



San Francisco Hotel Labor Dispute Embroils Academics

by Alan Karras

Most LAWCHA members are aware that a labor dispute involving fourteen San Francisco hotels forced the relocation of the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians earlier this spring. Meeting in San Jose in early April, the OAH attracted much smaller than usual attendance and will face substantial financial losses as a result. Yet many OAH members expressed satisfaction with the organization for taking a difficult, principled, pro-labor position. OAH President James Horton, President-elect (and LAWCHA member) Vicki Ruiz, and Executive Director Lee Formwalt worked tirelessly in the weeks preceding the meeting to canvas the membership, explore alternative arrangements, and surmount a number of major logistical problems involved in the relocation. Despite the flurry of email communications and broadcast memos, the background to the San Francisco hotel dispute is not well known.

On 29 September 2004, UNITE HERE (Local 2), the Hotel Workers' Union, called a two-week strike against four hotels in San Francisco. The union designed its strike to raise local consciousness about degenerating wage and benefit conditions for its members in some of the city's biggest conference hotel venues. Pickets went up, and for two days, 1,400 workers informed both hotel residents and city residents that they had worked for six weeks without a contract. Many faced falling real wages and, at the same time, dramatically increasing health insurance premiums.

On 1 October, management of the fourteen-hotel management group, known as the San Francisco Multi-Employer Group, locked out 4,300 workers at its fourteen hotels. Pickets went up at all of these hotels immediately. Members of the public routinely heard "don't check in, check out" as they walked the

streets surrounding Union Square. The hotel management group had hired strikebreakers in order to keep their properties running. Guests complained about delays in room service and housekeeping, but the hotels remained firm in their tactics.

Faced with a growing public relations problem, and a union-friendly Board of Supervisors (eight of the eleven attended a rally in support of the hotel workers), San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom attempted to bring the parties together through mediation. The management team refused to budge. After twice rejecting his efforts to mediate the dispute, the mayor carried through on his promise to walk the picket lines with workers. He joined the picket lines at the Westin St. Francis on 26 October. City hotel business declined, causing inconvenience to many and putting the city's economic rebound at risk. Meanwhile, the workers kept their picket lines staffed twenty-four hours a day,

seven days a week. Other area unions, including the California Faculty Association (the Union for California State University Faculty), joined the picket lines in solidarity with the hotel workers.

With the approach of the holiday season -- traditionally one of the busiest for travel to San Francisco -- management finally agreed to a 60-day cooling off period. They allowed workers, whose benefits were coming close to exhaustion, to return to work on 20 November 2004. The pickets went down, the noise stopped. But the dispute remained.

To say the least, bargaining has been very slow -- despite both sides privately saying a deal is possible. The cooling off period ended in mid-January, but bargaining has not taken place since 14 February. The union has said that it made the last proposal and that it is waiting for a *(cont'd on page 11)*

The Wobbly Centenary: Celebration and Show

by Paul Buhle

A few months ago, I asked the Northland Poster Collective to make a up a new button reading: "2005: It's a Wobbly Year." It was a natural move. Many of us labor historians, labor educators, labor history buffs and card-carrying Wobblies had been talking about the upcoming Centenary for several years. Local labor choruses were tuning up. Scattered groups, especially but not only in the Northwest, started making plans. Then it got closer. Now it's high time to ask, What does it mean for us?

This is a fascinating question because it brings back into view so much of what the history of the labor main-

stream has often lacked -- romance, bohemianism, biting satire, connections with the itinerant and the homeless, and something that I've called the "American version of socialism." That is, the collective quest for something like "workers' control" (in David Montgomery's sense) has never been far from apex of strike movements or the *(cont'd on page 4)*

In This Issue:

Letter from the President	2
From the Grassroots	5
Random Notes	8

Greetings from Jim Green

President of LAWCHA

It's a pleasure to take this opportunity to recognize and thank a few special LAWCHA members.

First of all, I appreciate the excellent work of our Program Committee Co-Chair and Board member Nancy Gabin, who has teamed up with Don Watson, representing the Southwest Labor Studies Association, to put together a wonderful program for our joint meeting with SWLSA in Santa Barbara on 5-7 May. Check it out -- I know you will all want to be with us if you can.

Special thanks are due to Board member Zaragosa Vargas for coordinating the Santa Barbara meeting, and also to Nelson Lichtenstein for the support he has provided.

Dan Bender, the other Program Committee Co-Chair, was responsible for setting up several LAWCHA panels at the OAH in March, including a luncheon session chaired by Eileen Boris concerning current organizing among direct care workers. This session was left out of the original printed program, so Dan had to work with the OAH to make sure our activities are featured in the new program to be held in San Jose. He deserves our thanks for everything he has done at the OAH.

Some of the less visible but quite valuable contributions to LAWCHA are those made by our extremely competent Treasurer Tom Klug, the director of our fine website, Cindy Hahamovitch, the head of our Membership Committee, Heather Thompson, and our superb Executive Secretary, Mary Nash, who has been putting in extra hours for us because we have grown so much in the past year. I also appreciate the excellent advice I received from LAWCHA Secretary Cele Bucki, and our Vice President, Alice Kessler-Harris, as well as our past President Joe Trotter in preparing an agenda of important items for the Board of Directors to consider in Santa Barbara.

I am not finished yet: Much of the success of LAWCHA in recent months is due to the quality of our journal, *Labor*, and the accomplishments of its editor Leon Fink and, in a related way, to the enormous

support Duke University Press provides our association.

It is a pleasure as well to recognize the accomplishments of our Board member Kevin Boyle, whose book *Arc of Justice: A Saga of Race, Rights, and Murder in the Jazz Age*, won the National Book Award this year, and also to congratulate LAWCHA members Toby Higbie and Bob Korstad, co-winners of this year's Philip Taft Labor History Award, for their works (respectively), *Indispensable Outcasts: Hobo Workers and Community in the American Midwest, 1880-1930*, and *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South*.

A final note -- in the next few months I will be speaking at several public events where I will be able to promote LAWCHA and recruit new members:

*May 1 in Chicago, for a talk on the international dimensions of the Haymarket case and its enduring memory at the annual meeting of the Illinois Labor History Society. The meeting will be followed by a march to the new free speech monument in Haymarket Square.

*June 4 at the University of Colorado Pueblo, where Jonathan Rees is organizing a seminar on the Ludlow massacre and the recently troubled history of the monument.

*June 5 at the rededication of the restored Ludlow monument, where the United Mine Workers have organized a program and asked me to speak for LAWCHA. Betsy Jameson, co-chair of our Ludlow Committee, will be there too, and will report on the progress of the work she is leading to have the site declared a national landmark.

Message from the Program Committee

Nancy Gabin and Dan Bender, Co-Chairs

LAWCHA will meet together with the Southwest Labor Studies Conference at the University of California at Santa Barbara on 5-7 May 2005. This joint conference aims to bring together unions, universities, and social justice groups around the general theme of Labor in Protest: The Legacy of the 1960s for the U.S. Labor Movement. The conference will open on Thursday May 5 with sessions running from 11:00 am-1:00 pm and 2:30 pm-4:30 pm. Bill Fletcher, president of the TransAfrica Forum and labor activist, will present a plenary address entitled "Rising to the Challenge: The Interconnections of the Black Freedom Movement and Organized Labor" on Thursday 5 May at 5:30 pm. On Friday, sessions will run from 9:00 am-11:00 am, 11:15 am-1:15 pm, and 1:45 pm-3:45 pm. Mike Davis, professor of history at the University of California, Irvine and the author of works such as *Prisoners of the American Dream*, will offer a plenary address entitled "Riot Nights on Sunset Strip" on Friday 6 May at 4:00 pm. On Saturday, sessions will run from 9:00 am-11:00 am and 12:00 noon-2:00 pm. The sessions include roundtables and panels devoted to a variety of topics, including farm worker organizing, organizing efforts in unions and working class communities by radicals and revolutionaries, union reform efforts of the 1960s and 1970s, social policy and poverty programs, labor links to the African American freedom struggle, new ethnic and gender leadership in the AFL-CIO, new tactics in labor organizing, deindustrialization, plant closures, and outsourcing. There will be art and photography exhibits as well as film screenings.

The official conference program -- including information about registration, travel, and lodging as well as session details -- is available at www.lawcha.org/SWLSA.php (click on "conference program").

Membership Committee News

Heather Thompson, Chair

Great news:

LAWCHA has far more members in March 2005 than it did a year ago! This wonderful growth can be attributed to several successful outreach efforts that took place over the last year. First of all, we reached many important labor organizations and many new individuals in unions and labor studies groups -- such as the United Association for Labor Education, *Labor Notes*, the Center for Working Class Studies, the Pacific Northwest Labor history Association, the Illinois Labor History Society, the North American Labor History Conference participant list, and the Newberry Labor Lecture Series list -- thanks to the hard work of Duke University Press in promoting LAWCHA in mailings and at conferences where *Labor* was

displayed. It also bears noting that some LAWCHA folks went beyond the call of duty and personally took the time to distribute our brochures (by the boxful) at various large labor functions over the past year. Speaking of the brochures: these have been going like hot-cakes. As it turned out, the new brochure is a wonderful way for us to advertise LAWCHA.

This summer and next year, the Membership Committee is planning to embark on several new outreach activities, including increasing our presence at national historical conferences and

approaching specific labor organizations to explore ways in which we might more effectively reach their members.

The **LAWCHA Newsletter** is published twice yearly and mailed to all paid-up members of the Labor and Working Class History Association. A PDF version (and back issues) are available via the Association's web-site:

www.lawcha.org

Copy for the Fall issue is due on 15 September 2005 and can be sent to one of the co-editors:

Rick Halpern, University of Toronto, rick.halpern@utoronto.ca
Dan Letwin, Penn State University, letwin@psu.edu



New LAWCHA Board Members

This past fall, the following members were elected to the LAWCHA Board:

Rick Halpern (University of Toronto)
Ruth Needleman (Indiana University)
Michael Merrill (Empire State College)
Liesl Orenic (Dominican University)
Paul Ortiz (UC, Santa Cruz)
Francille Rusan Wilson (Maryland)

They join the following continuing Board members:

Jefferson Cowie (Cornell University)
Elizabeth Esch (New York University)
Dana Frank (UC, Santa Cruz)
Matt Garcia (Brown University)
Dave Riehle (United Transportation Union, Local 650)
Carmen Theresa Whalen (Williams)



Wobblies (cont'd from cover)

artist's quest in every medium for control of the particular means of reproduction. Where "socialism" as a word has been absent, the feeling has been widespread that the corporate hierarchy (or the government hierarchy, in public service work) is worse than useless. Its authorities don't know or care much about the real problems of the job; and those who do, could probably do it better themselves.



The Industrial Workers of the World has, of course, always epitomized the cross-border and transnational quest for labor solidarity -- especially south of the border, whence a considerable bulk of the post-1965 immigration has come. Wobblies also welcomed Asian workers when the AFL scorned them, offered powerful examples of black/white collaboration, and if utterly indifferent to struggles like the one for women's suffrage, nevertheless broke down gender barriers in important ways. It was and even now remains an inspiration to labor songsters (Ani DeFranco's recording with Utah Philips is likely to be the most widely heard labor music in the last decade).

The idea of the IWW never quite went away, even when the ranks of the old-timers dwindled badly. A large number of Americans over fifty, at least into the 1980s, would recognize the word "Wobblies," as a sort of literary reference, even if they had never met a live Wob. Cultural icons stay live somehow. To take one example: a statue of the "Old Wobbly" was erected in downtown Santa Cruz, California, by a left-leaning local government in the 1980s, after a late resident who often occupied that spot. Of course, Wobbly songs have remained alive as ever in the songbooks for labor events of all kinds, from picket-lines to Labor Day picnics to choral concerts.

It should have been no surprise that Students for a Democratic Society organizers, their national office in Chicago, should have started wearing IWW buttons during 1966-68 and affecting what they took to be Wobbly lifestyles, as National Secretary Greg Calvert called for "Student Syndicalism." After a waving of crossed black and red flags at the 1968 convention, Maoism took hold and it seemed as if

the Wobbly phase had been a phantom. But not quite. The mixture of bohemianism and anarchism at the local level, in the counter-cultural communities like Santa Cruz (also alive in Eugene, Portland, Seattle, the Bay Area, Madison, and so many other places), evoked a wobbliness part theater, part organic. To take another example, this one from Wisconsin: graduate teaching assistants thought about the Wobblies even as they resolved to affiliate with the mainstream.

The connection of Wobblies and cartoons or comics was historic, if only occasionally seen in the Underground Press and the left-wing press (outside, of course, of the *Industrial Worker*, always struggling onward). Mister Block, drawn by Ernest Riebe, was after all the first comic book published in the US (in 1912), more than twenty years ahead of the commercial trade. Wobbly cartoons, some of them by the fabled Joe Hill, have been reprinted so many times, from Joyce Kornbluh's *Rebel Voices to Labor's Heritage* of the AFL-CIO, that we recognize many of them instantly, old friends to the labor historian.

The emergence of the graphic novel in the chain stores set me into motion to find comic artists, and the milieux of youngish artists around the militant peacenik annual *World War 3 Illustrated* was defi-

nately ready. Nicole Schulman, co-editor of *Wobblies, A Graphic History*, did the important work while I organized the project as if I were setting down to publish *Radical America* (whose second issue, in 1967, proudly bore Wobbly logos and a lead article by Wob historian Fred Thompson). It's a breakthrough in labor history art as well as a fine way to get history across to young people.

Out of *Wobblies, A Graphic History*, came the Traveling Wobbly Show (www.wobblyshow.org), an art exhibit with its own music CD, scheduled for some 25 locations over 2005 and somewhat beyond. The works of the late Carlos Cortez (he died in January) play a central role, but the work of Dylan Miner, the reproduced panels from *Wobblies*, a series of posters on Emma Goldman's Wobbly connection, and other pieces highlight the diversity of approaches. Many in LAWCHA will see us in Santa Barbara, others will catch us in Vancouver, Providence, Barre, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Montreal, Chicago, St. Paul, Atlanta, Santa Cruz, Los Angeles, Portland, San Francisco, or elsewhere.

What will an art-and-music revival do for labor history? The most obvious thing for those of us working furiously on an upcoming March labor history/transnationalism conference at Brown has been the outreach to young people, students, artists and others. The appeal of "comics" as much as of "Wobblies" may help do that elsewhere. But there are so many other angles and interests, for all the people of various ages and backgrounds now in touch with us. Time to experiment: we'll see!

For further information, contact Derek Seidman at derekseidman@yahoo.com, or Paul Buhle and Paul_Buhle@Brown.edu

From The Grassroots

New England

From New Haven

Lisabeth Pimentel

On 14 January 2005, President Lawrence Summers of Harvard University made his controversial argument that "innate" differences between men and women might explain why men are more likely to advance in academic science. On January 17, graduate teachers at Yale University, members of the Graduate Employees and Students Organization (GESO/UNITE HERE), staged a walk-in on Yale's Provost, Andrew Hamilton, demanding negotiations with the union toward policy changes that would remove many of the structural impediments to the advancement of women and people of color in the American academy, including access to childcare, dependent healthcare, fair promotion standards, and a grievance procedure. One month later, 150 graduate teachers held a speak-out in President Richard Levin's office, demanding that he implement these changes and speak out against Lawrence Summers's comments, which he has as yet refused to do.

In early March, GESO – in conjunction with Graduate Student Employees United at Columbia and Graduate Employees Together-UPenn (GET-UP) – released a report called "The (Un)Changing Face of the Ivy League" (available at www.geso.org), with endorsements from the Rainbow Push Coalition, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Feminist Majority Foundation, and other civil rights organizations. The report argues that Ivy League universities have made little progress in hiring women and people of color into tenure-track jobs. Instead they are hiring them into "casual" or temporary jobs – as graduate teachers and researchers, postdocs, and adjuncts – which have little or no job security, low wages, and poor benefits.

The graduate teachers' unions at both Yale and Columbia, who continue to seek union recognition and negotiations toward contracts, held card counts in mid-December 2004 certifying that each union represents a clear majority of the graduate teachers on these campuses. At Yale, GESO represents

over sixty percent of the teachers. Both unions, due to the intransigence of their administrations, are considering striking this semester. GESO is also working in federation with Locals 34 and 35 at Yale, District 1199 at the Yale-New Haven Hospital, and the Community Organized for Responsible Development, which is fighting for a community benefits agreement between Yale-New Haven and the New Haven community.

Lisabeth Pimentel is Organizing Coordinator for UNITE HERE/Graduate Employees and Students Organization, Federation of Hospital and University Employees

Mid-Atlantic

From New York

Gail Malmgreen

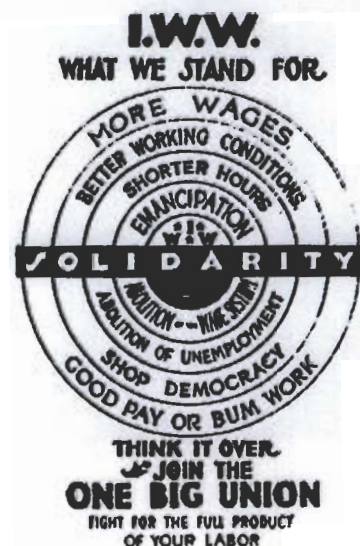
The annual meeting of the New York Labor History Association, held on the evening of September 23rd, featured a lecture on "Gotham during World War II" by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Mike Wallace of the Gotham Center at the City University of New York. Wallace's thought-provoking talk was a compressed version of several chapters of the forthcoming second volume of *Gotham: A History of New York City*. On October 5th the NYLHA co-hosted a book party for David Von Drehle's *Triangle: The Fire That Changed America*, at the Wagner Labor Archives, NYU. On November 16th the Association hosted its annual John Commerford Labor Education Awards reception at the headquarters of the United Federation of Teachers; this year's awardees were legendary arbitrator Theodore (Ted) Kheel and the Jewish Daily Forward Association.

On February 22 NYLHA hosted a Black History Month lecture by Professor Clarence Taylor of Baruch College on race issues and the Teachers Union of New York during World War II. On May 9 at 6:30 we will co-host (with Actors' Equity Association and the Wagner Labor Archives, NYU) a panel discussion on "Broadway and the Blacklist" – featuring actors Madeline Gilford, Richard Masur, and Peter Friedman, and Actors' Equity archivist Keyvne Baar. Free and open to the public, at Actors' Equity headquarters, 165 W. 46th St.

From Washington DC

Joe McCartin

More than 20 Georgetown University students staged a successful nine-day hunger strike from 15-24 March 2005, demanding that their university pay a living wage to all employees, including those subcontracted to perform janitorial and food services on campus. At issue were the wages and benefits of some 450 contract employees on Georgetown's Washington, DC, campus. The Georgetown Solidarity Committee, the student organization which coordinated this strike, won some significant concessions from the university. These include: a 14.7% increase in the university's minimum total compensation rate for contract employees by 1 July 2005; a 7.7% increase in minimum compensation by 1 July 2006; annual COLAs indexed to the local cost of living to be instituted following the 2006 raise; equal access to the library privileges, English as a Second Language courses, transportation services, and other benefits enjoyed by regular university employees; and a statement by the university that "all working members have the right to freely associate and organize, and that the University will respect the rights of employees to vote for or against union representation without intimidation, unjust pressure, or hindrance in accordance with applicable law." The hunger strike drew substantial support from local unions and community and religious groups, as well as from national union leaders. In addition, students on several other campuses engaged in solidarity fasts to express support for the Georgetown students.



Read more about the Georgetown living wage campaign at studentorgs.georgetown.edu/solidarity/lw.

The university's new policy is spelled out at www.georgetown.edu/svp/justemployment.html.

Midwest

From Chicago

Toby Higbie

Labor history is alive and well in Chicago. Thanks to the energetic leadership of LAWCHA members Leon Fink and Toby Higbie, the Newberry Library Labor History Seminar has attracted a steady audience to discuss scholars' works-in-progress in a supportive and rigorous workshop setting.

The seminar takes a broad view of "labor history." Topics in the 2004-05 season ranged from African-American women and the informal economy of early 20th-century Chicago, to working-class autobiography and prison labor, to labor movement strategies for dealing with contemporary globalization. All papers are pre-circulated to seminar participants, so the discussions are lively and informed. There is still time to submit a proposal for next year's seminar.

For more information contact Ginger Shulick: shulickg@newberry.org, 312-255-3524. The seminar is co-sponsored by the Newberry Library, the History Departments at the University of Illinois at Chicago and Northern Illinois University, and LAWCHA.

Chicago

Liesl Orenic

On 18 February, 2005, the Chicago Center for Working-Class Studies (www.workingclassstudies.org) celebrated the printing of *THE LABOR TRAIL: Chicago's History of Working-Class Life and Struggle*, at Columbia College. To an audience of about 100 including labor activists, students and faculty, Leon Fink (University of Illinois-Chicago), Jeff Helgeson, Dan Harper and John Flores (graduate students at UIC), and Liesl Orenic (Dominican University) presented segments of the map and talked about the powerful heritage of Chicago's workers, their communities and institutions. The evening included comments by three long-time Chicago activists: Tim Leahy, Secretary-Treasurer of the Chicago Federation of

Labor, Katie Jordan, President of the Chicago chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, and Ed Sadlowski of the Steelworkers District 31.

The Chicago Center for Working-Class Studies launched this project in October 2002 as an effort to literally put Chicago's working-class history "on the map." Support for the project has come from the Illinois Humanities Council, the Chicago Metro History Education Center, the Illinois Labor History Society, the Chicago Federation of Labor, the Newberry Library, and the UIC History Department. Copies of the map are now available at www.labortrail.org.

This April 2nd the CCWCS will hold its second (now annual!) Getting Paid to Cause Trouble: Organizing for Social Justice event. Funded by the Weiboldt Foundation, this forum is designed to bring together national and local organizers and Chicago area college students. With over 60 students in attendance last year, Nancy MacLean (Northwestern University), Dorian Warren (University of Chicago and CCWCS), Liesl Orenic (Dominican University), and Michelle Couturier (Illinois Education Association, NEA) anticipate an even bigger turnout this time around since the forum will be held in the new University Center, a multi-university dorm in downtown Chicago.

From the Twin Cities

Peter Rachleff

Twin Cities LAWCHA members have helped plan several events for the monthly public programs of the St. Paul Labor Speakers Club, based at the St. Paul Labor Center/Trades and Labor Assembly. On January 31, we screened "The Take," Naomi Klein's documentary about factory takeovers in Argentina. On February 28, we celebrated a look back at the history of the civil rights movement with three eye-witness participants: Frank Hickman, who grew up in a small town in South Carolina, and is currently chairman of his United Transportation Union local, based in Duluth; Arthur McWatt, a retired high school teacher whose mother was president of the Ladies Auxiliary of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in the 1940s; and Paul Moe, who taught at Alcom A & M in the early 1970s. On March 28, our program was "Under the Starry Plough - The Irish Labor Movement," with Michael Cavlan, a former member of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, who is today a staff

person with the Minnesota Nurses Association, and Rev. Fintan Moore, who was born in Dublin and whose grandfather was a founding member of the Irish Carpenters Union.

We are looking ahead to our seventh annual collaboration with the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library known as "Untold Stories: A Celebration of Labor History." This year's program will begin May 5 with a talk by Liza Featherstone on women workers at Wal-Mart, followed by a local panel of union and community activists who have challenged Wal-Mart's invasion of the urban Twin Cities. Other programs will highlight the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World, including a walking tour of IWW historical sites led by LAWCHA member Dave Riehle, and a panel discussion on the fiftieth anniversary of the merger of the AFL and the CIO in the Twin Cities events.

From Madison

Will Jones

On 1 May 2005, The Wisconsin Labor History Society will observe the 119th anniversary of the 1886 attack on an 8-hour day demonstration in Bayview, a working-class community in Milwaukee.

The Wisconsin Labor History Society will hold its annual meeting on 7 May at the United Auto Workers Hall in Janesville. Speakers will include Doris Thom, who will relate her experiences as the first black woman hired in the Janesville General Motors plant, and Wisconsin Black Historical Society director Clayborne Benson, who will discuss the underground railroad in Wisconsin.

From Urbana

Bryan Nicholson

At a March 10 rally, volunteers from the Graduate Employees' Organization confronted the Board of Trustees for the University of Illinois. Inside the meeting, GEO member Rachel Shulman criticized a plan to modestly increase graduate employee health benefits as grossly inadequate. Summarizing a recent survey of UIUC grads about their health insurance, Shulman argued that the university must increase the employer contribution to catastrophic and dependent coverage, and implement a prescription drug plan. Dramatic increases would be required for

Illinois to be competitive with the grad insurance provided by other Big 10 universities such as UW, Madison and UM, Ann Arbor. Outside, forty protestors held aloft signs that read "No Insurance, No Peace" and "UIUC: #1 in Basketball, #26 in Health Care." Despite the persistence of an icy prairie wind, the spirits of the protestors were high and their voices were clearly audible to the trustees inside.

South

From Florida

Robert Zieger

On February 14, the United Faculty of Florida (NEA; AFT) won a major victory in its two-year struggle to retain bargaining rights for the core academic faculty and staff at the University of Florida. In a sweeping ruling, Florida's First District Court of Appeals overturned a ruling made two years ago by the state Public Employee Relations Commission that held that changes in the governance of the university system had abrogated a twenty-five year collective bargaining relationship and required recertification of each of the 11 UFF chapters. The court cited a wide range of precedents and used sharp and categorical language in rejecting PERC's ruling that the new Boards of Trustees were not successor employers, a ruling that UFF challenged.

Naturally, while UFF was confident of its case in the legal arena, it has nonetheless proceeded to re-establish bargaining rights on the individual campuses. Either through elections or through card counts, UFF chapters have been validated and collective bargaining has been resumed at 10 of the 11 campuses, with new contracts now in operation at several.

At UF (which is in Gainesville), a card-signing drive yielded 72% support for UFF. The UF administration and trustees, however, insisted on drastic changes in the bargaining unit, which had been in stable existence since 1976. PERC has not issued a definitive ruling on the question of bargaining unit; thus, the status of UFF in Gainesville has remained uncertain. While the conditions of the old contract remain in force, and while UFF grievance committees are functioning capably to ensure that its terms are being observed, PERC's protracted deliberations on the bargaining unit issue have delayed a definitive

vote.

The recent District Court ruling would seem to obviate the need for a bargaining unit ruling and would seem to require the Board of Trustees and the university administration to resume the bargaining relation that had prevailed for a quarter of a century. The clear logic of the decision would be to require immediate resumption of recognition and immediate beginning of collective bargaining but we have learned that "justice delayed is justice denied" is no idle adage. The administration continues to "assess the implications and possibilities" of the ruling and it is unclear at this writing as to how the decision will actually be applied. Nonetheless, legal validation has boosted UFF morale and has made the resumption of bargaining relations in the near future a virtual certainty.

Robert Zieger is Vice-President of the United Faculty of Florida

West

From The Bay Area

Don Watson

The featured speaker at the February annual meeting of the San Francisco Labor Archives and Research Center at ILWU Local 34 hall was Richard Steven Street, agricultural labor historian and photographer. He is author of two recent books: *Photographing Farm Workers in California* and *Beasts of the Field: A Narrative History of California Farm Workers in California, 1769-1913*.

The Bay Area Labor History Workshop opened this Spring with a presentation by Don Watson on "Labor and the Lettuce Grower-Shipper Bud Antle." Further BALHW presentations are planned this Spring, starting with Lynn Bonfield and Carol Cuenod (April 17) on the archival collections from ILWU founder Harry Bridges and his wife Nikki Sawada Bridges. Their topic title is "New Treasures from the Collections of Harry and Nikki." Molly Martin and Meri Issel follow on May 1, with a presentation on "Women in the Building and Construction Trades." Finally this year's BALHW annual dinner – June 1 at John's Restaurant – will feature a talk by Eugene Vrana, ILWU archivist, on ILWU's educational programs.

This year's Elaine and Karl Yoneda Memorial Award goes to Walter Johnson, retired leader

of the San Francisco Labor Council, for his decades of work in support of lower paid workers and people of color. It will be presented in May at this year's Southwest Labor Studies Association conference at UC Santa Barbara.

Meanwhile, editors and authors who created the Rutgers University anthology "American Labor and the Cold War" will be honored with appearances on radio station KPFA (April 4) and at the Berkeley Public Library (April 5). This book was based on papers given at the SWLSA conference in San Francisco in 1999.

Also documentary filmmaker Maria Brooks recently presented at the Port of San Francisco a work-in-progress showing of "Shipping Out: The Story of America's Women Seafarers." She is still raising funds to complete this project.

Canada

From Alberta

Alvin Finkel

The Alberta Labour History Institute (ALHI) has been videotaping Alberta labour pioneers and rank-and-filers in an effort to create an oral history record of labour struggles and workers' lives in the province. ALHI is currently planning to create a website that will include many of these videos and transcriptions. ALHI has also been producing a timeline with write-ups of key events in Alberta labour history for the website. Alvin Finkel, secretary of ALHI, has written a paper on what we are learning from the videotapes, to be presented in the Oral Labour History panel at the Congress of Historical Sciences conference in Australia this July. You can get a copy from Alvin at finkel@telusplanet.net.

From Vancouver

Mark Leier

The Centre for Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University has compiled an annotated bibliography of children's and young adult literature on labour themes. It may be found at www.sfu.ca/labour. Currently the Centre is working with ILWU Local 500, Vancouver, BC, on an oral history project with retired members. Researchers at the Centre have completed a historical brief on the strike as political protest for the Hospital Employees'

Union as part of a labour relations board hearing and its ongoing struggles with employers and the provincial government. Work is nearing completion on the "Death of a Miner" website. Offering primary historical material, it invites readers to learn about and analyze the 1914 death of Joseph Mairs, an activist in the 1912-14 Vancouver Island coal mining strike, who died in prison while serving a sentence for "rioting."

For further information, contact Mark Leier at leier@sfu.ca, or go to www.sfu.ca/labour.

RANDOM NOTES

From Dan Comford:

A copy of the **California History Labor Map** is now obtainable from the California Department of Education. The cost is \$5, plus a \$1 handling fee. To order a copy, call 800-995-4099. This is the only means by which a copy can be ordered. The map was commissioned by the California Assembly's Speaker's Committee on Labor Education. Work on the map was overseen by the California State Library in 2003-04. Dan Comford (San Jose State University) was the project's historian and David Fuller (California State University, Northridge), the cartographer. The map is four feet by three feet in size. It contains, and locates, with short descriptions, 262 major events in California labor history. The map also provides smaller inset maps of California and text with important contextual information.

In conjunction with this project, a California Labor History website has been mounted, containing, among other things, a California labor history chronology of 1,100 events, and a range of long and short essays on California labor history. The design and development of the website was overseen by San Francisco State University. The website address is calpedia.sfsu.edu/calabor.

From Steve Early, CWA District 1:

In the midst of current debates about AFL-CIO restructuring and strategy, the **Labor Education and Research Project** in Detroit — publishers of *Labor Notes* — has produced a 372-page manual on how to re-build union strength from the bottom-up. Targeted at

workplace activists, stewards, local officers and staff, and bargaining committee members, **A Troublemaker's Handbook 2** recounts winning tactics and successful campaigns, but also examines the lessons of past union defeats and failures. The book has 72 contributors, plus additional material from hundreds of activists interviewed by editor Jane Slaughter. According to Cornell ILR School professor Kate Bronfenbrenner, *Troublemaker's* provides "a wealth of information" on "everything from researching multinational companies, to mapping workplace hazards, running a local, developing leaders, building community-labor coalitions, bringing immigrants into the union, and running comprehensive organizing and bargaining campaigns."

For further information, go to www.labomotes.org/bookshelf/tmh2.html. The book can

be ordered at this website; by mail at 7435 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48209; by phone at 313-842-6262; or by fax at 313-842-0227. The price is \$24 plus \$4 shipping.

LaborArts.org, a web museum of art by and about working people, has posted a new web exhibit — **Art from the Waterfront**, featuring portraits by Pele deLappe of longshoremen in the year after the 1934 maritime strike, and oil paintings by Joseph Grosso of waterfront work scenes from the 1950s. These newly-restored paintings, which hang in the San Francisco headquarters of the International Longshore Workers Union, are being made available to a broader audience for the first time. The ILWU has collaborated with LaborArts.org to present this striking collection of art on-line, the second in an ongoing series of images from the waterfront.



Angela Jancius and Sherry Linkon have launched a new listserv, **Working-Class Studies**. Sponsored by the New Working-Class Studies Association and the Youngstown State University Center for Working-Class Studies, the listserv – in the words of moderators Jancius and Linkon – “develops a forum for diverse intellectual and political approaches to scholarship, teaching, and outreach. It also promotes partnerships linking scholarly work with activism in labor, community, and other working-class social justice organizations. Subscribers are encouraged to post information about forthcoming meetings, conferences, announcements, queries, calls for proposals, and to exchange information on academic and political opportunities as well as general news relevant to working-class life.” Those interested in learning more about or subscribing to the website can be invited to visit: lists.yzu.edu/mailman/listinfo.cgi/working-class-studies, or to contact Angela Jancius at:

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The Center for Working-Class Studies at Youngstown State University will mark its 10th anniversary with the holding of its Seventh Biennial Conference during **18-21 May 2005**. Co-sponsored by the Ford Foundation, the conference will focus on **New Working-Class Studies: Past, Present, and Future**. Featured at the conference will be plenary sessions on New Working-Class Studies, and panel discussions exploring literature by and about the working class; working-class and labor history; material and popular culture; current workplace issues; geography and landscape; journalism and media; sociology; economics; union organizing and practice; museum studies; the arts; multiculturalism; ethnography, biography, autobiography; pedagogy; and personal narratives of work. The conference will also include photographic and art exhibitions, performance art, and poetry readings by Guy Saldanha, Tom Juravich, Jeanne Bryner, and Diane Gilliam Fisher, among others. There will also be film screenings, workshops, and the first business meeting of the Working-Class Studies Association.

Conference materials, including information

on hotels, schedule, and registration are available on the Center for Working-Class Studies's website www.as.yzu.edu/~cwcs.

The sixth **European Social Science History Conference** will be held **22-25 March 2006** in Amsterdam. Labor Network panels are being coordinated by David Devries (Tel Aviv University), Carolyn Brown (Rutgers University) and Lex Heerma van Voss (Institute for Social Science, Amsterdam). LAWCHA members interested in forming a panel are invited to contact Carolyn Brown at cbrown@panix.com. Further information on the ESSHC is available from the conference website at www.iisg.nl/esshc.

On 24 March 2005, **UNITE HERE**, together with the New York Fire Department, held its annual commemoration of the **1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire**, which took the lives of 146 young immigrant garment workers, and galvanized the struggle for workplace safety. The gathering was held at the corner of Washington Place and Greene Street, near the site of the tragedy.

Present at the event were labor leaders (including Bruce Raynor, General President of UNITE HERE, and John Wilhelm, President/Hospitality Industry of UNITE HERE), firefighters, and descendants of those who perished in the fire. At the ceremony, students and workers read the names of, and laid flowers for, every victim of the Triangle fire, and firefighters slowly raised the ladder of their truck to the highest point the firefighters could reach in 1911 – two floors below where workers were trapped.

From the **Labour History Serials Alerting Service** comes word that the International Association of Labour History Institutions Serials Service now offers web access to tables of contents of 113 serials in the area of labour history. At serials.ialhi.org you can browse the tables of contents and search for articles. For research purposes, photocopies of articles can be requested from the institute that holds the serial. As of now it is possible to subscribe to an email alerting service: a monthly email message containing recently added tables of contents. This information is also offered as an RSS feed. Go to serials.ialhi.org/alerting_services.asp for more information.

The IALHI Serials Service is maintained by members of the since 1997, and is free of

charge. Any queries or remarks about this service can be directed to: ialhi@iisg.nl.

From Peter Jones:

Nourish your soul, make magic happen, celebrate your heritage, recharge your batteries, and keep the spark alive! Register now for the 27th Annual Great Labor Arts Exchange at www.laborheritage.org/glac04p1.html! The conference will be held **19-21 June 2005**, at the National Labor College in Silver Spring, Maryland.

The **Great Labor Arts Exchange (GLAE)** is a national gathering of union members, union staff, union officials, artists and labor educators who use music, art, poetry, theater, murals, posters, cartoons, puppets, film and websites to strengthen the labor movement. This year's highlights include the spoken word group Molotov Mouth, the singing ensemble Caminante, a film documentary about Joe Glazer, and a celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the IWW.

For more information, visit www.laborheritage.org/glac04p1.html or register online at www.laborheritage.org/glac02p4.html. If you have questions please feel free to call Peter Jones at 202-974-8040 or email pjones@afficio.org. If you need copies of our brochure for your conference, meeting or mailing, let us know.

Robert P. Wolensky, Nicole H. Wolensky and Kenneth C. Wolensky have co-authored **Voices of the Knox Mine Disaster: Stories, Reflections, and Remembrances of the Anthracite Coal Industry Last Major Catastrophe, January 22, 1959**. Recently published in paperback by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Press, the book was written as a supplement to the authors' first volume (*The Knox Mine Disaster, 1999*, PHMC Press) on the coal mining disaster that took twelve lives when the Susquehanna River broke into the Knox Coal Company's River Slope mine. The catastrophe ended deep mining in much of northeastern Pennsylvania. *Voices* draws upon over 60 oral history interviews with survivors, other mineworkers, and victims' spouses, siblings, and children – as well as newspaper editorials, letters-to-the-editor, testimony at official investigations, and contemporary news reports. The book reconstructs the story of the disaster – including causes, consequences, and remembrances – largely through first-person accounts. The

Random Notes (cont'd)

working-class context of the disaster is apparent, particularly in the lack of work alternatives for miners in a declining industry, coupled with strong pressures from the company to mine illegally under the river. The volume also examines the ways in which the working-class community of the former "hard coal" areas around Scranton and Wilkes-Barre has faithfully memorialized the disaster over the past 46 years.

The centenary of the **Industrial Workers of the World** (see Paul Buhle's piece in this issue) is being marked this year in a variety of ways. On Saturday, May 7, a "Conference and Celebration" – "**One Big Union: The Dream, the Reality, the History...The IWW and a Century of Radical Labor Activism, 1905-2005**" – will be held at the Paul Robeson Campus Center, Rutgers University (Newark). Here's how conference organizer Jennifer Guglielmo describes the event:

In the spirit of May Day, join us for a day of powerful information, thoughtful conversation, and zesty celebration of the history of the IWW. In plenaries and workshops, distinguished scholars such as Rosalyn Baxandall, Steve Golin, Joyoe Kombluh, Nunzio Pernicone, Jeffrey Perry, Salvatore Salerno, and current worker-activists from the Vermont Workers Center, the Garment Workers Solidarity Center, the International Longshoremen's Association, the Committee for Welfare and Social Progress, and the Industrial Workers of the World, will discuss the significance and relevance of the historic IWW for organizing today with scholars, actors, artists, and other worker-activists from around the country, punctuated with performances by Phyllis Capello ("The Ukulele Lady") and the Solidarity Singers, as well as book and art exhibits, including "The Traveling Wobbly Show."

Our closing "gala" celebration will be the New

York City launch of **Wobblies: A Graphic History**, with co-editor Paul Buhle (Verso, 2005). The gathering will take place on Saturday from 6:30 pm at the historic Chumley's Bar, 86 Bedford Street, in the West Village, Manhattan – a center of IWW organizing in New York City during the heyday of the organization.

Admission is free. Lunch and all-day refreshments \$15. The conference, partially funded by the New Jersey Council for the Humanities, is

organized by the NJ May Day Committee and the Spirit of the Arts Foundation; it is co-sponsored by the Rutgers University Department of History, the Rutgers Institute on Ethnicity, Culture, and the Modern Experience, and the American Social History Project (CUNY), with the American Labor Museum/Botto House and the MalEca Collective of Italian American Women as cooperating organizations.

For the full conference program see www.maliacollective.org/brochure.pdf. Contact Jennifer Guglielmo at jjugliel@email.smith.edu, or 413-585-3712, for more information.

Meanwhile, Julie Herrada announces that **Fifth Estate** (www.fifthestate.org) will be joining in the centenary celebration of the IWW by dedicating its Fall issue to the topic of **Wobblies and Work**. *Fifth Estate* is looking for original articles on the history of the IWW, as well as articles that address the contemporary international radical labor milieu. Submissions of art and images are always welcome. Possible topics include work and anti-work, the unethical nature of the Protestant work ethic, the right to be lazier, proletarian lifestyles, subproletarian subcultures, underemployment, unemployment, worker's comp scams, workplace sabotage, shop floor shenanigans, lockouts, factory occupations, slackers, and hobos.

Deadline for proposals: 1 July 2005; deadline for first drafts: 15 July 2005. For further information, contact fifthestate@pumpkinhollow.net, or Julie Herrada at jherrada@umich.edu.

On 20-21 May 2005, a **Conference on Caring Labor** will be held at the **Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies**, University of Washington, Seattle. This conference will explore some central questions about the concept of caring labor. Caring Labor can be defined as any kind of work that requires an empathetic identification between the worker and the recipient of the worker's efforts. This would include all forms of health care, social work, childcare, teaching, etc. Historically, these jobs have often been low or unpaid "women's work." Core themes for the conference include: the mechanisms by which caring labor has become a surrogate for economic sacrifice; the challenges careworkers face in organizing to protect themselves within the marketplace; and the dynamics of public policies designed to support those who provide care within the family. The conference is intended to provide a forum for researchers, practitioners, and activists together to explore the contradictions of care in market economy and search for ways to resolve them. The keynote speaker will be Nancy Folbre, professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

For further information, write pcls@u.washington.edu, or contact Sarah Laslett, Director, Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, at 206-543-7946.

OAH Panel on the Attack on Labor Studies

by David Offenhall

Is there a nationwide attack on labor scholarship? One of LAWCHA's three OAH panels focused on the larger significance of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's threatened defunding of the Institute for Labor and Employment. As the ILE's Ruth Milkman explained, the ILE was created under Gov. Gray Davis when the California labor movement was at the height of its influence. Since then it has become one of the victims of California's class warfare and partisan fireworks. Since entering office, Schwarzenegger, prompted by right wing think-tanks and employer organizations, has threatened to cut off funding to the ILE only to have it saved by labor connected Democrats. But is this just a California story or a national

trend? Jefferson Cowie of Cornell's Industrial Labor Relations school argued that labor studies is suffering not simply from underfunding and political attacks, but also from a crisis of legitimacy. Labor studies wavers uneasily between academic scholarship, labor institution building, and field activism. It is in response to this crisis of legitimacy that Youngstown State University reimagined the possibilities of labor studies, as YSU's John Russo suggested. The YSU labor studies program has eschewed many of the commitments of other programs, choosing cultural approaches rather than classes in organizer training or contracts. The crisis of labor studies, then, is two fold; on the one hand, the field suffers from a dissolving sense of direc-

tion and academic place and, on the other hand, where it reflects labor's strengths, as in California, it is the target of systematic attacks. If labor studies are obviously beleaguered, labor history is also under assault, as part of the overall crisis of history employment. As the University of Toronto's Daniel Bender argued, while labor historians are notorious for considering the future directions of the field, they rarely consider the labor of labor history, that is, the conditions under which labor history is being written. The health of the field should not be judged by the few scholars at "top" universities, but by the number of unemployed or underemployed labor historians.

San Francisco Hotel Dispute *(continued from cover)*

response from the hotel management group.

The union called a boycott of the fourteen hotels, contacting meeting planners and suggesting that their business be moved elsewhere. Several meetings did so, including the American Anthropological Association and the Organization of American Historians. Other groups are in the process of pulling meetings now; still others have attended and have had members attend impromptu pickets put up in front of the hotels. The hotels -- and the city's economy -- have lost yet more business. The hotels continue to play hardball with those who have sought to change their venues, unless they had earlier negotiated a cancellation clause in the event of a labor dispute.

Meanwhile, Mayor Newsom continues to refuse to attend any events in the affected hotels. Some local business leaders remain furious with him for this principled stand.

Mayor Newsom's argument has been that the hoteliers do not know the local situation. San Francisco, one of the USA's last remaining progressive cities, and one that has traditionally been respectful of unions, has found itself on

the vanguard of what many believe is a large-scale effort to further erode union power. The hoteliers take their directions from their corporate parent offices, which are located outside the state. As a result, the mayor and others have argued that the hotels are not interested in local conditions and practices. This argument has generally been ignored.

As have many of the demands of the workers themselves. The most contentious issue has been the union's desire to sign a shorter two-year contract than has been the past practice. The goal here was to synchronize hotel contract expirations across the country, in order to gain more leverage at the next round of negotiations. The union has moved off of that goal, in large measure because locals elsewhere signed contracts of different durations, and is now focusing on other issues of more immediate concern to its members.

From their perspective, the remaining issues remain compensation and health care costs. At one point, management made a proposal to increase wages the grand sum of twenty cents per hour, per year, for a five-year contract. (That was

for non-tipped employees.) They also proposed a wage increase of five cents an hour for those employees who were tipped. As anyone who has been to San Francisco knows, the cost of living increases have been much greater. Similarly, managers had proposed to raise the cost of health premiums from \$10 a month to \$273.42 a month, in the same five-year period. The contrasts are clear. In the most recent months, it has become clear that the health insurance premium increase has changed dramatically. Management has now proposed to keep the \$10 per month cost UNLESS the increases that it faces are more than 10-12 percent each year. The union has countered with various proposals, depending on the length of the contract that is ultimately signed.

No end to this struggle is on the immediate horizon and San Francisco's reputation as a great place to visit remains at risk.

Alan Karras teaches in the International and Area Studies Program at UC Berkeley. He is also UC-AFT Vice President for Grievances, and Steward of UC-AFT, Berkeley Local 147

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ABOUT LAWCHA

- ▶ We are historians, labor educators and working class activists who seek to promote public and scholarly awareness of labor and working-class history through research, writing, and organizing.
- ▶ We are open to the widest possible variety of approaches to the subject of labor and working class history; through our organization we facilitate the free exchange of ideas and opinions.



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- ▶ Participate in LAWCHA sponsored panels at the AHA and OAH, and at labor history and labor studies conferences around the United States. We cosponsor LAWCHA panels, plenaries, and walking tours, and hold an annual members' meeting.
- ▶ Receive our informative and interesting newsletter twice per year that updates members on LAWCHA activities around the country.
- ▶ Grad student members are eligible for our Research Paper Award as well as annual travel grants to the North American Labor History Conference or to another co-sponsored LAWCHA conference.
- ▶ Receive reduced subscription rates to the labor history journal *LWCH*.
- ▶ Receive a subscription to LAWCHA's official journal, *Labor Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*.



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