

IBEW LOCAL 949 NEWSLETTER



Summer 2013

Volume 12 Issue 2

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Any organizing leads are appreciated and should be sent to

The attention of

Business Rep **Mike O'Connor**
At moconnor@ibewlocal949.org



Perez Nominated for Labor Secretary

Thomas Perez, Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Rights Division of the United States Department of Justice, has been nominated by President Obama to be the United States Secretary of Labor.

Born in Buffalo, New York of Dominican immigrants, Perez put himself through college with the help of scholarships and Pell grants, while also working as a trash collector, and in a warehouse.

Besides his work in the Justice department, Perez worked for Senator Edward Kennedy; for the



Clinton administration in the Department of Health and Human Services; has served as professor at the University Of Maryland School Of Law; and was Maryland's Secretary of Labor.

Perez has been involved in some high profile decisions and his nomination under went some hard scrutiny but is now pending before a full Senate vote which has been postponed until July.

Perez lives in Takoma Park, Maryland with his wife **Ann Marie Staudenmaier**, an attorney with the Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless, and their three children.

STOP THE CORPORATE POWER GRAB

Corporate funded politicians in the Senate are threatening to shutdown the National Labor Relations Board, the independent agency that protects workers rights, and let CEO's run amok! Tell your senator to stop the corporate power grab and confirm nominations now!



americanCRYSTALSugar LOCKOUT

On April 13, the locked-out workers of the American Crystal Sugar Company voted for the fifth time on the same concessions contract that was originally rejected in July 2011. The decimated ranks, 1,300 down to 400, voted to accept by 55%. As a result of the new contract, American Crystal will have the ability to replace union workers with

contract workers, dismantle seniority, redefine which workers are entitled to full benefits, and reduce its share of health care costs for union workers to that of its non-union workers. The pay increases workers will receive will be more than neutralized by the increased health care costs shifted to them

The bill by MN Representative **Joe Atkins** to curb lockouts, HF602, sits in Committee until next year. Another stonewall? Tell your Minnesota representative to move and pass this important legislation!

If Not Unions, then what?

You wouldn't know it from our nation's debate over Obamacare, but the U.S. has had government supported health care for nearly 80 years. Not only that, but our nation bolsters a retirement level well beyond the thin safety net provided by Social Security, and it even ensures Americans a path to a family-supporting wage. And, no, I have not mistaken the U.S. for a socialist European nation.

Our government assures us these broad economic benefits by guaranteeing our right to form a labor union. Those among us who join a union-- or who get a job with a company that matches the higher wages and benefits offered by its unionized competitors-- effectively win a more robust social safety net through government-sanctioned collective bargaining. Thus, the U.S. has long relied on *unions to do the kind of economic redistribution work* which is shouldered by governments in other nations.

However, our nation is about to lose this leveling tool. We learned this month that the nation's rate of unionization is at a 93-year low. Only 11.3 percent of America's workers belong to a union, including a mere 6.6 percent of private-section workers. In Maryland, union membership used to be above the national average, but in 2012 it fell below average to 10.6 percent. Much of the media coverage around this drop in union membership asks what this means for labor's future. The larger question, however, is what it means for America's future-- how will our nation temper the inequality of today's new, global economy if we can no longer rely on unions to do that work for us?

Unions have long served as economic equalizers. From 1947 to 1972, the U.S. economy was the undisputed economic world leader, and our nation used unions to ensure that we spread that wealth around. Once union membership started falling, the income divide grew. Since 1973, the drop in union membership accounts for a full third of the growth of wage inequality among men, according to a recent study by scholars at Harvard and the University of Washington. Today, the

income gap is larger than anything we've seen since before the Great Depression.

In fact, it was during the Great Depression that our nation struck a grand compromise to finally soften for its citizens the harshness of industrial capitalism. It was a bargain that had been in the works since the late 19th century, and we hammered out the details throughout the post-World War II period. America's citizens never got the kinds of universal health care programs, job insurance, or

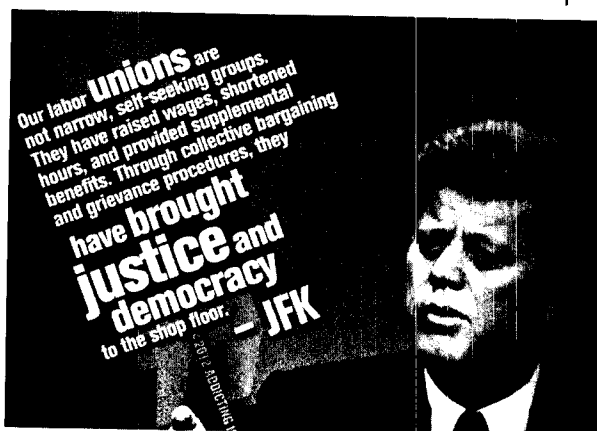
wage guarantees that benefited European workers. Instead, we won very basic economic security through Social Security and, eventually, Medicare. Plus we won the government's assurance that if we voted in a union election, the government would give legal backing to our

efforts to win greater economic security from our employers.

However, too few of us were ever able to grab onto this economic life boat. It turns out that it is difficult to form a union, and employers have shrewdly upped their resistance over the decades. Employers routinely fire, harass and threaten workers who want to form unions; the U.S. labor law is too weak to stop them, according to **Kate Bronfenbrenner** at Cornell University. In fact, in 2000, the Human Rights Watch declared that U.S. workers have effectively lost the freedom to form a union. However, labor law reform does not seem to be in the Obama administration forecast for the second term.

So, if not unions, then what's the new plan? What's the new institutional framework we will use to balance people's needs with those of corporations? If we're going to effectively scrap our nation's method of broad economic redistribution, what will we replace it with? A near 100 year low in unionization rates isn't just labor's problem. *It's a problem for anyone who does not want to see U.S. economic inequality shred our nation's social fabric.*

Author is Lane Windham from The Baltimore Sun



June is National Safety Month—Protect Your Skin



To someone who works indoors, sunlight may seem to be a friend, but for an outdoor worker, the sun should be considered the enemy. While outdoors between 10a.m. and 2 p.m., a worker is exposed to two-thirds of that day's ultraviolet radiation. More than 1 million new skin cancers are diagnosed each year, and 90 percent are caused by sun exposure. In order to guard against skin cancer and fight the effects of premature aging, people of all skin types need to understand how sunscreen works.

Ultraviolet radiation blasts down from the sun in different wavelengths; UVB and UVA. UVB rays cause sunburn and redness. SPF, which stands for "sun protection factor," is a guide to the amount of protection sunscreen provides against UVB rays. A sunscreen with SPF 30 means the wearer should not burn for 300 minutes.

A worker wearing sunscreen might feel safe and assume he or she is protected against skin cancer, but this is not the case. Repelling UVB rays isn't difficult; most sunscreens do it using their SPF as a gauge and they do a good job. UVA rays however are a different story. SPF has absolutely nothing to do with a sunscreen's protection against UVA rays, which reach deeply into the sub-skin layers and damage skin cells. UVA is more insidious than UVB, causing damage that goes undetected until years later when it turns up as wrinkles, premature aging, and skin cancer. (Fact: squamous cell carcinoma shows up on a 95 year old



Look for this on sunscreen label!

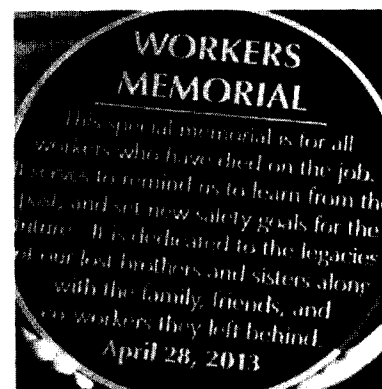
woman who hasn't been in the sun for years but was exposed when younger. Growth was cancerous but was removed safely.)

Workers should use a **broad-spectrum sunscreen that protects against both UVA and UVB rays with a SPF of 15+.** However, only three major FDA-approved ingredients protect against UVA rays: avobenzone "Parasol 1789," titanium dioxide, and zinc oxide. These ingredients are known as UVA filters, and are found in two forms: chemical and mineral. Avobenzone depends on a chemical reaction within the skin, while titanium and zinc oxide reflect light from the skin's surface, blocking harmful rays. Titanium protects against only short-wave UVA while zinc protects against both short-wave and long-wave UVA rays.

Using a chemical and mineral combination sunscreen will provide outdoor workers with the most effective UVB protection. Zinc oxide covers both UVA and UVB rays and has been used in different formulations for more than 300 years.

Besides using an effective sunscreen, protect the skin by wearing hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants. Avoid surfaces that reflect light more, such as water, sand, concrete, and white-painted areas. Use sunscreen in the winter. Know that skin burns faster at higher altitudes and the danger is greater closer to the start of summer. Avoid the sun lamps, tanning beds and salons.

Workers Memorial Day is observed every year on April 28. It is a day to honor those workers who have died on the job, to acknowledge the grievous suffering experienced by families and communities and to recommit ourselves to fight for safe and healthful workplaces for all workers. It is also the day OSHA was established in 1971.



The Amazon Army-Women in the Fight

In December 1921, on the frozen plains of Kansas, between 2,000 and 6,000 women—some pregnant and others carrying small children—marched to 63 mines in southeast Kansas, protesting unfair labor practices and laws regarding hazardous working conditions, poor pay, and discrimination. The New York Times dubbed them the “Amazon Army.”

They faced down the state militia, a machine gun attachment and 100 armed deputized men. Shots were fired at their feet and still they marched. The women were armed only with American flags and red pepper flakes, the latter of which they planned to throw into the eyes of union scabs.

Their leader was **Mary Skubitz**, a feisty woman who was born in Slovenia and immigrated to Kansas with her family when she was 3 years old. Skubitz, 34 when the march took place, could speak five languages.

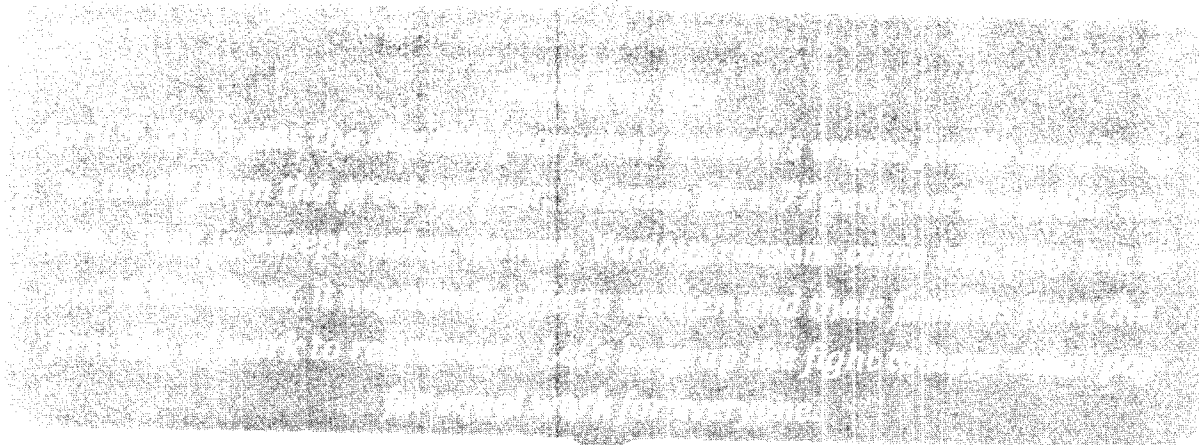
The 63 mines—located in Crawford and Cherokee Counties in southeast Kansas—produced a third of the nation’s coal. The people mining the coal were a mix of 50 nationalities.

The women effectively shut down the mines in southeast Kansas for three days, beginning Dec 12, 1921. The women fought for eight hour workdays, child labor laws, and equal rights for women and minorities. Forty-nine women were jailed during the protest on charges of illegal assembly and assault.

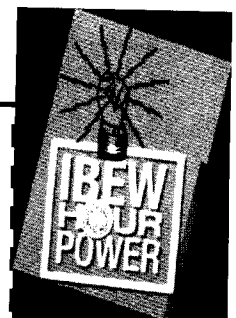
Marching Women in Action Near Pittsburg



In honor of the women, a Miner’s Memorial in Pittsburg details the story with photos, text and audio recordings. Also, the Franklin Heritage Museum in Franklin, considered the birthplace and meeting site of the women’s march features a plaque detailing the march. The museum is the site of the original Miners Union Hall



CapX2020 is a 1.9 billion dollar transmission update in Minnesota and surrounding areas. Many IBEW locals, including 949 are involved. Hear about the project from Local 160. Check it out at www.ibewhourpower.com.



Hooray for:

....faithful employees! Local 949 Business Representative **Mike O'Connor** reports the retirement of two members from Frontier Communications of International Falls, MN who, between them, have almost 86 years of service!

Tom Urban was initiated in November 1969 and **Dean Gelineau** in October of 1970 into Local 1716 when the company was

Continental Telephone. They were part of a group transfer when Local 1716 amalgamated with Local 949 in 1993. Both members retired in December 2012. Congratulations and best of luck!

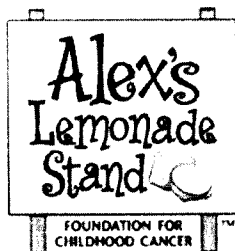


Dean Gelineau and Tom Urban

Oops! Sorry for...leaving **Steve Runge** from the Fox Lake Generating Station, Sherburn, MN off of the 2012 Retirement list.

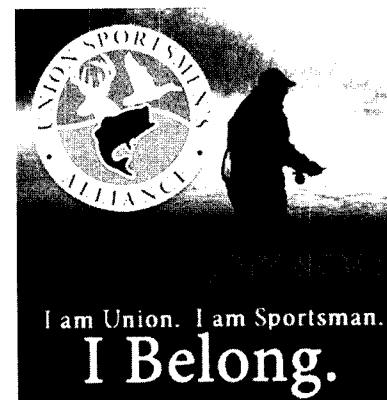
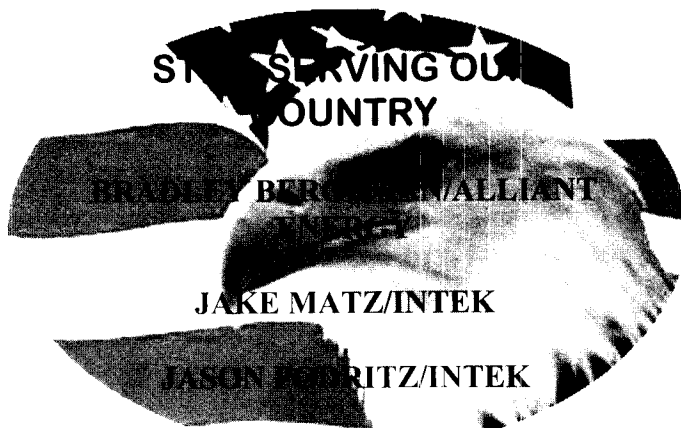


Teleflora, in addition to giving Union Plus members a 25% discount, will be donating 10% of the selling price of their Sunny Day Pitcher Bouquets to Alex's Lemonade Stand (ALSF) to benefit children's cancer research. This promotion runs from April 1 to September 30, 2013. So, buy a bouquet and put a smile on your loved one's face and on Alex's!!



Send a bouquet and help fight childhood cancer!

With any purchase of the Sunny Day Collection, Teleflora will donate 10% of the proceeds to support Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation!



Call the Hall

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Phone 1-952-890-8484 or
1-800-833-0949.

BARTZ, Rick, Business Rep.ext. 106
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KAUFMAN, Mark, Business Rep.ext. 107
INGALLS, Todd..... ext. 109
OAKES, RICK, Business Mgr..... ext. 104
O'CONNOR, Mike, Business Repext. 105
SOWER, Katie, Administrative Assistantext. 102
THOMFORDE, Gary, Business Rep.ext. 108
TIEDT, Elain, Office Mgr.ext. 101

E-mail: first name initial last name@ibewlocal949.org

Example: roakes@ibewlocal949.org

Address change? Call the Hall and the
International or use websites. THANKS!



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If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative, officer, or steward be present at this meeting. Without union representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

W

Of interest:

Local 949 meeting is the third Saturday of each month at the Burnsville Office at 10:00 a.m.

Find your legislative representatives:

www.house.gov
www.senate.gov

Support Unionism

www.ibew.org
www.aflcio.org
www.shopunionmade.com

Comments welcomed at the Burnsville address or cy43@charter.net

Check This Out:

IBEW has partnered with Excelsior College to give IBEW members access to college degrees and significant savings on tuition and fees. Excelsior College offers degrees, certificates and career development opportunities in a wide range of disciplines.

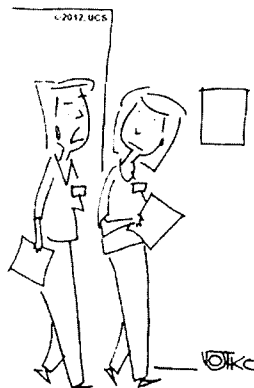
IBEW members may transfer credits already earned at other accredited colleges and universities, credit for evaluated industry training, such as NJATC & NUAP, and ACE-evaluated military training. Check it out at ibew.excelsior.edu

From our History:

It is time that all Americans realized that the place of labor is side by side with the businessman and with the farmer and not one degree lower.

President Harry S. Truman, 1948

Labor Solidarity has no borders.
From a Mural by Mike Alewitz, 1990

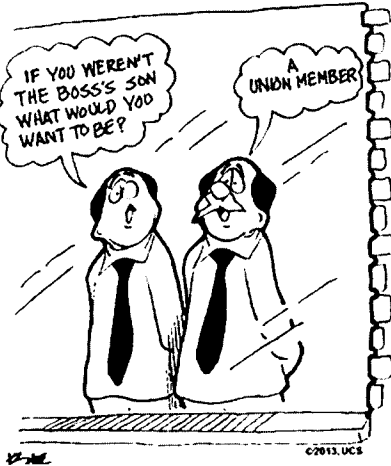


"It's called stress management,
because you get all the stress
from management."

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Small logo with text "S... 7"

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Union Families in Need!

IBEW Local 1141 has established a fund to help members whose homes were devastated in the Moore, Oklahoma tornado on May 20, 2013. "It's a real miracle that we've had no one seriously hurt," reported Business Agent **Jim Griffy**, "But we are aware of seven Local 1141 members whose homes were destroyed and seventeen more that sustained significant damage.

"We appreciate any amount anyone could spare to help these IBEW families who have lost everything, said Local Business Manager **Joe P. Smith**.

If you would like to mail a contribution, make your check or other instrument payable to IBEW 1141 TORNADO FUND (must be exact four words!) and mail to: IBEW 1141 Tornado Fund, Bank of Oklahoma, Special Contribution Accounts, POB 960051, Okla. City, OK 73196-0051. Please notify the local of your contribution at ibew1141@gmail.com or mail IBEW LU 1141, POB 95789, OKC, OK 73143-5789.

