

THE BULLETIN BOARD

L E T T E R

September 2008

BUSINESS MANAGER'S REPORT

Donald J. Hoak, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

The Wrong Road

Traveling as much as I do, once in awhile I've taken the wrong road trying to get somewhere. Inevitably while

on the wrong road, rather than turning around, I've tried to convince myself to just keep going and I'll come out in the right place. Once in awhile, that happens. When it doesn't, I usually end up on a dead-end road out in the middle of nowhere. I am sure by now you have already figured out where I'm going with this little adventure, so let's get to it.

It is time for us to get back on the right road in this country. We have wandered around out in the middle of nowhere for so long, we are now completely lost and we have to back-track: 3.5 million manufacturing jobs lost in the last eight years, 47 million Americans without health care, the largest debt ever in our nation, Union membership continuing to decline, OSHA under funded at an unprecedented level, mine fatalities, sugar factory fatalities while our own government continues to allow corporations to run with impunity, mortgage meltdown, recession, \$4.00 a gallon gas, spying on Americans in the name of homeland security, traffic light signals for terror threats, accusing Union members of being terrorists. (Remember Tom DeLay? I do.)

With less than 100 days left until the election, be prepared to be

bombarded by the biggest bunch of lies and half-truths ever told in history.

The good news is, we will not be fooled by all of the commercials on television. Rather than paying attention to all of the blathering, our decision making process is as simple as this.

Do we have the freedom to join a Union in this country without interference? No.

Can we strike our employer if necessary without being permanently replaced? No.

Have our wages kept up with corporate profits or the cost of living? No.

Is it fair to American workers that politicians vote for trade deals that ship our jobs elsewhere? No.

Do we think the politicians care? No.

Can we change this? Yes and we are going to.

Will the Employee Free Choice Act really help us? Yes. When more people can join a Union, our collective strength will increase exponentially.

(Continued on Page 2.)

THE BULLETIN BOARD

INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD OF
ELECTRICAL WORKERS

Main Office
408 Broad Street
Johnstown, PA 15906
814-535-7655
800-850-3088
814-535-7657 FAX
Erie Office
814-825-1781

<http://www.ibew459.org/>

Donald J. Hoak, Business
Manager/Financial Secretary
Kenneth L. Richards,
President/Assistant Business
Manager/Editor
Gregory W. Wolf, Assistant
Business Manager
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The Wrong Road

(Continued from Page 1)

Would banning of striker replacement help? Absolutely yes. When we can strike without being permanently replaced, there will be a more level playing field with our dominant corporate friends trying to eliminate pensions and passing on health care increases.

How will we keep up with the cost of living? By increasing our collective strength through organizing the unorganized. Our voices will become much stronger than they are today.

Can we stop giveaway trade deals? Yes and we are going to. No more yakking promises about retraining money. We don't need to be retrained; our jobs must be retained. Then we can save the training money and put it towards the Social Security Fund. Politicians that vote for more trade deals need us to vote them into unemployment so they can be retrained in how to think, either party.

Will the politicians care about us then? We won't care then because if they vote us out of work, they will be out of work and we are more qualified to work than they are so we will get the job before they do.

We MUST change the direction of our country, workers must regain a voice in the workplace of Corporate Dominance and in November, we will backtrack and get on the right road for America.

The last time I got lost, I drove to the end of the road where I saw a dog tied to a chain running in circles and barking. It reminded me of 30 second sound bites during a

campaign. Lots of spin and noise but the dog wasn't speaking my language, just like a lot of our current politicians.

The name of the right road is UNION WAY. They can either get on it or continue to run around in circles, barking all the way to the unemployment counter.

The Times "They Are a Changing"

Gregory W. Wolf, Assistant Business Manager, Local 459 - Erie

An Irish philosopher Edmund Burke once said, "All that it takes for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing" (or words to that effect). As I examine my correspondence, I see more and more untruths, falsehoods and downright lies circulating through the Internet like some Kansas tornado. It gives me great pause that so great an educational tool as the Internet can be utilized by demigods and single issue groups to baffle, distort and possibly circumvent the electoral process; and for their efforts to succeed, all it takes is for good men and women to do nothing.

Our ability to control our destiny through free and informed elections is something that most of civilization does not have but in order to keep it, we must do our part in keeping the process free and informed. I suggest that we read and study the different candidates' positions and policies at great length. Now is not the time to sit idly by and listen to blurbs and advertisements on the television or read parsing of one's candidate's words on the Internet or in newspapers and magazines. Now is the time for action, for education,

and for discounting the rumor mongers that are so persuasive in their actions.

It is vitally important that we all stand up and force all candidates to speak to the issues and define their vision on the issues, not let this election fall to the "evil" that will say and do anything to keep their power and not let the people be heard. I say to all, get involved, get informed and get active in the process so that it will not be said of us that "we did nothing."

If you need assistance in getting involved in a course of action, please call the Johnstown Hall for guidance.

Labor Day

Kenneth L. Richards, President/Assistant Business Manager/Editor

I want to take this opportunity to say that I hope everyone had a safe and enjoyable Labor Day Celebration. I know that a lot of our members have to work the holidays and do not have the opportunity to picnic and celebrate. This particular holiday makes me think that it should be a special day for Union members. The holiday is celebrated just as it is identified - Labor Day.

All other holidays are more or less degree-connected with conflicts, certain persons, or glories achieved by one nation over another. Labor Day is devoted to no man, living or dead, to no sect, race or nation. It is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers.

Over 100 years ago, the first Labor Day was observed. What remains unclear is which (Continued on Page 3.)

Central Labor Union adopted a Labor Day proposal and appointed a committee to demonstrate and picnic. We do know that the first Labor Day holiday was celebrated on Tuesday, September 5, 1882 in New York City. In 1884, the first Monday in September was selected as the holiday.

All of us have to stop and reflect on what Labor Unions have done for each of us. All of us have different employers and different terms and conditions. For the most part, our successful labor leaders and members have done well for everyone under collective bargaining agreements.

Members many years before us fought for a lot of great benefits such as the eight (8) hour workday, paid holidays, health care, pensions, and many, many more benefits that we all have the luxury of enjoying today. Yes, these people did have to fight for these benefits. Every union member had to be tough and join together. Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that we, the members, are the Union. We are going through disagreements with our employers. The fight for what is fair and respectful is everyone's fight. Our local Union has a great leader and business manager but a large portion of strength is in the rank and file behind him.

Members of Local 459 should be proud of their local union. We are all aware of our terms and conditions. Just talk to your neighbors. Not many of them are doing as well as you. To continue the luxury of great benefits, we need to stay united. We must have solidarity.

It is appropriate, therefore, that the nation pay tribute on Labor Day to the creator of so much of the nation's strength, freedom and leadership - the American Worker.

Barack Obama

Barack Obama says that "politics didn't lead me to working folks; working folks led me to politics."¹ After college, he worked with a church-affiliated organization as a community organizer in a Chicago neighborhood devastated by the closing of steel mills. He worked with community members to get a job-training program in the area and get the city to test the housing projects for asbestos. He talks about his time in that community as being the inspiration for what he does as a public servant.

Barack Obama will side with workers. In the Illinois State Senate and U.S. Senate, he has consistently supported our issues, living up to his words. He supported strong wages by voting to raise the minimum wage, enforce prevailing wages and guarantee equal pay. Obama wants to close corporate tax loopholes so we don't reward corporations for sending our jobs overseas. He believes in a fair trade policy that protects workers rights and will only enter trade agreements with strong labor protections. Obama will protect our retirement by ensuring Social Security stays strong.

Barack Obama was an original co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act and has pledged to sign

it into law when elected to protect the middle class and give every worker the right to decide if they want to join a union and bargain collectively. He has a good health plan that will cover all workers and ensure high-quality coverage. Obama will work on behalf of *all* economically disadvantaged workers, *regardless* of their race. He will get us out of Iraq so our family members can come home safe and proud of all that they accomplished.

Frankly, John McCain would be a disaster for working families. McCain strongly opposes the Employee Free Choice Act and long has worked to take away our unions through "right to work" for less laws and by blocking our collective bargaining rights. He voted to allow companies to hire permanent replacements for striking workers and believes workers are "crippled" by union contracts that protect their rights.²

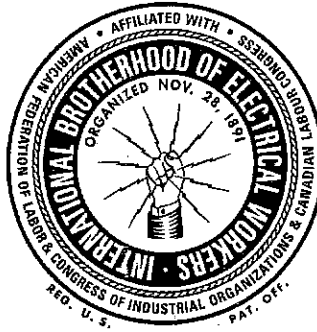
McCain supports Big Oil over working families. He wants to give the largest U.S. oil companies \$3.8 billion in tax breaks but tax workers' health care benefits. One of his top advisers created loopholes for speculators that allowed them to drive gas prices up even higher than market forces would take them. McCain has never met a trade agreement he didn't like and wants to privatize Social Security.

We need a president who will help us turn around America, not one who will fight us every step of the way.

¹ Obama at the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Conference

² Address to Oklahoma State Legislature, 5/21/07

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of Electrical Workers
AFL-CIO
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408 Broad Street
Johnstown, PA 15906
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ATTEND YOUR MONTHLY UNION MEETINGS

1ST Thursday
4:00 PM Executive Board

2ND Monday
7:00 PM Northwest District
(Erie/ Warren)

2ND Wednesday
7:00 PM Central District
(Clearfield)

2ND Thursday
7:00 PM Northeast District
(Towanda)

3RD Thursday
7:00 PM Southwest District
(Johnstown)

**DON'T LOSE
YOUR VOICE**



**ATTEND YOUR
UNION MEETINGS**