Buy American Jobs

By Leo Gerard


First, at the forceful urging of U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, the Smithsonian on June 8 opened an all-American-made gift shop in the National Museum of American History. Three days later, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio introduced legislation requiring federal agencies to buy only 100 percent American-made flags.

Then, at the Netroots Nation 2011 conference in Minneapolis, Minn. this week, the AFL-CIO will serve American union-made beer, including Schell’s, brewed in Minnesota by members of my union, the United Steelworkers (USW). The Alliance for American Manufacturing will host at Netroots an American-made fashion show at which it will serve USW-member made Kellogg’s Nutri-Grain bars. And the BlueGreen Alliance is distributing to Netroots attendees mercury-free, USW-made, energy-efficient, non-curly cue Oshram Sylvania halogen light bulbs.

All these events occurring before mid-June are significant in an era of stubborn 9.1 percent unemployment, a time when 14 million unemployed Americans are searching for jobs. It’s significant because buying American-made products is buying American jobs. And buying American union-made products is buying good, middle class American jobs.

Eight million American manufacturing workers have lost their jobs over the past 30 years as multi-national
My View
Bruce Reed, Local Union Representative

Brothers and Sisters:

In my last newsletter article I discussed the “right to work” legislation that was pulled from the table during the last state legislation session, and the fact that we should support and thank the Democrats that supported us. I said it was a victory that we would have to work to keep when the next session started and it is obvious now that “right to work” will be back in the next session. There are several Republicans that are going to meet in the next week or two to start planning the rolling out of the bill, a bill that will permanently damage our Unions and our working lives. Please take time to understand this bill and how it will impact us as working men and women. The last session was anti worker and the Republicans are not about to stop the attack now, our help and support is needed. When you are asked to write to our lawmakers, make phone calls or go to the State House for a rally please take time to help. Our voice must be heard until we can restore the Statehouse to being a worker friendly majority.

On the national level we are on the edge of a crises dealing with the debt ceiling. It is of great importance that we understand the Republican and the Tea Party’s answer to the problem, their answer is crunching the “entitlements”, the entitlements being our Social Security and Medicare benefits. We in the middle class have paid the way our whole working lives and now that many of us are reaching the age of expecting a return on our investment, the legislators are saying we do not have a right to expect the “entitlements” we have been promised. We as working people must stand up for ourselves and our families, we cannot continue to be quiet and let the legislators in power cut our standard of living, our Social Security benefits and Medicare without making them pay in the next election. We must start to prepare to fight now and become angry with the people who are taking “money” from our pockets because they see it being the direction of least resistance. We as workers must hold the representatives we send to the State House and to Washington to the promises they make. The current majority in both the State and National Houses do not represent workers they represent business and the wealthy, do not take my word examine the facts.

Governor Daniels has announced a surplus in Indiana on the backs of state worker layoffs, 2-3 year wage freezes, teacher layoffs and cuts in social benefits for all Hoosiers, he is “giving” bonuses to state workers instead of wage increases, as we all know the bonus is worth about 60% of the face number due to taxes and it is a onetime payment, wages are with us our whole working lives.

It’s time for us to stand up and put people in elected positions that will represent us in the middle class not the wealthy and business interest of their friends. It is about our survival as working class, not as they believe, the “entitlements’ the evil workers of America expect. We have paid for the right to expect the promise of benefits be upheld.

Falling behind financially?
Union SAFE may be able to help.

If you're having trouble making ends meet in this economy, Union SAFE may be able to help. We offer valuable benefits for members who participate in Union Plus programs including Union Plus Credit Card, Mortgage and Union Plus Insurance and who are facing economic hardship.

To find out how Union SAFE may be able to help, visit: UnionPlus.org/UnionSAFE
JOBS, From Page 1.

Corporations off-shored factories. But America still manufactures and the prices of American-manufactured goods, including those made by union workers, are competitive with foreign-made products.

Choosing an American-made product, or North American-made to include my home country of Canada where hundreds of thousands of USW members live and work, means supporting North American workers and the North American work ethic. It means buying products manufactured by willing adults in reasonable conditions, not by children laboring Dickensian hours in dangerous factories. It means reasonable assurance that the manufacturer abided by environmental laws prohibiting the poisoning of the air, ground and water by toxic substances like mercury and lead.

The Smithsonian experience provides the perfect example of how buying American-made products purchases American jobs.

Late last year, Sen. Sanders went to the history museum shop to buy Christmas gifts and discovered the presidential busts there were made in China. He was incensed that an American taxpayer-supported history museum was selling American history memorabilia not made in America. He complained.

While the Smithsonian reviewed the situation, CBS news determined exactly how policies like the museum’s injure the American economy. CBS reporters found a Connecticut woman who had to lay off three workers when the museum stopped selling her hand-crafted, American-made jewelry and replaced them with foreign-made substitutes. Before the change, Merrie Buchsbaum’s “Americana Collection” was among the museum shop’s best sellers. Apparently tourists did not find the prices for her America-made souvenirs to be excessive.

When the museum cut her off, Buchsbaum’s sales declined 20 percent, forcing her to furlough her entire staff. Three jobs is the difference between buying American and buying foreign for just one small supplier of one small gift shop.

The Smithsonian changed its policy, converting the gift shop to an all-American operation with 300 American-made souvenirs. Now it’s called the American History Price of Freedom gift shop.

That price of freedom, the Smithsonian said, is higher in some cases when the souvenir is American-made. For example, the custom, hand-crafted American-made mugs it now sells cost $20 instead of the average $12 price for a foreign-made mug in other museum shops. But U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall of West Virginia, who is preparing legislation tying the sale of American-made souvenirs to future federal funding for the museums, believes Americans will pay a buck or two more “to have their lapel American flag pin say ‘Made in the U.S.A.’”

American products don’t always cost more, however, even when they’re union-made. ABC news investigative reporters discovered that when they removed foreign-made goods from a Dallas family’s home earlier this year and replaced them with American-made products.

In addition, included in the price of North American-made products is the cost of protecting the environment and treating workers with dignity. It’s the price of morality. The United States and Canada, for example, forbid child labor and institutionalized the 40-hour work week. Both countries enforce environmental protection laws forbidding the devastating pollution countenanced by China and some third-world nations.

For example, the New York Times this week revealed that millions of Chinese children suffer from brain and nerve-damaging lead poisoning from unregulated, polluting factories, many of which produce batteries or smelt metal. The Times reported that the Chinese government in some cases conspired with the polluting companies to cover up the problem, denied testing to nearby sick residents and withheld tests results.

See BUY, Page 4.
The lead poisoning raises the question of what China is doing about even-more-dangerous mercury, which is used by Chinese companies to make those twisty, energy-efficient light bulbs.

In America, Steelworkers are fabricating energy-efficient Sylvania halogen bulbs that look exactly like traditional light bulbs and contain absolutely no mercury. That’s American innovation, American compliance with moral environmental rules and American union labor creating a superior product.

Who knew, though? All anyone hears anymore is that American manufacturing is dead. American doesn’t make anything anymore. That is just not true. Here are some USW-made, terrific North American products:

- Jacobson hats
- Cutco Cutlery
- Kellogg’s Pop-Tarts
- Wendell August Forge pewter gifts
- Breyers Ice Cream
- Cascades paper towels and tissue
- Viva and Bounty paper towels
- Depend undergarments and Poise pads
- Charmin and Angel Soft bath tissue
- Puffs facial tissue
- Georgia-Pacific Dixie Cups and plates
- Cenveo envelopes (Local 1999)
- Leader Paper Products envelopes and business cards
- All-Clad metal cookware
- Regal Ware cookware
- Speed Queen washers and dryers
- Alberto Culver hair care products
- Carrier home heating systems (Local 1999)
- Enderes forged hand tools
- Channellock tools
- Ideal Roofing steel shingles
- Blanco Canada kitchen sinks
- Nestle Purina cat litter
- Distinctive Design furniture
- Barrymore furniture
- Star Bedding, Sealy, Spring Air, Springwall, King Koil and Simmons mattresses
- Anchor Hocking glass tableware
- General Storage containers
- World Kitchen Pyrex
- A.O. Smith residential water tanks
- Gentek Building Products including windows, doors and vinyl siding
- American Standard bathroom fixtures
- Reynolds Wrap aluminum foil
- Fabri-Kal plastic ware
- Speakman shower heads
- 3M O-cell-O sponges
- Crown Metal Packaging for food and beverages
- Federal White Cement
- Shade-O-Matic and Eclipse venetian blinds, shutters and window covers
- Valspar pigment for Valspar paints
- Lavelle Industries rubber and plastic plumbing components
- Harley-Davidson motorcycle parts and accessories
- PFERD Milwaukee Brush metal brushes
- Alto-Shaam, Inc. ovens and warmers

See JOBS, Page 5.
I’m Proud to Be Union

It’s obvious now that times are hard
Our nations’ image is deeply scarred
The Government gives the Unions blame,
And too many of us accept the shame.
Instead of applying the things we’ve learned
We take for granted
what our forefathers earned
Our newest enemy is our Sister or Brother
Ignorance says we fight each other.
These backstabbing people are so confused
They’re not Union Members, they just pay dues.
Members don’t tell on their Brother, man!
Or refuse to help when they know they can!
It’s easy to talk, to complain and cuss,
But our Union’s future depends on us!!
We can put dignity back in our label.
It won’t be easy, but I know we’re able.
Being strong takes more than a few,
before. I’m not sure if we all have taken the time to read it or to really understand what it is saying.
Everyday, I deal with issues in one plant or the other that ties into this poem. Fighting verbally or physically with our Union Brothers and Sisters should not be happening. Corporate America would like nothing better than to have us at each others throats, because as long as we are fighting among ourselves then we are not paying as much attention to them as we should be.

There is power in numbers.
We belong to the largest Union in North America, and our Local is one of the largest in the United States. With that comes influence and a strong voice for issues that pertain to labor and working men and women. We owe it to ourselves and to one another to do everything we can to work together and remain united.

Thank you.

- Author Unknown

I’m sure we all have seen this poem before. I’m not sure if we all have taken the time to read it or to really understand what it is saying.

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Thank you.

JOBS, From Page 4.

- Shur-Line paint rollers
- Goodyear, Bridgestone/Firestone, BFGoodrich, Titan and Yokohama tires.

The tires require caution. Many of those companies have foreign factories that export tires to North America. So the buyer must look for these codes to get American made tires: BE and BF for BFGoodrich, YE, 4D and E3 for Bridgestone/Firestone, UP and UT for Cooper, MD, MJ, MC, and MK for Goodyear and CC for Yokohama. These letters follow the letters DOT on each tire’s code.

In the case of the other products listed, some also operate foreign factories, so it’s always good to look for the Made in America label.

Buy American.
Buy American jobs.
Steelworkers Lay Out Detailed Case Against Free Trade Pacts, Warn Of Political Impact

PITTSBURGH (PAI)—The Steelworkers have laid out, again, a detailed case against all three pending “free trade” agreements – with Colombia, Panama and South Korea -- circulating on Capitol Hill. But it’s literally the last line of union President Leo Gerard’s 5-page single-spaced letter that may really wake lawmakers up.

That’s because he says voters will remember next November which politicians favored workers and which ones didn’t on the trade pacts – a warning to both parties.

“The American people, in increasing numbers, reject the approach our policymakers have taken on the trade issue. They will remember, at the next election, those who stood by their side and those who put their jobs, their families and their communities at risk,” Gerard’s detailed June 20 letter concludes.

Gerard wrote Congress as debate heated up over the pacts, and especially over those with South Korea and Colombia. Business launched an expensive blitz for the pacts. The GOP-run House Ways and Means Committee started work on legislation to implement them, but Congress can do nothing officially until the Obama administration sends such legislation to Capitol Hill – which must vote it up or down, with no changes.

The Steelworkers leader argues all three treaties are built on the flawed model of the U.S.-Canada-Mexico North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). As labor forecast in arguing against it, NAFTA has cost at least 683,000 well-paying U.S. industrial jobs, calculations show. Gerard urged Congress to beat all three new pacts.

“Overwhelming portions of our members work in import-sensitive manufacturing sectors and all too often lost jobs due to bad trade deals and unfair and predatory trade practices. Promises made by administrations past and present touting the benefits of free trade have simply not materialized for America’s manufacturing workers,” he said.

“The results of ‘free trade’ deals are all too clear: In the last decade alone six million manufacturing

See FTA, Page 9.
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OSHA Fines Honeywell $119K For Safety Violations At Ill. Uranium Plant As Lockout Passes 1-Year Mark

METROPOLIS, Ill. (PAI)—Showing, once again, the danger of using scab labor in a plant that requires sophisticated and trained workers, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) proposed fining Honeywell $119,000 for the Dec. 2010 release of hydrogen fluoride (HF) from its uranium-processing plant in Metropolis, Ill. – an accident that occurred during a lockout of workers that just passed the 1-year mark.

To make things even worse, Steelworkers Local 7-669 reported, the company and union reached a tentative contract agreement on June 6, and then Honeywell reneged the next day. The plant normally employs 228 workers.

“Honeywell can now end the lockout with a telephone call or fax over the final conclusive issues,” local President Darrell Lillie said.

Honeywell locked out the unionists, members of a former Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers local. They did not agree to Honeywell’s takeback demands, particularly its cuts and almost virtual elimination of overtime pay, Lillie told the June 25 anniversary rally. The lockout started June 28, 2010.

Meanwhile, with “replacement workers” trying to run the Metropolis plant, the Dec. 22 hydrogen fluoride release was the second notable accident since Honeywell locked out the unionists. The other, in September, saw accumulated hydrogen reacting with fluorine during venting of the plant, shaking the neighborhood with a loud boom.

“Fortunately, the accident occurred in a non-regulated area of operation, meaning away from the handling of yellow cake uranium,” the union commented.

On June 22, OSHA cited 17 violations in the December release of hydrogen fluoride (HF) vapors. They include “failure to address human factors in operating valves on HF tanks, failure to establish written procedures to maintain the integrity of process equipment, failure to establish and implement written procedures to manage changes to process chemicals, equipment and procedures, and a deficient incident report that did not include factors contributing to the vapor release.”

Editor’s note: On July 19 Honeywell management and United Steelworkers Local 7-669 reached a tentative agreement on a new contract. The tentative agreement is on a new three-year contract. The parties agreed to remain at the bargaining table to separately negotiate a return to work plan that would ensure the orderly transition of work from the plant’s temporary workforce to the union hourly employees. The tentative agreement remains subject to union ratification.
FTA, From Page 6.

Jobs and 55,000 plants have been lost. Multinational companies easily set up operations overseas and export back to the U.S....New Department of Commerce data show large U.S. multinational companies cut their workforces in the U.S. by 2.9 million during the 2000s while increasing employment overseas by 2.4 million. This continues even as workers wrestle with a tepid and uncertain recovery.

Trade policies that “encourage job growth overseas” lead to unemployment and underemployment here, Gerard warned lawmakers. Citing the Economic Policy Institute’s calculations, for example, he said the U.S.-Korea FTA pact alone could cost another 159,000 high-paying jobs and increase the U.S. trade deficit in seven sectors.

“The Korea-U.S. FTA will accelerate the off-shoring and outsourcing of auto parts production, jeopardizing not only the jobs of 350,000 Steelworkers that make products that can be used in the auto supply chain, but those of other workers across the country,” Gerard said. Obama did well to keep U.S. tariffs on Korean vehicles for up to eight years, he conceded, but “came up short for the vastly larger auto supply chain.”

Labor is split, however, on the U.S.-Korea deal. The United Auto Workers and the United Food and Commercial Workers favor it and other unions – plus the AFL-CIO and Korean organized labor – oppose it. The split may let lawmakers push it through.

UFCW says the U.S.-Korea deal will open up the Korean market to processed U.S. meat and poultry, whose plants employ many of its members. UAW negotiated with the Obama administration to keep the tariffs on the Korean vehicles.

Gerard said the pact would endanger the auto supply chain workers’ jobs. They would face cheap Korean imports, aided by Korea’s currency manipulation. The pact does nothing to curb that manipulation or multinationals’ actions, he said. And the pact lets Korea export vehicles to the U.S. that are only 35% Korean-made, making Korea a transshipment center for even-cheaper Chinese cars – and costing more U.S. jobs.

Organized labor is unanimously dead set against the Colombia FTA, for the reasons Gerard laid out in his letter: The Latin American nation is the world leader in political assassinations of unionists and has been for more than a decade.

And a recent agreement on labor rights enforcement between Colombia’s new president and Democratic President Barack Obama is only just that – an agreement – that hasn’t gone into effect yet and that isn’t part of the U.S.-Colombia FTA, he adds.

The pact is “sacrificing the lives and livelihoods, the worker and human rights of the Colombian people at the altar of free trade,” he declared. It “institutionalizes a status quo that makes Colombia the most dangerous place in the world to be a union member.” The death toll is approaching 2,600.

Colombia “continues to fail miserably at effectively prosecuting those responsible for anti-union violence. Impunity for anti-union killings remains at 96%, while impunity for other forms of anti-union violence remains at an incredible 99.8%,” Gerard wrote. “Colombia should not be rewarded with a trade agreement until it has a proven track record of bringing to justice” the perpetrators and enforcing workers’ rights nationwide.

In a separate letter, The Washington Office on Latin America also enlisted 431 groups against the U.S.-Colombia FTA. They included IBEW Local 1837, Fair Trade Coalitions in Minnesota and Oregon, the United Electrical Workers, USW Local 1188, and the union’s Maine state council, Teamsters Local 340 and UFCW Local 1689.
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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

First, I hope everyone had a wonderful Memorial Day weekend. I also hope that everyone remembers why we have this holiday. It is more than just a time to get together with family and friends for cookouts and whatever else you might do. Let's not forget the soldiers that died defending our country. Being a soldier should not be a thankless job.

To start off with, we had second step grievance meetings on 5-24-2011. We had one over discipline over the quality of work in punch press. One was over improper recall from layoff procedures. The last one was about the training matrix. Just a little background on the matrix. What happened was that the company posted a job in MTO for a material handler on 2nd shift. At the time, the matrix only listed "material handler" in the duties across the top. When they awarded the job, the Union told them that they didn't award the job to the senior qualified per the matrix. The MTO department has 3 sets of job duties from old classifications, and when they made out the matrix, they didn't separate those particular duties. What the company did next is what we have a problem with. They decided to void the original posting and award, and then they separated out all of the material handler duties to fit their needs. Then reposted the job and awarded it.

Just as a reminder to employees who are choosing to go to their own doctor for your annual physical. When you go in, please make sure that you tell the doctor to code it as an annual physical. It must be coded correctly for it to count. If it is not coded correctly, you will be stuck with only the high deductible insurance plan with NO seed money. Also, if you are planning on taking the health screening that is at the plant in July, Joan Mason has informed us that there will be a full blood draw instead of just a finger prick like last year. We are currently looking into reasonableness of such an invasive procedure for a health screening.

As we head into the hottest part of the year, let's not forget about protecting yourself from the elements. Drink plenty of water. If you feel like you are not feeling well because of the heat, do not hesitate to let someone know. The longer you wait, the worse it will get. Heat stress is very serious this time of year.

In Solidarity,
Mike Hensley
Unit 13 President

Unit 17
Mid America Extrusion

Brothers and Sisters,

Business has been up and down this quarter. Shipping 650,000 lbs. in April, 913,000 lbs in May, and 596,000 lbs in June.

We have hired three people however two of them have been laid off.

We have one grievance at the second step.

I would like to remind everybody to stay well hydrated in this extreme weather, because heat kills.

In Solidarity,
Howard W. Davis
Unit 17 President
Labor-Manufacturing Alliance Lays Out 7-Point Plan For Reviving Industry

WASHINGTON (PAI)—A joint alliance of the Steelworkers and forward-thinking U.S. industry is laying out a 7-point plan for reviving U.S. manufacturing.

The plan is headed by creation and implementation of an industrial strategy for the U.S., something the country had up until the end of World War II, Alliance for American Manufacturing executive director Scott Paul told lawmakers in late June.

Paul’s testimony, and that of other experts, came as the future of manufacturing once again loomed large both on Capitol Hill and on the campaign trail. That’s because Congress is on the verge of considering three Obama administration trade “treaties,” with Colombia, South Korea and Panama that could heavily impact U.S. factory jobs.

The trade pacts, combined with undervalued Chinese currency, hurt, not help, manufacturing Paul told the congressional Joint Economic Committee.

It’s also because Democratic President Barack Obama told a crowd at an Alcoa plant in Iowa on June 28 that reviving manufacturing is key to a healthy economy. And manufacturing is particularly key in the swing states and Great Lakes states Obama needs to win re-election next year.

While factories employed 1 of every 11 U.S. workers in 2010, the latest full-year data available, each factory job – depending on the industry – has a multiplier effect of between four and nine other jobs, another witness told lawmakers.

Manufacturing employs 16% of Indiana’s workers, 15.75% in Wisconsin, 13.62% in Iowa, 12.32% in Ohio, 12.27% in Michigan, 11.07% in Minnesota, 9.97% in Illinois and 9.16% in Missouri. The first five are in the top 10 in factory workers’ share of all workers. Oregon leads the U.S. in manufacturing’s share of state product (28.5%).

To bring business up, the Alliance for American Manufacturing’s plan included:

- “Pass legislation to allow American workers and firms to seek relief from the effects of currency manipulation by China and other countries using our existing trade laws. Such legislation would provide our manufacturing sector with an effective tool to seek a level playing field, and it would also deter China from continuing this highly protectionist and mercantilist practice.”

If the Chinese currency rose to its

⇒See PLAN, Page 15.
Wisconsin Recalls, Round 1: Labor-Backed Dems Sweep Primaries

By Mark Gruenberg , PAI Staff Writer
Dominique Paul Noth, Editor, Milwaukee Labor Press

MILWAUKEE (PAI)—Despite GOP shenanigans, led by fake candidates and a robocall from a right-to-life group – just before Election Day – urging voters to cast absentee ballots five days later, labor-backed Democratic state senate hopefuls swept six races in the first round of Wisconsin’s nationally watched state recall elections.

“Wisconsin voters were not fooled today as they voted to support candidates who are ready to stand up for middle-class Wisconsinites and put the brakes on” Right Wing GOP Gov. “Scott Walker’s extreme agenda,” the state AFL-CIO said after the vote.

The July 12 wins set up showdowns with six GOP state senators forced to fight for their seats after they helped Walker jam through his legislation earlier this year abolishing collective bargaining rights for 200,000 state and local public workers.

Unionists have fought back in a variety of ways, with the Wisconsin recalls as Round 1. Primaries occurred in three Democratic-held state senate seats on July 19, with the deciding recall votes – pitting the primary winners against each other – on Aug. 9. Results of the nine races will decide if the GOP keeps its 19-14 state senate lead.

Labor poured people into the state senate primaries, especially after the GOP recruited fake Democrats to try to knock off the labor-backed endorsed candidates.

Unionists also picked up wide backing nationwide. “What we’re seeing now is more and more Americans paying attention” to the anti-worker moves of Walker, Govs. John Kasich, R-Ohio, Rick Scott, R-Fla., Chris Christie, R-N.J., and others, AFT President Randi Weingarten told her union’s Teach conference in Washington, D.C.

“They’re realizing what it would mean to revoke workers’ rights and silence their voices, and they see it isn’t pretty,” Weingarten said.

The Milwaukee Labor Press reported that on Election Night, the “first text message from D.C. was someone who ‘could not believe!!’ the Republicans could find thousands of people” in one of the contested state senate districts “to pretend to be Democrats and vote for the fake one.”

“But the next message was from a happy supporter of the easy winner, real Democrat Sandy Pasch, who wound up with 21,000 votes and a 64%-36% margin. ‘If that 11,000 is the hard core of (GOP State Sen. Alberta) Darling supporters, Sandy wins in a walk,’” the caller said.

The Labor Press said Democrats, labor and the GOP all should be concerned. “There is genuine anger over her (Darling) carrying water for the governor and Pasch’s ‘Alberta, How Could You?’ campaign has considerable traction,” the paper said.

“But Pasch’s supporters also have reason for concern. There is some ground to be made up, not just with moderates but with people still uncertain about the whole concept of resorting to recalls,” the paper added. That’s one tactic labor is mulling nationwide. And the GOP will have a money edge: Darling alone raised $1 million.

≡See RECALL, Page 15.
NALC Food Drive Garners 70.6 Million Pounds Of Donations

WASHINGTON (PAI)—The Letter Carriers’ annual “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive, the biggest single food drive in the U.S., garnered 70.6 million pounds of donated food on May 14, just short of the all-time yearly record set in 2010, NALC said.

Union President Fredric V. Rolando thanked postal customers nationwide for chipping in so generously and his union’s members for collecting the food. It went to local food pantries, soup kitchens and similar food services. Some 50 million people, one-third of them children, depend on those organizations.

“Six days a week, Letter Carriers see first-hand the needs in communities. We’re privileged to be able to help the needy and to lead an effort that brings out the best in so many Americans,” NALC President Fredric Rolando said. “The slight downturn is related to the tough economy, which makes the drive all the more important.”

That’s especially true in summer months, when schools are closed and federally provided breakfasts and lunches are unavailable for needy children, added NALC Community Service director Linda Giordano, the food drive coordinator.

A typical report came from Jean Kempe-Ware, spokeswoman for the Oregon Food Bank. “In a year with a lot of national disasters – and we’re still dealing with high unemployment – it’s pretty amazing to collect over a million pounds of food in a day,” she told the Northwest Labor Press. Even though that’s 19% less locally than in 2010, it’s enough for more than a million meals, Kempe-Ware added. “We’re very grateful.”

Preliminary union figures show NALC West Coast Florida Branch 1477 led all branches, collecting 1,770,814 pounds of food. It was followed by Branch 599 in Tampa (1,729,382 pounds), Branch 458 in Oklahoma City (1,485,118), Branch 3 in Buffalo (1,383,220) and Branch 1100 in Garden Grove, Calif. (1,112,083).
That reluctance to get involved was clear among voters on both sides, say campaigners who went door to door. Even backers of Pasch – the most high-profile challenger to a GOP incumbent – “don’t want to be too obvious about it,” one labor canvasser told the Labor Press. “They want to be invited to the next block party.”

“The fake Dem thing also looked unseemly to many Republicans as well as Democrats, and even to TV commentators who tried not to shake their heads and chuckle too visibly on camera. Despite the claims that the GOP wasn’t involved, the reality was they were

European and Asian competitors and run counter to efforts to reduce damaging global imbalances.

- Enact new tax laws “targeted towards manufacturing, such as enhancing the clean energy manufacturing tax credit, dramatically expanding support for industrial energy efficiency efforts, and maintaining accelerated depreciation for plant and equipment investments.”

- Reform or kill “duplicative and unnecessary regulations,” but don’t use that as an excuse for “a race to the bottom with countries like China.” He called such a competition “foolhardy and ineffective as a means to boost our global competitiveness.

“A high-road strategy is the only feasible one for our nation. Advances in technology are making industries more sustainable, and ultimately, more competitive. … The goal should be for other nations to aspire to the quality of life that Americans enjoy, not to discard our efforts through a downward competitive spiral.

- Invest in infrastructure, a key cause of construction unions. “We must ensure that, to the maximum extent practicable, public funding be coupled with adherence to Buy America requirements,” Paul added.

- “Finally, enhance the skills and training infrastructure.” Better skills and training for industrial workers “is absolutely critical. Our nation needs a comprehensive network of opportunities, beginning in high school, progressing through community colleges, and continuing into lifelong learning.”

Sens. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, and Robert Casey, D-Pa., introduced legislation this year for an industrial strategy. Senate Democrats intend to roll out a “jobs creation” package this summer – even if it suffers from a GOP filibuster blockade.
Womens Rights Groups, Unionists Lead Protests Of Wal-Mart Ruling

By Mark Gruenberg

WASHINGTON (PAI)—Cindy Kirby has a simple message for the U.S. Supreme Court:

“My 21-year-old daughter” who just graduated college and is job-hunting, “deserves fair and equal pay, too,” when she lands a position, says the veteran Letter Carrier who totes mail in Brookfield, Colo.

But thanks to the High Court’s ruling tossing out the massive class-action suit by female Wal-Mart workers against the monster retailer, Kirby’s daughter and millions of other woman workers around the country might not get it.

That’s because the justices closed off a key avenue women and minorities use to battle pay discrimination on the job: Large class action suits against big discriminators.

The justices’ June 20 decision brought Kirby and more than 100 other women out to the court’s front steps the next day, to let the court know it’s wrong and to demand Congress right the injustice, by passing the Paycheck Fairness Act, among other things.

Though the ruling does not affect federal workers, such as Kirby and her NALC colleague, Geneva Kubal, of Alexandria, Va., “for us, it’s a solidarity thing,” says Kirby.

Thousands of other demonstrators nationwide joined the D.C. women, who included members of the Letter Carriers, The Newspaper Guild, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Coalition of Labor Union Women and the Government Employees. Protests of the ruling also occurred in other cities.

And protests came from leading union officials, too.

“Our courts should be available to working men and women who seek to challenge discriminatory promotion and pay practices by their employers. Today’s decision continues a disturbing trend of closing the courthouse doors to workers seeking redress against corporations,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

The United Food and Commercial Workers – which has been campaigning to organize Wal-Mart’s million-plus workers for years in the face of continual company labor law-breaking – and the Service Employees both urged Wal-Mart workers to join a new pro-worker Wal-Mart worker group established last week, the Organization United for Respect at Wal-Mart.

The court “turned its back on collective remedy for workers facing widespread injustices,” said UFCW President Joe Hansen. “UFCW will continue to demand accountability from Wal-Mart to its workers who deserve fair treatment, fair pay and respect on the job.

“Employers like Wal-Mart have long attempted to isolate workers and prevent them from solving problems together. This decision will not stop workers from joining together, through collective action, or prevent them from continuing to pursue their individual claims against Wal-Mart,” he stated.

“No single employer has a larger impact on employment standards than Wal-Mart. That’s why we must stop Wal-Mart's race to the bottom,” added SEIU President Mary Kay Henry. “This work must be done with Wal-Mart associates,” the company’s name for its workers. “We can change Wal-Mart, but we need to work together. Please encourage all the Wal-Mart associates you know to join OUR Wal-Mart at www.ForRespect.org,” Henry said.

“Denying 1.5 million women the right to bring legitimate discrimination claims in a class-action lawsuit against retail giant Wal-Mart without so much as a hearing forecloses a chance for justice and a voice,” stated AFT President Randi Weingarten.

“This decision is a huge setback for women facing workplace discrimination, including many who earn less than men for doing the same job. It sends a chilling message that Goliath still has the power to beat the Davids of the world…But we will continue to support the women of Wal-Mart in their fight for fairness and in Wal-Mart workers’ struggle.

∝See RULING, Page 17.
Women’s rights groups also protested the ruling, and pondered next moves. “One thing we hope to see happen is action in Congress, and specifically passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act,” which would outlaw employer bans on workers’ discussions of their pay on the job, says Anne King, an attorney with the National Women’s Law Center who was at the D.C. protest. That bill stalled in the Democratic-run Senate in 2010 – a GOP filibuster halted it – and has little chance in this Congress.

“We hope the ruling will galvanize Congress, and constituents, to push it,” King added. Debra Ness of the National Partnership for Women and Families agreed.

“All this did not satisfy Teamsters President James Hoffa, who has led the fight against letting the Mexican trucks roam U.S. roads. Teamsters lobbying blocked the trucks, or restricted them to a zone within 20 miles of the U.S. border, until recently. Union spokesman Galen Munroe said the union had not decided on its next moves, yet.

“Opening the border to dangerous trucks at a time of high unemployment” in the U.S. “and rampant drug violence” in Mexico “is a shameful abandonment of the Transportation Department’s duty to protect American citizens from harm and to spend American tax dollars responsibly,” Hoffa said in a statement.

“This so-called pilot program is a concession to multi-national corporations that send jobs to Mexico. It erodes our national security. It endangers motorists. It ignores the rampant corruption among Mexican law enforcement. It lowers wages and robs jobs from hard-working American truck drivers and warehouse workers. It adds insult to injury to force U.S. taxpayers to pay for monitoring equipment on Mexican trucks so Mexican carriers can take away their jobs,” Hoffa said.

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“Particularly now, when families rely more than ever on women’s earnings, women need fair pay and fair opportunities for advancement. Today’s ruling sets a dangerous precedent that will make it easier for employers – especially large ones – to discriminate against their employees while, at the same time, making it harder for workers to come together to challenge it. This creation of a potential ‘large company’ exception to our civil rights laws is a perversion of justice,” Ness said.

WASHINGTON (PAI)—The Teamsters are protesting the detailed U.S.-Mexico agreement, announced July 6, to let an approved set of Mexican trucks roam all U.S. roads. But the union hasn’t decided yet how it will try to stop the transaction.

The deal, announced in Mexico City by Obama Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Mexican Transportation Secretary Dionisio Arturo Pérez-Jácome Friscione, lets selected Mexican trucks roam all U.S. roads for at least 18 months – after U.S. officials inspect the trucks and certify the credentials and traffic records of the drivers.

The 8-page pact carries out a provision of NAFTA, the controversial U.S.-Mexico-Canada “free trade” treaty. It requires Mexican trucks and drivers who want to drive in the U.S. to pass safety, license, drug test, vehicle emissions and other inspections. It exempts participants in a prior, Bush-era Mexican truck demonstration project. It also orders the Mexican trucks and drivers to follow all U.S. truck driving laws and rules.

Initially, only selected Mexican trucks and drivers could roam in the U.S., but after three years, all trucks and drivers for an approved company – after passing the testing – could do so. U.S. truckers and firms would get the same rights in Mexico.

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