	30
51	29
52	28
53	27
54	26
55	25
56	24
57	23
58	22
59	21
60 or above	20

Chart 1

of retirement or cessation of working in a GCC/IBT or Unifor Graphical Local Union bargaining unit, met one of following age and membership requirements: (See Chart 2, top right)

Participants with ten or more years of continuous membership in good standing with a Participating Local Union or their predecessor Unions who are totally and permanently disabled and who have qualified for Social Security Disability Insurance Benefits under Title II of the Federal Social Security Act or the Canadian equivalent or other Federal, State or Provincial disability provision. If such qualification is denied, a Participant will be exempt upon submission of medical opinions from two doctors certifying that the Participant is permanently and totally disabled subject to review by the Board of Trustees.

Age at Retirement or Cessation of work in Bargaining Unit	Years of Continuous Membership in a Participating Local Union or their Predecessor Unions
55	25
56	24
57	23
58	22
59	21
60 or above	20

Chart 2

Proof, satisfactory to the Board of Trustees, that a Participant has satisfied one of the conditions set forth above must be provided by the Participant or by his or her Local Union in order for a Participant to be deemed an Exempt Participant under the terms of the Plan and Fund.

Please contact your Local Union office if you have any questions as to when you will become an Exempt Participant under the BTF. Additional information about the BTF is available in your BTF Summary Plan Description.

This Notice is a Summary of Material Modifications made to the BTF Plan document. You should keep it with your BTF Summary Plan Description. As always, if you have questions about the changes to the Benevolent Trust Fund described above or any other questions, please call the BTF Office at (202) 508-6675 or email btf@gciu.org.

It is very important that Participants submit a Designation of Beneficiary Form to the BTF and keep it up-to-date. If you need to submit or update your Designation of Beneficiary Form, please contact your Local Union office. Please see your BTF Summary Plan Description for more information about the Fund. ■

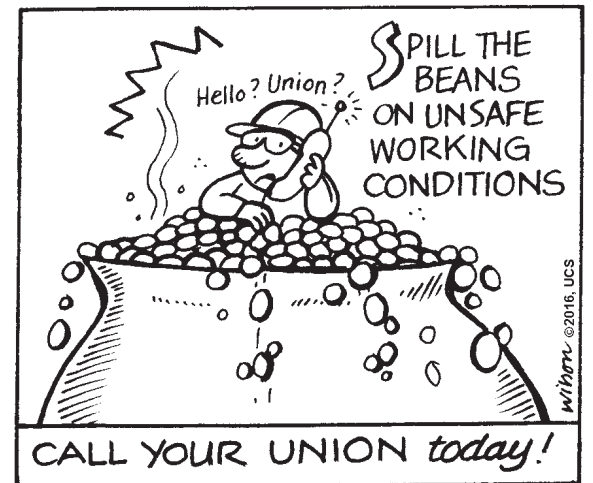
Funny Business



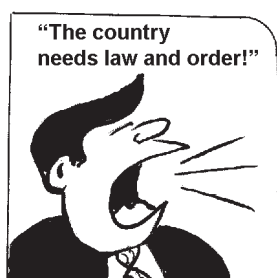
"Why didn't you catch my mistakes when you had the chance?"



"We've resolved the fundamental problems. Now we're down to personal issues."



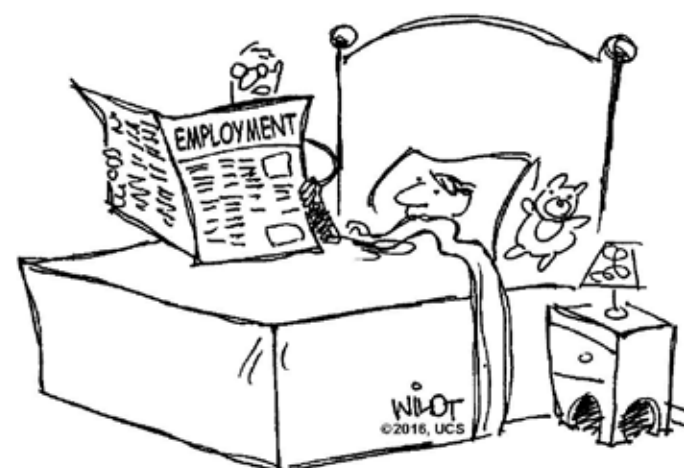
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Then: Give me your tired, your poor,
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The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.*



Now: On second thought, keep them!
It's cheaper to send our jobs over there.



"Once upon a time there was a thing called the Middle Class."