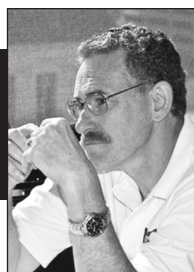


Who's On Our Side?

By Tom Chamberlain



As I watch the political pundits decipher the Aug. 9 Wisconsin election results to determine whether it was a Democratic victory (because the Democrats captured two Republican State Senate seats out of six, in one of the few legislative recall efforts in American history), or a Republican win (because they were able to fend off a massive grassroots attack and hold onto four of the six seats), I can't help but wonder at the information they ignore.

It appears that over \$35 million was spent on the recall campaigns. While some was from labor, the lion's share came from the Koch Brothers, conservative donors, and corporations.

The two victories in Wisconsin — and I do believe they were victories — are two small steps toward greater victories to come, as long as we learn the right lessons.

The Wisconsin battle was a grassroots workers' battle against big dollar contributors; the Koch Brothers against Wisconsinites who get up each morning and go to work, raise their kids, pay their taxes, and hope for a better future. And the magic of Wisconsin is that community groups, workers, students, and activists joined together and fought for a common goal. We finally realized that a workers' movement is larger than the union movement.

While the union movement is an essential and large component of a broader workers' movement, it isn't the only component. Community groups, churches, progressive activist organizations, and immigration groups, just to name a few, more often than not share the same goals and objectives as organized labor. They work to create and maintain good paying jobs in our communities and they fight to protect workers and their families from exploitation.

I hope Wisconsin begins a transformation of the union movement, away from the same sad tried and not-so-true practice of giving hundreds of millions of dollars to politicians and political parties each election cycle so that those same candidates who need us can become politicians who kick our middle class agenda to the curb in favor of a corporate agenda.

We can't forget that nationally, 73 percent of all Democratic contributions come from large corporations, while about 76 percent of Republican contributions are from corporations.

Wisconsinites created what could become a permanent grassroots organization that can elect candidates door by door, phone call by phone call. It's an organization that reaches onto the shop floor and into the church pew. It's the kind of organization that elects candidates and holds them accountable.

This transformation is occurring nationally within the AFL-CIO and many of your unions. During the next election cycle you will see less money going to candidates and political parties and more funds invested in states that are ready to create a strong grassroots infrastructure.

It's hard work, but we must deliver our message one person at a time. And we must work more closely with our community partners, forging a strong relationship that only comes when we understand each other's issues and trust that whenever and wherever possible we will be there for each other.

This is more crucial now than ever before.

The "Citizen United" Supreme Court decision allows corporations to spend limitlessly on political campaigns. Wisconsin proved that we can still win if we form coalitions and fight back together.

The bottom line is: Wisconsin proved that we have one weapon more powerful than corporate money. I think Oregon is ready to unleash that weapon, and change the game.

That weapon is you.

Are you ready to be on the side of a winning game?

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

Changes at the NW Labor Press

Newspaper revamps web site; has new printer and mailer

The non-profit Northwest Labor Press, in print since 1900, has been online at nwlaborpress.org since 1997. By the standards of the Internet, that's an eternity.

Internet search engines seem to have caught on that nwlaborpress.org is a bona fide "content" site. Because of that, our site performs fairly well in Google searches — for example, when the search subject is a union, or an employer that has had a labor dispute. But that's also partly because we face too little competition in reporting on the subjects we write about. Corporate-owned news media too seldom report on organized labor or delve into issues that impact working people — like employer abuses, NAFTA-style trade policies, or spiraling health insurance costs. So when someone searches for those things, our online articles come up.

That's good, but it's not good enough. Each month our print edition goes to more than 62,000 members of 82 local unions, but we think many

more working people need to be exposed to news from a labor union perspective. That's why last month we undertook a long-planned upgrade of our web site.

For those interested in such things, the new site is based on the WordPress content management system. It enables users to sign up for updates via e-mail, RSS feed, Facebook or Twitter.

Readers can also comment on stories, though comments are moderated: We want the site to be a place for building up the union movement, not a place where anti-union "trolls" trash unions as they do on other news web sites.

All the past articles are still online in their same locations, accessible via search engines as before.

Since web sites don't have the space and time limitations that print publications have, many articles will appear online before they appear in print. We've also begun providing daily roundups on the site, with links to union movement-related news that appears on other web sites. We hope these things will make the Labor Press more timely and valuable for our community.

Of course, not everything in our print edition will be online, and not

everything in our online edition will be in print. We don't see the revamped web site as a replacement for the print edition. We see it as a way to reach out to new readers, and as a supplement for existing readers.

As for the print edition, for the past seven years the newspaper has been printed and mailed at Oregon Catholic Press, a multi-union shop in Portland that produces the Catholic Sentinel for the Archdiocese of Portland. Last month OCP discontinued its commercial offset web press and shopped out the Sentinel to a nonunion printer. Our search for a unionized printer took us to Kent, Washington, where — starting with the Aug. 5 edition — the Labor Press is being printed at Rotary Offset Press. Our new mailer is Morel Ink, an all-union sheet-fed print and mail shop in Portland that used to operate under the name Whitham and Dickey.

We hope you'll like the changes. Feel free to comment and drop us a line with feedback and suggestions. And of course, we welcome financial contributions to support our work creating an online antidote to the anti-union media. That too, you can do online at our improved site, nwlaborpress.org.

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Portland pub goes union

Workers at The Guild Public House signed union recognition cards Aug. 13 to become members of Communications Workers of America Local 7901. It is the only unionized restaurant in Oregon not attached to a hotel.

There are six people in the bargaining unit.

The Guild, located at 1101 East Burnside St., Portland, is owned by Jesse Cornett and Molly Aleshire. The pub serves high quality food, microbrews and cocktails. It is open from 4 p.m. to midnight Monday through Saturday. The Guild rents the entire pub for private events daily until 3 p.m., and can accommodate groups up to 35 most nights.

For more information, call Jesse at 503-233-1743.

SPORTING GOODS

DRIFT BOAT, aluminum, 16ft 6in, 6 ft wide, use motor bracket or oars, seats 3 adults, \$2,000 obo. 530-774-3559
RIFLE MAGAZINES, all new, AK style; 3-30 rnd \$10 ea; 2-5 rnd \$2 ea or free with 30 rounders. 360-213-9540
15FT SYLVAN YUKON 30 Honda 4 stroke, elect tiller, Shorelander galv trailer Happy Troller, \$5,200. 503-658 5043
GOLF PULL CART, 3-wheel, excellent condition, \$40. 503-669-5324

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COLLECTOR PAYS cash for older toys, older oil paintings and older American art pottery. 503 703-5952
SILVER COINS, US and Canadian, 1964 and older dimes, quarters, half-dollars and dollars for top silver prices. 503-806-6287
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