

# Graphic Communicator



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**Leaders Send NANC Clear Message to Organize Now**



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**Top NLRB Lawyer Seeks End to Forced Mgmt Meetings**



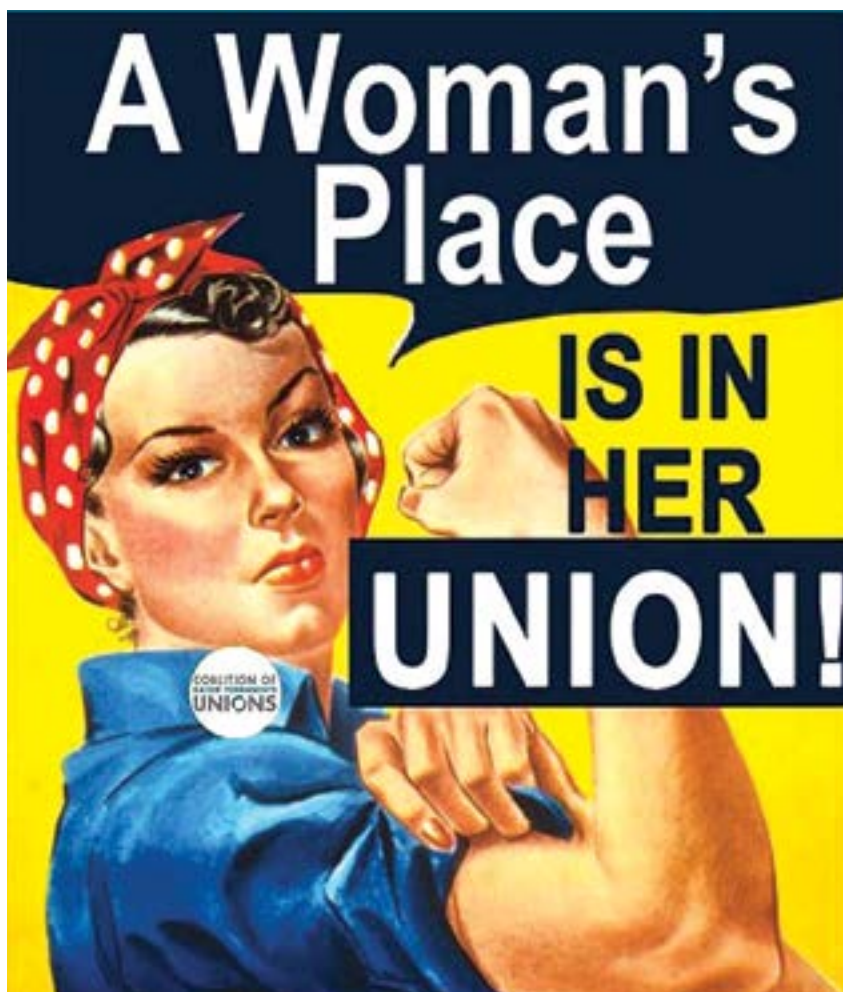
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**Allies Bid Hoffa Good-bye at Scholarship Event in LA**



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## TOP STORY



# Women Union Leaders: 'A Powerful Presence'

By Dawn Hobbs  
*Special to the Communicator*

**F**rom Starbucks coffee shops to REI camping supply stores, union activity is surging around the nation with women often taking lead roles – a development mirrored in the GCC/IBT where the number of female leaders is increasing and a spirit of solidarity among women activists is evident.

“It’s a good time to be a woman union leader,” said Janice Bort, secretary-treasurer of Local 72-C, Washington, D.C. since 2008. “It is inspiring to see women fight and work harder for our rights in the workplace like I have never seen before.”

Bort said women are seizing a moment when public approval of unions is high and the job market remains volatile after two years of a devastating covid pandemic.

“It is more important now than ever for women to stand united and to get into leadership positions,” she said.

Nearly half the country’s workforce is female but activists say discrimination persists and that union representation is the surest way to address inequities.

“Given that issues like pay, benefits, paid sick time, paid family leave, minimum staffing levels, schedule flexibility, mental health, and workplace safety have become increasingly urgent in the midst of the pandemic, women...have emerged as union leaders across industries like never before,” Harper’s Bazaar magazine reported.

On the national level, women union leaders have become a powerful presence, the magazine noted. Among the most prominent are Liz Shuler, the first female president of the AFL-CIO, Sara Nelson, international president of the Association of Flight Attendants, Crystal Dunn, vice president and

*continues on PAGE 8*

### BTF NOTICE:

A Summary of Material Modification describing a change to the Benevolent Trust Fund Plan document can be found on Page 16.



## PBGC bails out troubled union pensions

PAGE 4

# WHERE I STAND

KURT FREEMAN GCC/IBT PRESIDENT

## Labor Progress Doesn't Depend on Miracles but Patience and Fortitude

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN KNEW THE VIRTUES OF GRIT AND endurance.

"He that can have patience can have what he will," said Franklin, who helped draft the Declaration of Independence and was a key figure in negotiating an end to the Revolutionary War that secured America's nationhood.

As union members, we know the wisdom of Franklin's words.

Patience, strength, fortitude, perseverance – that's what it takes to build and sustain the labor movement. Progress often is slow. Miracles are few.



Workers have organized since the earliest days of the United States – there was a Philadelphia shoemakers union in 1794 – to gain basic rights and a fair deal from employers.

In 1898, drivers of horse-drawn wagons in the Midwest organized 18 local unions – a move that helped spur the founding five years later of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

The IBT immediately became a powerful force but the fight for workplace equity was not easy.

"Improving wages and working conditions would take enormous effort," said a commemorative book published by the IBT on occasion of the union's 100th anniversary. "Despite the Teamsters ever-increasing numbers and strong desire for dignity and justice on the job, members still struggled with obstacles placed before them by business and government."

Labor had few protections until 1935 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed into law the National Labor Relations Act – the "Wagner Act" named after visionary Democratic senator Robert F. Wagner of New York – affirming "the right to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations."

To make certain those rights were upheld, the NLRA also established the National Labor Relations Board. The NLRB had responsibility for

a range of vital duties – arbitrating deadlocked disputes, assuring fair elections, penalizing unfair labor practices. Wagner in a speech said the labor act "seeks merely to make a worker a free man."

Why the history review?

Because we have to recall the past to understand the present.

At the moment, interest in unions is flying high. I've noted this before, and it's exciting and encouraging.

Young people are organizing at Starbucks, Apple and the outdoor apparel company REI.

A homegrown, worker-run victory at an Amazon facility in Staten Island, New York, gained enormous national attention and prompted debate about organizing tactics.

"...the win by a little-known, independent union with few ties to existing groups appears to raise as many questions for the labor movement as it answers: not least, whether there is something fundamentally broken with the traditional bureaucratic union model that can be solved only by replacing it with grass-roots organizations like the one on Staten Island," said the New York Times.

Not surprisingly, Amazon is challenging the election but the company had reason to cheer only a month later when workers at a second Amazon installation on Staten Island soundly defeated an organizing effort launched by the same independent union that prevailed in the earlier campaign.

Optimism prompted by the April victory of the little Amazon Labor Union quickly dissipated and the Times said the setback pointed "to the possible limits of an uptick in worker interest in unionizing at Amazon and beyond."

Organizing is not magic. What works in one case may not in another. Small-scale efforts can bring surprising results. But, as the second Amazon election on Staten Island shows, there are no assurances.

At the GCC/IBT, we try our best to be nimble, alert, and open to new ideas while not tossing aside successful methods of the past. We know that organizing depends on listening to workers and tailoring campaigns to their needs and expectations.

After the Amazon victory in Staten Island, IBT General President Sean M. O'Brien saluted the spunky local union activists and pledged an all-out Teamster effort to organize the company – coast to coast.

"We have to have a plan in place," O'Brien told the Guardian newspaper. "We have to execute that plan and not be scared to change that plan if it doesn't work at times. Even a world champion team doesn't win all the time. Hopefully we will have a favorable win-to-loss ratio."

Perfect. Have a plan, execute, be ready to adjust – and never give up. As history proves, patience pays off. ■

## OUTLOOK

SEAN M. O'BRIEN TEAMSTERS GENERAL PRESIDENT

## About Time We Stood Up to Corporate Bullies

I TESTIFIED IN EARLY MAY BEFORE the Senate Budget Committee on why it is wrong for our government to hand taxpayer dollars in the form of federal contracts to companies like Amazon that repeatedly, knowingly, and purposefully violate federal labor laws.

Amazon was found guilty last year of illegally firing two workers in Seattle after they advocated on behalf of their coworkers at an Amazon warehouse. Amazon broke labor law in Alabama when workers tried to organize—forcing their election to be rerun this year. And in December, the NLRB cited Amazon for illegally threatening, surveilling, and interrogating workers trying to start a union at its Staten Island facility.

These kinds of actions make something clear—when workers try to organize, Amazon breaks the law. When workers raise their voices, Amazon does whatever it takes to shut them up.

While Amazon acts with impunity, our government recently



awarded the company a \$10 billion contract for web services. At the same time, Amazon reportedly spent \$20,000 per week on union-busting consultants in Staten Island alone.

The federal government—under the National Labor Relations Act—has a mandate to protect workers' efforts to form unions. But our government ignores that mandate with every dollar it puts into Jeff Bezos' pockets.

As a Teamster, I've faced countless union-busting companies. As a proud Bostonian from a tough neighborhood, I've confronted my fair share of schoolyard bullies too.

Let me tell you—you don't take a beating from a bully, then fill his pockets with money and expect fewer beatings. Amazon has been beating up on the American worker for too long. And our government has been letting them do it.

It's long past time to push back on Amazon's bullying behavior. Amazon—or any employer that repeatedly breaks labor law—should not receive federal funds until they change their conduct. We must send a message to predatory companies that workers' rights will be defended and there will be consequences when corporations break the law. ■



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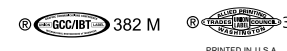
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## Consciousness is Rising and so are Women Labor Leaders

THE LABOR MOVEMENT IS DEDICATED to equality and the GCC/IBT and its Teamster partners are particularly committed to workplace fairness – regardless of race, ethnicity or gender.

So it is not surprising that at this time of rising awareness, women within the ranks of our union are moving into leadership roles and helping shape policy at locals and district councils across the country.



In her extensive Page 1 story on women union leaders, Dawn Hobbs highlights individuals who – with courage and determination – are making a mark and urging others to do the same.

“It’s a good time to be a woman union leader,” said Janice Bort, secretary-treasurer of Local 72-C, Washington, D.C. since 2008. “It is inspiring to see women fight and work harder for our rights in the workplace like I have never seen before.”

As Hobbs points out, the quest for equity is nothing new – and more progress is needed. “Only when they are organized do women get equal pay for equal work,” said First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt more than three-quarters of a century ago.

The same holds true now, Hobbs reports.

As the nation continues to struggle with a remarkable assortment of challenges – from inflation to persistent threat of covid – women labor leaders are asserting themselves powerfully in the quest for better pay, paid sick time and family leave and other vital matters.

At last year’s IBT Women’s Conference, a delegate said, “Sisters, it’s time to put yourself out there as a leader in your community, to start saying, ‘yes, I can’ because when Teamster women run, all Teamsters win.”

The power of a strong-minded and resolute woman was evident in recent moves by



CUINSIGHT.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

Jennifer Abruzzo, the Biden-appointed general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board. (Pages 9 and 14.)

Abruzzo is asking the full NLRB Board – three Democrats, two Republicans – to revise two important regulations. She wants the board to bar so-called “captive audience meetings” at which management can intimidate employees during a union drive and revive the “Silk Road Doctrine” allowing card check organizing.

Even if the board agrees to Abruzzo’s reforms, court challenges are all but certain. But reforms of this sort would not even rate discussion under a Republican administration. That is why union

leaders say often that voting makes a difference – a good thing to remember as November elections approach,

GCC/IBT retirees have special reason to celebrate the Biden administration’s pro-union outlook.

Biden officials at the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation okayed \$1.7 billion in bailout money to the National Pension Plan and Joint Pension Plan assuring that thousands of GCC/IBT participants will not see cuts in their retirement checks. “Teamsters and the Biden administration stood up for retirees when no one else would,” said Peter Leff, GCC/IBT general counsel. (Page 4.)

In other news, we cover the North American Newspaper Conference in Tempe, Arizona – always a rousing event that demonstrates GCC/IBT strength and dedication (Page 5). Dawn Hobbs brings readers up to date on covid issues affecting union members. And we report on a tribute to former IBT General President James P. Hoffa at an event in Los Angeles attended by a GCC/IBT contingent. (Both stories, Page 10.)

At the farewell dinner, Hoffa, who retired in March, said the IBT remained “the most powerful union in the world” and saluted the audience. “Thank you for all you have done,” Hoffa said, “We return the favor. Thanks to you, Jim, for 23 years of service and solidarity. All the best.”

### COMMENTARY JIM HIGHTOWER

## Corporations Play Monopoly As Inflation Socks Consumers

The problem with our so-called “free market” is that it’s not free for you and me.

It’s largely controlled by monopolies, which are free to inflate prices without worrying that consumers will be able to flee to cheaper sellers. This lets the gougers gleefully extract unwarranted monopoly profits.

The phenomenon – corporatists call it “pricing power” – is the unbridled force propelling today’s surging price hikes.

Brand name corporations claim they are being forced to mark-up prices just to cover rising costs for raw materials, labor and transportation.

But in a competitive marketplace, they’d have to eat much of those increases by taking a bit less in profits. Instead, they’re raising prices not simply to maintain exorbitant profits, but to squeeze even greater profits from hard-hit consumers.

Consider diapers, a necessity for many families.

As corporate watchdog Judd Legum reported, the huge consumer product seller Procter & Gamble announced a year ago that COVID-driven production costs were forcing it to raise the price for its Pampers brand.

At the time, it had just posted a quarterly profit of \$3.8 billion, so P&G could easily have absorbed a temporary rise in its costs. But instead of holding the price to



ease their customers’ economic pain, the conglomerate used a global health crisis to justify upping diaper prices.

Six months later, P&G’s quarterly profit topped \$5 billion. And – in that same quarter – P&G spent \$3 billion to buy back shares of its own stock – a Wall Street manipulation that artificially bloats the wealth of top execs and other big shareholders.

And why wouldn’t savvy consumers switch from Pampers to Huggies, the brand sold by Kimberly-Clark, P&G’s main “competitor?” Because co-monopolist Kimberly-Clark goosed up its prices at the same time. And – get this – the two companies control 80% of the global disposable diaper market. Welcome to the monopoly merry-go-round.

These giants are in non-competitive markets operating as monopolies, so they can set higher prices and scamper away with a record-busting share of America’s total economic output. In 2019 for example, before the pandemic hit, big U.S. corporations hauled in roughly a trillion dollars in profit. In 2021, during the pandemic, they grabbed more than \$1.7 trillion.

Rodney McMullen, CEO of Kroger supermarkets, gloated last summer that “a little bit of inflation is always good in our business,” adding that “we’ve been very



comfortable with our ability to pass on [price] increases” to consumers.

Last year, Kroger used its “monopoly pricing” power to reap record profits, then spent \$1.5 billion of those gains to buy back its own stock – a scam that gives more money to top executives and big shareholders.

Or take fast-food purveyor McDonald’s. It reported that 2021 had been “a banner year.” Executives bragged that despite the supply disruptions of the pandemic and higher costs for meat and labor, they used the chain’s pricing power to up prices, thus increasing corporate profits by a stunning 59% over the previous year.

And the party goes on: “We’re going to have the best growth we’ve ever had this year,” Wall Street banking titan Jamie Dimon exulted at the start of 2022.

That’s how the rich get richer – and inequality happens. ■

*Populist author, public speaker, and radio commentator Jim Hightower writes the Hightower Lowdown, a monthly newsletter chronicling the ongoing fight by America’s ordinary people against rule by plutocratic elites. Annual subscription rates for the Hightower Lowdown: \$10, digital; \$15, print. Information at Hightowerlowdown.org*

# With \$1.7 Billion Bailout Biden Backs GCC Retirees

The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation will provide approximately \$1.7 billion to assure thousands of GCC/IBT members receive full retirement checks – a move hailed by union leaders as a demonstration of Teamster political clout and further proof that the Biden administration is the most labor-friendly in decades.

“Organized labor and the Teamsters, in particular, fought for and won legislation that protects hard-earned retirement benefits,” said GCC/IBT President Kurt Freeman. “National GCC/IBT pension funds and numerous local ones have or will be receiving much needed relief. This is just another example of how unions fight for workers and their families.”

Officials said the assistance came as plans approached insolvency and retirees feared they would lose benefits earned after years of hard work and face economic hardship as a result.

The GCC/IBT National Pension Plan will receive approximately \$1.3 billion and the Graphic Arts Industry Joint Pension plan another \$440 million under the PBGC’s Special Financial Assistance (SFA) program, the PBGC announced in separate statements. The GCIU Employer Fund – known as the ERF or West Coast Plan – also is protected by the SFA program and will receive relief in the future if necessary.

Had there been no government assistance, the National Pension Plan, covering nearly 32,000 GCC participants, and the Joint Pension Plan, providing benefits to more than 9,500, would have run out of money this year forcing deep cuts in pension checks.

As retired members feared their incomes, and living standards, would be jeopardized, union leaders pressed for relief and the White House responded, officials said.

“Teamsters and the Biden administration stood up for retirees when no one else would,” said Peter Leff, GCC/IBT general counsel. “Without this legislation, the government would have forced GCC and many other union plans to reduce pension benefits for retirees through no fault of their own.”

Under President Joe Biden and Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, the administration and Congressional allies set aside funding for the SFA in the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan passed last year to help stabilize an economy jolted by the covid-19 pandemic.

The SFA program provides funding for 250 troubled multiemployer pension plans around the country, the PBGC says, “and will ensure that over three million of America’s workers, retirees, and their families receive the pension

benefits they earned through many years of hard work.”

Walsh, who serves as chair of the PBGC board of directors, said money from the financial assistance program “ensures the retirement these... printing industry workers were promised is delivered.” If government funds had not been available “workers would have faced diminished pension payments that threaten the secure retirement that they worked many years to earn,” Walsh said.

White House action to save the pension plan drew praise from union leaders

“It’s a great story,” said Steve Nobles, GCC/IBT secretary-treasurer/vice president.

Nobles, formerly secretary-treasurer/principal officer of District Council 3, recalled having the “terrible job” of telling DC-3 retirees their pension checks would be cut – some by as much as 50 percent.

The prospect represented a heartbreaking turn of events for members who had sacrificed in hopes of a stable retirement income.

“As we all know our members make difficult decisions throughout their careers to take less money in their contracts so they can have contributions made toward their pensions in an effort to retire with dignity,” Nobles said

Because of the Biden administration initiative, retirees



Labor Secretary Marty Walsh, who serves as chair of the PBGC board of directors, said pension recipients will receive ‘the secure retirement they worked many years to earn.’

will have pensions restored and receive back pay that could amount to “tens of thousands” for many GCC participants. “This is life changing,” Nobles said.

GCC/IBT officials said there was an obvious – and urgent – political lesson to be drawn from the government’s intervention on behalf of union retirees.

“The most important message to be delivered here is that elections have consequences,” Nobles said. “Joe Biden, the most union-friendly President in my lifetime, helped return dignity to the lives of our present and future retirees. I will be eternally grateful.”

## ERISA ASSURING WORKERS’ PENSIONS SINCE 1974

In 1974, Congress – led by Democrats – passed the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) and President Gerald R. Ford, a Republican, signed the bill into law.

Under ERISA, Ford said, “the men and women of our labor force will have much more clearly defined rights to pension funds and greater assurances that retirement dollars will be there when they are needed.”

The new law established the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) which operates two separate insurance programs – single-employer and multiemployer – and protects millions of union pension recipients who would face benefit cuts if their plans went insolvent. Earlier this year, the PBGC said it currently is “directly responsible for the benefits of more than 1.5 million participants and beneficiaries in failed pension plans.”

PBGC’s Single-Employer Program is financed by insurance premiums, investment income, and money from companies formerly responsible for the plans. The Multiemployer Program is financed by premiums and investment income. The programs are legally separate and financially independent.

The PBGC’s Special Financial Assistance program (SFA) – which recently provided \$1.7 billion to rescue troubled GCC/IBT pension funds – was established by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 under President Joe Biden and is financed by taxpayer funds.

Earlier this year, Labor Secretary Marty Walsh called the SFA a “historic achievement to secure the pension benefits of hard-working union members.” Labor leaders and retirees had been fighting for years to protect pensions, he said. The “Biden-Harris administration made it a priority to stand with them.”

## Don’t Kid Yourself, GOP Would Not Protect Union Plans

By George Tedeschi  
Editor, Graphic Communicator

Before the midterm elections of 2018, conference representative Mike Huggins distributed bumper stickers with the GCC/IBT logo that said, “Elections Have Consequences.”

It was a powerful message – and more important than ever.

I was thinking of Mike, now retired, and his commitment to political action, when we learned the Biden administration would rescue troubled GCC/IBT pension plans with \$1.7 billion in government funds.

Yes, I said “billion” – with a “b.”

Help came by way of the Special Financial Assistance program, a component of the American Rescue Plan advanced last year by House Democrats. It passed in the U.S. Senate without a single Republican voting for it and was signed by President Joe Biden.

Don’t kid yourself: If Congress was controlled by the GOP and a Republican still occupied the White House, there would have been no pension bailout for thousands of our present and future retirees who would have been hit with severe benefit cuts. It’s that simple.

Republicans were not always so fiercely anti-union. In fact, the 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) which provided for the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation (PBGC) was proposed by Republican senator Jacob Javits of New York and signed into law by GOP President Gerald Ford.



Those days are gone.

The party has lurched far to the right. It feeds on anti-union sentiment and continues allegiance to former President Donald Trump who did nothing for labor – except to show off for the cameras when he summoned union leaders to the White House for policy discussions that went nowhere.

In the shadow of Trump, Republicans appeal to working-class anxieties by stressing “hot button” issues like abortion,

gun rights, school curriculum and gender identity.

Too often, their cynical strategy works. Union members – including many in the GCC/IBT – are tricked into voting against their own best interests.

Don’t let them get away with it again.

Midterm elections are around the corner and before you know it, we’ll be in another Presidential campaign season. At every level of government, anti-labor GOP candidates will pretend to be guardians of the middle class while relentlessly undermining pro-union initiatives.

As the next election cycle approaches, keep in mind how your retirement – and those of other GCC/IBT members – would have suffered without the strong action of Joe Biden. Remember that Democrats – and not a single Republican in the House or Senate – voted to protect your hard-earned pension benefits.

Mike Huggins was right. Elections matter. Better believe it.

George Tedeschi, GCC/IBT president emeritus, has decades of experience in pension matters and continues to serve as a trustee of GCC/IBT retirement programs.

# Energy and Hope at NANC in Tempe

By Zachary Dowdy  
*Special to the Communicator*

Seize the moment.

With public sentiment for unions increasing and organizing efforts underway around the country, GCC/IBT leaders brought that clear and compelling message to members of the North American Newspaper Conference meeting in Tempe, Arizona.

GCC/IBT President Kurt Freeman urged delegates to be alert for opportunities to organize within workplaces – internal organizing – as well as outside the print and packaging industry as part of a determined effort to boost membership and keep the GCC/IBT strong and independent.

“The main thing is – it’s all about organizing,” Freeman said after returning from the 63rd annual NANC session. “That’s the one area that we’re really trying to emphasize.”

Dozens of delegates and guests attending the meeting June 13-15 at the Hilton Phoenix Tempe Resort heard assessments of the newspaper industry, the U.S. economy, and the GCC/IBT, itself.

Local leaders exchanged information on how to best take advantage of rising approval for unions and a remarkably pro-labor White House administration.

Delegates and speakers hailed President Joe Biden’s aggressive efforts to strengthen the labor movement and put in place a number of pro-union initiatives.

Labor officials have noted, for instance, that Biden signed an executive order mandating project labor agreements (PLAs) on federal construction projects of \$35 million or more. He has made it easier for federal employees to join unions and increased access of labor organizers to workers on U.S. property.

The President enthusiastically voices support for the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO) and placed reliably pro-union officials on the National Labor Relations Board.

“Biden emphasizes the importance of organized

**‘After combating the attacks on unions year after year, we’re still here.’**

– Alejandro Guzman,  
*national organizer*

labor at every opportunity,” Freeman said earlier this year.

Among other speakers in Tempe were Richard Maresca, senior managing director of Atalanta Sosnoff Capital, which handles several GCC investment accounts, and Maggie Peck, executive director of the Teamster Members Retirement Plan, formerly the Inter-Local Retirement Plan.

As membership declines in various GCC/IBT segments delegates discussed the possibility of consolidating meeting of the union’s four conferences – Specialty, Eastern, Midwestern, and North American Newspaper – but no decision was made and the matter remains under consideration.

Officials said consolidation would bring together significant numbers of GCC/IBT leaders from a variety of segments covered by the union and allowing a wide-ranging exchange of ideas while at the same time saving money for the local unions.

Across the country, unions – including the GCC/IBT – are struggling to halt a decades-long decline in membership

A federal Bureau of Labor Statistics report released

**‘We need to consolidate our base and organize the unorganized.’**

– Steve Nobles,  
*secretary-treasurer/vice president*

in January showed that 10.3 percent of the American workforce was unionized in 2021, down 0.5 percentage points from 2020. In 1983, 20 percent of the workforce was unionized.

By far, the federal workforce is the most unionized in the United States. Only 6.1 percent of private sector workers are unionized, while 33.9 percent of public employees are union members.

Freeman noted that while there is pro-union sentiment around the country, organized labor has not made gains commensurate with the spike in support.

Companies continue to vigorously oppose organizing, Freeman says, and conservative forces in Washington – most often in the Republican Party – are eager to undercut organized labor.

But, Freeman told NANC delegates, the GCC/IBT remains committed to building union ranks and urged leaders to redouble efforts at the local level.

He cited recent gains in the corrugated box sector, as a promising example of recent progress.

“The corrugated box industry is the area where we see growth,” Freeman said. “We have good contracts with a couple of big players in the corrugated box industry, and there are other plants out there.

Despite an uncertain U.S. economic outlook, concerns over inflation and the ongoing threat represented by covid-19, Freeman described the mood at the Tempe meeting as generally upbeat. Delegates were energized by presentations, Freeman said, and – as always – by the chance to renew friendships in a spirit of solidarity.

Alejandro Guzman, hired last year as national GCC/IBT organizer, agreed there was a sense of optimism at the meeting and renewed dedication to sustaining and strengthening the newspaper segment and the GCC, broadly.

“I saw hope in the room,” he said. Delegates asked probing questions on how to best bring in new members and halt the worrisome slide in union membership. “After combating the attacks on unions

*continues on PAGE 16*

## Republicans Have Lurched; Don't Get Dragged Along

Elections have consequences.

If that sounds like a bumper sticker slogan – it is, and one of such vital importance that former GCC/IBT conference representative Mike Huggins once handed out stacks of sticky-back reminders to help rally support for union-friendly candidates.

As GCC/IBT president emeritus George Tedeschi points out in a commentary on Page 4 of this edition, organized labor must stand behind elected officials who believe in the fundamental right of workers to organize and secure their future through collective bargaining.

Not everyone in Congress meets that standard – not by a long shot.

Let's be honest.

In this hyper-partisan political atmosphere, there are few shades of gray.

Democrats – whatever their failings – stand as the most dependable allies of working Americans. The party is dedicated to the growth of organized labor, survival of middle-class values, protection of minorities and the security of constitutional rights.

Seized by far-right influences, beholden to corporate interests and spellbound by the divisive, and deluded politics of former president Donald Trump, the Republican Party has lurched toward the sort of disruptive and undemocratic rule it once would have rejected out of hand.

No matter how loudly the GOP pronounces itself the defender of the little guy, its policies rarely justify the claim.

The most far-reaching accomplishment of the Trump administration was a tax cut that wildly favored the richest Americans. GOP leaders have opposed every important piece of labor legislation proposed by Democrats – including the Employee Free Choice Act and the Protect the Right to Organize Act (PRO) – and doomed the Build Back Better Act advanced by Democrats and President Joe Biden.

What a shame.

Build Back Better – a proposal vigorously supported by the Teamsters and GCC/IBT leadership – would have done enormous good for working Americans. Among its features were universal pre-school, improved Medicaid coverage for senior home care services, expanded child care benefits, reduced prescription costs and a significant investment in affordable housing.

The same Republican lawmakers who dismissed Build Back Better were quick to celebrate a Trump era tax giveaway that likely will cost \$2.3 trillion over 10 years. But, it appears, consistency no longer counts – or even tradition.

Though the GOP has been the party of corporate America and the upper class for decades, at one time Republicans were able to ignore ideology and do the right thing for working class people.

As we note on Page 4, for instance, the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation was established under the historic 1974 Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) signed – with enthusiasm – by President Gerald Ford, a Republican, who said the measure would make sure workers had their “retirement dollars...when they are needed.”

Just a few weeks ago, we saw the enormous value of responsible government intervention – the kind Democrats favor and hard-right Republicans often denounce.

Under a Special Financial Assistance program, the Biden administration provided \$1.7 billion to protect faltering GCC/IBT pension plans – welcome news for present and future retirees who feared deep cuts in pension benefits. On this crucial issue, the GOP couldn't have cared less. Biden and Democrats made the difference by providing emergency relief.

Union leaders know that many rank-and-file members have been swayed by populist Republican rhetoric on cultural issues and by Donald Trump's swaggering style and bombastic speeches.

But big talk and tough guy posturing don't speak to the real needs of working Americans and union members. You might not like everything they do, but Democrats – and Joe Biden – have proven again and again they are labor's most trustworthy partners.

The midterm political season is coming up. Study the issues, shut out the sound, choose carefully. Remember who's on our side. Elections have consequences. ■



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## Point of View BY ROBERT REICH

# Gloomy? 10 Reasons for Hope

We expected covid to be gone by now. We thought the minimum wage would be raised by now, that bold measures to slow climate change would be enacted, pharmaceuticals would be cheaper and childcare widely available.



forces now reshaping America cannot be reversed. Our diversity will be a bulwark against racist nationalism.

7. Putin's war on Ukraine is showing the world that totalitarian systems can't even execute a war efficiently and that the myth of the decline of the

We never thought we'd be back in a Cold War with Russia, that inflation would rip through the economy or that the next Congress could be under control of crazy right-wingers.

Don't kick yourself for feeling lousy. You have every right to feel that way.

But let me say something else as clearly as I can. I've been at this fight a very long time, and right now I find lots of reasons for hope. Ten, to be exact.

1. First, unions are stronger today — and more workers want to join a union — than at any time in the last four decades. Between October 1, 2021 and March 30, 2022, the National Labor Relations Board recorded a 57 percent increase in workers filing for the petitions to allow union elections. That's a good thing.

2. Many issues now on the table would have seemed fantasies a decade ago. A majority is in favor of Medicare for All. There's a surge of support for Universal Basic Income, free public higher education and a wealth tax on billionaires.

3. The more America sees of former President Donald Trump, the more people are reminded of how disastrous he was for the nation and why we need stable and thoughtful individuals in positions of power.

4. The Supreme Court's conservative majority is a horror show — but it's also another reminder to most people of why we need a Democrat in the Oval Office and a Democratic senate.

5. The young people I work with are committed, talented, and progressive. I'm finding such young people across America — and many are entering politics.

6. Tucker Carlson may bemoan it, and Fox News viewers hate it, but the demographic

West and the rise of the East is bankrupt.

8. The horror of covid has built public support for paid family leave, universal childcare, and universal access to healthcare. The pandemic has also shown us how essential our “essential” workers really are — fueling measures to raise state minimum wages.

9. At the local and community level, the pandemic has shown most Americans just how kind we can be to one another, how much we depend on each other, and how rich this nation continues to be in voluntary efforts for the common good.

10. Finally, let me remind you this is a long game. Fifty years ago, a person could be imprisoned for being gay, there was virtually no Black middle class, no women headed large corporations or sat on the Supreme Court. Fifty years ago, tens of thousands of Americans and Vietnamese were dying in a purposeless war, we suffered a crime wave far larger than anything seen today, poverty was deeper.

The struggle never ends. It is hard because it **has** to be hard — because the fight is about overcoming fundamental imbalances of power, and those with power will not give it up without a fight.

What do you think? Where do you find hope these days? ■

*Robert B. Reich served as secretary of labor in the Clinton administration. He is Chancellor's Professor of Public Policy at the University of California at Berkeley and senior fellow at the Blum Center for Developing Economies. Reich has written 18 books, including his most recent, "The System: Who Rigged It, How we Fix It," and is co-creator of the documentary, "Saving Capitalism," streaming on Netflix.*

## Keep the Faith and Hang On



Inflation is here to stay for a while. The questions are: How high will it get, how long will it last and what do we do about it?

The Federal Reserve Board said that a 2-3 percent inflation rate is okay for the economy. But 8 percent is not.

To fight soaring prices, board members raised the fed funds rate – the rate it charges banks to borrow money – three-quarters of a percent in June and plans to do more as necessary.

In turn, lenders will raise interest rates on mortgages, car loans, credit cards and businesses making it harder for people to borrow money. That slows the economy but it takes time. It is hard to go from 8 percent inflation to 2 percent in a hurry.

But it can also cause a recession and many economists think it will. How deep a recession? No one knows.

We went through circumstances like this in the late 1970s and early '80s and ended up with what became known as stagflation. That's when interest rates go up and the economy remains stagnant. In other words, the worst of both worlds.

A recession will not only slow the economy but could cause jobs losses at a time when the United States is enjoying the lowest unemployment rates in decades. Our robust job market has led to wage increases – a good thing, of course, except that inflation is a by-product.

Remember, it was the covid pandemic and supply chain issues that kicked off the inflation

as demand outpaced supply. Prices rose. And the government's trillion-dollar stimulus package – passed with good intentions – may have added to the problem, some economists say.

And now we have the Vladimir Putin's outrageous war in Ukraine.

Russian oil and natural gas aren't reaching world markets. Fuel prices are spiking everywhere – another source of inflationary pressure.

In addition, Russia and Ukraine account for more than 25 percent of the world's exportable grain. The war has crimped that supply line, too. Other nations are stepping in and charging more. Inevitably, food prices surge.

This is a moment of uncertainty – to say the least.

We don't know if the Fed's moves to slow the economy will work. We don't know if there will be a recession or how painful it might be. Or for how long.

Where does that leave working-class Americans? What should you do with your money – stocks, bonds, retirement accounts?

The best advice rarely changes: Have faith, hang on.

You can't time the markets. This too will pass. It always does. We just can't say when. ■

*Jerry Morgan is a former Newsday business writer and member of Local 406-C.*

## Guest Spot

BY JANICE BORT

## Breaking the Stereotype

There is nothing new about women in leadership positions in the print industry. They just did not get as much credit or become household names as often.

How many of us know Augusta Lewis, Mary Moore and Eva Howard, who joined the union in 1869, making the International Typographical Union the first to admit female members.

At one time our local – 72-C, Washington, D.C. – was a pressman's local. We came out of the IPPAU and, like newspaper locals, members were mostly men. All that has changed. Now with the printing trade requiring a wide range of skills, GCC/IBT locals are made up more equally of men and women.

The impact of women in the labor movement – and national affairs – is evident. All of the issues women face – inequality in pay, the prospect of losing the fundamental right to control their own bodies, workplace intimidation – have become a focus of our times.

Women are standing up for themselves like never before. Around the country, women are leading organizing drives. They are running for office on the local level, sitting on executive boards and serving as trustees of pension funds.

But we need more women in union leadership roles. Encouragement must come at the local level.

It did for me.

I was the only woman the first time I went to a union meeting. I wanted to learn all I could

and the local made that possible. I was sent to computer classes and union leadership training. Before long, I took part in contract meetings.

Becoming a union leader is not easy for anyone but for a woman it is more difficult because some men find forceful women intimidating. Defying expectations takes determination.

Once I went to a print shop for a retirement party. I joined a group of women who were passing out cake. One of them asked how long I had been married to the man retiring.

A little stunned, I said I was not his wife but his union representative.

People often do not think of me as a Teamster leader. Maybe I don't look the part – in other words, I am not a man. For years, I have enjoyed breaking that stereotype. Someday I hope women will be so prevalent in leadership roles that it won't be a stereotype at all. ■

*Janice Bort, secretary-treasurer of GCC/IBT Local 72-C, Washington, D.C., since 2005, also serves as secretary-treasurer of the Washington Allied Trade Council, recording secretary of the GCC/IBT Eastern Conference and secretary-treasurer/recording secretary of the GCC/IBT North American Specialty Conference.*



## All the Best

### Print

#### Fight Like Hell: The Untold Story of American Labor

Kim Kelly

At 448 pages, this book is a buster – and how could it be anything else? Kim Kelly, a young woman who serves in the unlikely role of labor columnist for Teen Vogue magazine, provides an extraordinarily rich view of the labor movement and what she calls the “long lineage of working-class heroes” who fought – mostly without recognition – for employee rights in the United States. She recalls pivotal moments like the 1881 strike of black laundry workers in Atlanta, the 1892 Coal Creek War in Tennessee, the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire in New York. Kelly highlights the contributions of Jewish immigrant garment workers, Asian-American field hands, disabled activists, labor organizers at Starbucks and Amazon. Her far-reaching work conveys an abidingly upbeat assessment about the future of unions. “We’re in a position where more people are interested in unions and organizing and taking their power back,” Kelly said in a Vogue interview. “That is nothing if not its own revolution.” *Atria/One Signal Publishers, \$28*



### Music

#### Sheryl: Music from the Feature Documentary

Sheryl Crow

Sheryl Crow is 60. Difficult to imagine, maybe, but – you know – time flies even for a superstar. At first reluctant, Crow ultimately agreed to a Showtime documentary (“Sheryl”) marking her nearly 30 years as a pop-folk-country-rock’n’roll powerhouse. With the film comes this two-disc album and, as usual, the singer-songwriter from little old Kennett, Missouri, delivers – and how. Her guitar playing is terrific. Her unmistakable voice is just that – righteous, real, irresistible. And, of course, Crow’s material is top notch – favorites that include her 1996 hit, “If It Makes You Happy” and new tunes like the wistful, “Forever.” “There is no such thing as forever,” Crow sings, but after her three decades of success, you have to wonder. *A&M Records, \$19.98*



### Video/Streaming

#### Death on the Nile

Kenneth Branagh, director

Agatha Christie mysteries are always deliciously dated – breezy, vintage pieces, mild in comparison to the deeply depraved accounts of murder and madness familiar to modern moviegoers. When transporting a Christie novel to the screen, the trick is to honor her light touch without allowing the intrigue to come undone. And that is what Kenneth Branagh achieves in his treatment of the riverboat thriller, “Death of the Nile” based on Christie’s 1937 book. Branagh, who directed the film and stars as the famous detective Hercule Poirot, knows that preserving the charm of these campy, whodunit classics means allowing the story to tell itself – and remembering that even a story involving several shipboard homicides can be good, clean fun. Streaming on Hulu and HBO Max



### Internet

#### The Nib

Thenib.com

This is almost too good to be true. Sign up – free – to the Nib and editor Matt Bors, a Pulitzer Prize finalist who founded the website, will email a fresh round of high-class political cartoons by independent artists every day. A recent entry by cartoonist Sam Wallman hailed the contributions of the labor movement and quoted Barack Obama: “The cornerstones of the middle-class security all bear the union label.” GCC/IBT members will find plenty more to like on the Nib – and might even consider a small donation to help this feisty little operation keep up the good work.



# 'Making Workplace Equal'

continued from PAGE 1

secretary of the U.S. Women's National Team Players' Association, and Mary Kay Henry, the leader of the Service Employees International Union.

"The coronavirus pandemic, coupled with our country's prolonged shortage of jobs that provide living wages, good benefits, and adequate working conditions, has created momentum for our movement on a scale we've never seen before," Shuler told Harper's Bazaar.

Women say their union activity is a way of securing their own future – and bettering the lives of co-workers.

"There has been this itch like, 'I need to do something,'" Claire Chang, an organizer at an REI's store in New York that voted to unionize, told the Gothamist newspaper. "Seeing the conditions of the world and my own working conditions and my experience too, with my coworkers, and seeing what they're going through. It was a no-brainer."

The sentiment hardly is new. Eleanor Roosevelt, wife of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and first lady of the United States from 1933-45, recognized that the labor movement offered a means of achieving workplace justice. "Only when they are organized do women get equal pay for equal work," Eleanor Roosevelt said.

At the GCC/IBT, women leaders also say they are committed to assuring basic rights for all workers.

"My goal is to continue to make the workplace more equal for women and men with wages, benefits and recognition," said Linde Shaw, who was appointed president of Local 14-M, Philadelphia, and secretary-treasurer of District Council 9 following the retirement of John Potts last year.

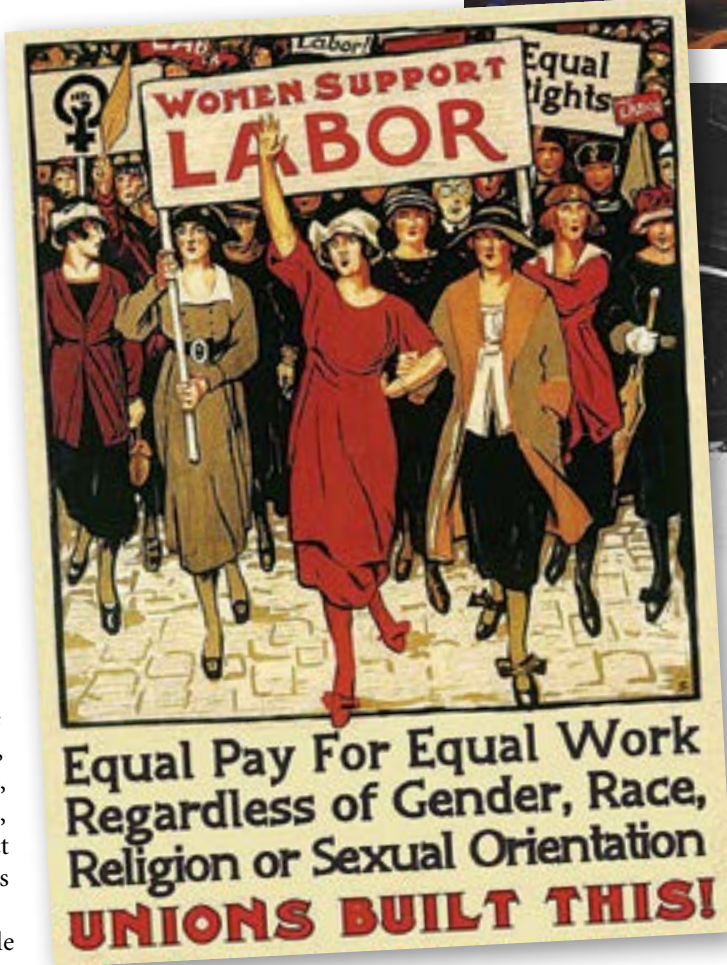
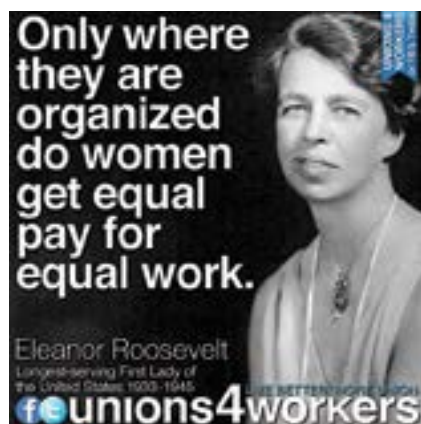
Important, too, said Shaw, is setting an example for women who might consider becoming leaders at the local and district council levels.

"I would also like to show women they are capable of becoming leaders and that it is possible to move into these higher positions," Shaw said.

The Teamsters and GCC/IBT have long urged women to seek leadership roles but progress has been slow. Out of more than 110 top GCC local positions and district council seats, only 11 are held by women. Few serve on executive boards and no women serve at the international executive level.

GCC/IBT President Kurt Freeman said it is vital that women be recruited for leadership positions.

"We need a broad range of perspectives to assure the GCC/IBT is responsive to



**'Women have been essential to the success of the Teamster movement since its earliest days. At the GCC, we are entirely committed to equality for all our members in the rank-and-file and at leadership levels.'**

– Kurt Freeman, GCC/IBT president

everyone's needs," Freeman said. "Women have been essential to the success of the Teamster movement since its earliest days. At the GCC, we also are entirely committed to equality for all our members in the rank-and-file and at leadership levels."

The need for women leaders – in unions and society more broadly – was emphasized at last year's IBT Women's Conference in Las Vegas.

"Sisters, it's time to put yourself out there as a leader in your community, to start saying, 'yes, I can' because when Teamster women run, all Teamsters win," said Royceann Porter, a member of IBT Local 238, Cedar Rapids, elected in 2018 to a seat on the Johnson County, Iowa, Board of Supervisors.

At the GCC/IBT, women leaders often emerge from entry level positions at their locals.

Mary DeGratto, president and secretary-treasurer of Local 119/43-B, New York, started as a clerk in 1990 and was encouraged by male colleagues to move into leadership ranks even though she had not expressed interest.

"They must have seen something in me," DeGratto said. "I certainly wasn't looking for it, I can tell you that much."

DeGratto says her early mastery of computer skills – well beyond those of the men at the local at the time – helped lead to advancement. "I believe they moved me up because none of them were computer savvy and they didn't know what to do to upgrade themselves as a union. I brought them into the next century."

Shaw, who is the newest female president in the GCC/IBT, started in 1977 as a die cutter in a specialty print shop where she also did silk-screening. She began her journey upward when she became assistant shop steward. Four years later, Shaw became a full shop steward and member of the Local 14-M negotiating committee.

"I had been talking with a lot of co-workers and heard a lot about their concerns," Shaw said. "During that time, I also talked to John Potts about his job and that's when I decided I wanted to be more involved. I think he picked up on that and asked me to be on the executive boards."

Potts sent Shaw to a women's conference and, in 2018, to officers' training before she assumed the role of vice-president. She's now wrapping up her first year in the top job at 14-M.

"I met Linde 25 years ago at the Aura Badge Company, a shop in New Jersey," Potts said. "She was full of questions on how the union works, wanting to know her rights in the workplace and how best she could assist Local 14-M."

Shaw showed the sort of initiative and dedication essential to union leadership, Potts said.

## LINDE SHAW: DEFYING NAYSAYERS AND 'EMPOWERING' ONE ANOTHER

With over 58 percent of women in the workforce today, more doors are opening for women to move into leadership roles. Women have come far since being seen as just barefoot, pregnant and trophies for men.

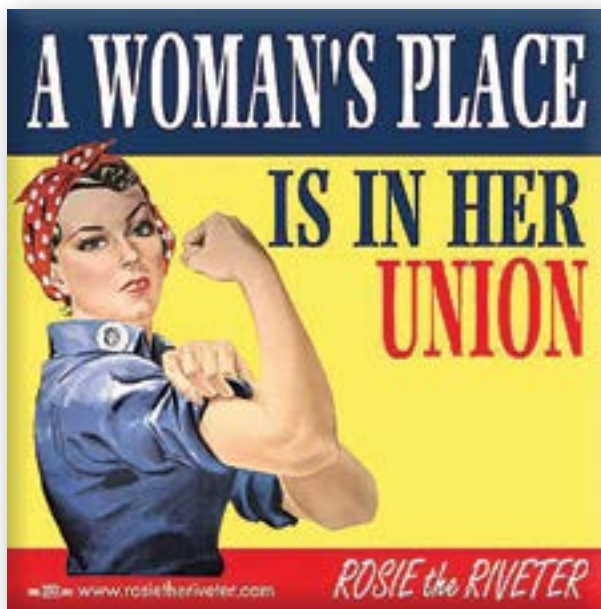
Women have stepped into leadership roles in every aspect of life – running households, managing health care, paying bills, taking care of children and working. We thrive in these roles, demonstrating that we can do it all. We are great at solving problems and mediating which are all essential qualities to have in a leader.

The obstacles we face are earning confidence from others and gaining respect. During day-to-day leadership, we face critics and 'naysayers' who condemn one another rather than hold each other up. If more women can help to empower and advocate for one another, more women can succeed in leadership roles. Female leadership demonstrates equality at its finest and can help build a better future for all.



Linde Shaw became president of Local 14-M, Philadelphia, and secretary-treasurer of District Council 9 last year upon the retirement of John Potts.





***“It is more important now than ever for women to stand united and to get into leadership positions.”***

*– Janice Bort, secretary-treasurer of Local 72-C, Washington, D.C.*

“Linde worked diligently to educate herself on the collective bargaining process, grievance handling and how to represent her sister and brothers on the shop floor most effectively. I am proud to have passed the torch to Linde and thankful for the leadership she has demonstrated.”

Janice Bort had a similar career trajectory.

She started in 2000 as a part-time receptionist and impressed Paul Atwill, president of Local 72-C.

Bort had good computer skills – and, Atwill found, she could write. Quickly, Bort set up a website, wrote an impressive article on the local’s history and established a small print industry museum on the lower floor of 72-C offices in Riverdale, Maryland.

“She wanted to learn, so we made sure she was able to do it,” Atwill said. “She wanted to get so involved that she actually talked to the pressmen and bookbinders to find out what they did and watch the presses and everything.”

Atwill said Bort was determined to succeed and help others in the process.

“She wanted to continue to improve herself and get the respect of the members so they could come to her and ask her anything and everything that had to do with the union,” Atwill said. “She’s unbelievable and can answer anything and virtually do everything.”

Bort quickly went from part-time receptionist to office manager to vice president to secretary-treasurer. In addition, Bort served on several committees, boards, and commissions.

“I forced myself to work harder to prove myself – and I read a lot, teaching myself about labor law and history,” said Bort, who also serves as secretary-treasurer for the GCC Specialty Conference, recording secretary for the Eastern Conference and secretary-treasurer for the Washington, D.C. Allied Printing Council.

Shaw and Bort say more needs to be done to encourage female participation in leadership roles.

“It starts at the local union level,” Bort said. “Local leaders need to get out there and talk to women one on one and invite them to come to the union meetings, conferences and trainings.”

The payoff would be well worth it.

“It is very important for more women to move into these roles so we can address the issues of both women and men,” Shaw said. “More women in leadership roles will boost confidence in other women to do the same and become more productive in today’s world.”

## NLRB’s Abruzzo: No ‘Captive’ Meetings

The top lawyer at the National Labor Relations Board said she will seek to end the widespread management practice of forcing workers to attend anti-union meetings – a move hailed by the GCC/IBT as a “major first step” toward curbing employer intimidation during organizing drives.

Jennifer A. Abruzzo, NLRB general counsel, said “captive audience meetings” represent an inherent and “unlawful threat that employees will be disciplined or suffer other reprisals if they exercise their protected right not to listen” to management attacks on unionization.

Captive meetings are “contrary to the basic principles of labor law,” said Abruzzo who is asking the full labor board to overturn precedent and declare it unlawful for employers to demand attendance at meetings aimed at undermining organizing efforts.

GCC/IBT President Kurt Freeman called Abruzzo’s initiative “excellent news” and said if employers want to hold captive meetings, unions should have “equal time.” He added: “These meetings never were a fair way to conduct campaigns.”

The full board – three Democrats, two Republicans – had not acted on Abruzzo’s proposal by press time. If her view prevails and the board revises long-standing policy, court challenges likely would follow, according to GCC/IBT general counsel Peter Leff.

“But this is a major first step to ensuring that private sector workers are not coerced against their will to being subjected to anti-union messages from their employer,” Leff said.

Abruzzo, appointed by President Joe Biden to replace business-friendly, Trump-era general counsel Peter Robb, said the NLRB years ago “incorrectly” ruled that captive meetings were legal when, in her view, such practices amount to an “anomaly in labor law” and must be addressed.

Employees, she said, should not be forced to attend anti-union meetings on paid time nor be “cornered by management while performing their job duties.”

The process is inherently threatening, Abruzzo said, and current NLRB policy “allows employers to make good on those threats by discharging or disciplining employees who assert their right to refrain from listening by failing to attend, or leaving, such mandatory meetings.”

Recent unionizing drives at Amazon and Starbucks brought attention to captive meetings after organizers complained of heavy-handed company tactics.



Jennifer A. Abruzzo



***“This is a major first step to ensuring that private sector workers are not coerced against their will to being subjected to anti-union messages from their employer.”***

*– Peter Leff, GCC/IBT general counsel*

Stuart Applebaum, president of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU) which sought to organize an Amazon facility in Bessemer, Alabama, said in a prepared statement that captive meetings are “the major weapon” used by management to frighten workers and spread “disinformation,” according to the Associated Press.

“The question of whether workers want a union should be the workers’ choice” – not the employer’s preference -- and employees should experience no intimidation, Applebaum said. “Captive audience meetings make that impossible.” (See related item in Press Run, Page 14.)

# Take Care Returning to ‘Normal’ Life

By Dawn Hobbs  
Special to the Communicator

**W**hile many Americans are conducting their lives as though the danger of covid has vanished, health experts warn of constantly evolving variants and GCC/IBT officials continue to urge caution in the workplace.

Federal health officials warned in late spring that one-third of Americans live in areas where the threat of covid-19 is so high that they should consider wearing a mask at public settings indoors and noted that more than 100,000 cases are reported each day.

Nevertheless, experts say, covid-weary Americans are moving away from mask-wearing and other precautionary health measures with the arrival of summer in hopes of regaining some sense of “normal” life.

In addition, many appear encouraged by the success of vaccines in preventing hospitalization and death and in data showing subvariants now in circulation are less deadly than earlier strains despite being highly transmissible.

“Folks here have tested positive for the variants, but it’s ultimately been very limited and symptoms have been more cold- or allergy-like,” said Clark Ritchey, secretary-treasurer of District Council 2. “And, they are back to work in short order, rather than missing a considerable amount of time.”

Union leaders caution, however, that the virus continues to represent a threat and its dangers – especially for so-called “long haul” sufferers – should not be dismissed.

Ritchey urges members – many considered essential workers in the paper and packaging industries – to follow safety protocols established by the Centers for Disease Control. Israel Castro, secretary-treasurer of District Council 3, offered similar advice.

“We continue to encourage safety precautions, but people are just so fatigued and done with it,” said Castro. “There’s a strong minimizing of it. Covid may not be done with us, but they are done with covid.”



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## Hoffa Allies Say Good-bye at LA Scholarship Event

It was a time to say good-bye – and thanks.

More than 1,000 Teamster officials and allies – including a contingent led by GCC/IBT President Kurt Freeman – gathered in Los Angeles to honor James P. Hoffa, who retired in March after 23 years as Teamsters general president and celebrate the IBT scholarship program that has helped thousands of union families meet the costs of higher education.

Founded in 2000, the James R. Hoffa Memorial Scholarship Fund, named for Hoffa’s father who held the top Teamsters job from 1957-71, provides aid to the children and financial dependents of IBT members pursuing college degrees or vocational training. The fund has awarded more than 4,000 scholarships and last year distributed grants of \$1.2 million.

“Many GCC/IBT families have benefited from the Hoffa Fund – another advantage of our merger with the Teamsters,” Freeman said, referring to the 2005 agreement that brought together the IBT and Graphic Communication International Union.

Recipients say the Hoffa money is an investment in their success and welcome economic assistance for families.

“Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to afford college and pursue my dreams,” said Raymond Chitswara III, a 2020 award winner and son of Raymond Chitswara, a member of GCC/IBT Local 735-S, Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Ho, son of David Ho, Local 388-M, Los Angeles, and a 2021 winner, said simply: “I’m really grateful.”

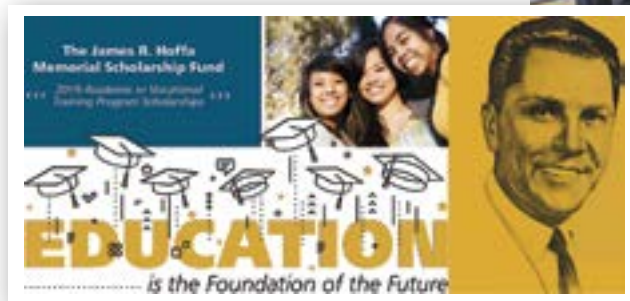
The Los Angeles scholarship dinner came days before Hoffa, 80, handed control of the union to Sean M. O’Brien, who was elected IBT general president in a mail-in election last fall.

Addressing the audience at the J. W. Marriott Hotel, Hoffa thanked supporters who had helped him revive the union, protect members and secure the IBT’s financial future.

“I look around this room and see the faces of men and women that I have had the



PHOTO COURTESY OF GCC/IBT



Joining more than 1,000 in Los Angeles to honor recently retired Teamsters General President James P. Hoffa and celebrate the scholarship fund named after his father, James R. Hoffa, were GCC/IBT officials, left-right, Peter Leff, general counsel; President Kurt Freeman; Israel Castro, secretary-treasurer, District Council 3; Steve Sullivan, president of Local 3-N, Boston; Clark Ritchey, secretary-treasurer, DC-2; Eddie Williams, president, Local 527-S, Atlanta; Marty Hallberg, DC-1 president; Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Steve Nobles.

honor of working with for more than two decades,” Hoffa said. “Together, we brought this union back from the brink of financial ruin. We organized and built Teamster power through industry-leading contracts. We saved the pensions of millions of active and retired members.”

Hard work paid off, he said, and the IBT regained its mantle as “the most powerful union in the world.” He added: “Thank you for all you have done for this union.”

Representing the GCC/IBT at the Los Angeles dinner in addition to President Freeman were: Steve Nobles, GCC/IBT secretary-treasurer/vice president; Israel Castro, secretary-treasurer of District Council 3; Marty Hallberg, president, DC-1; Clark Ritchey, secretary-treasurer, DC-2; Steve Sullivan, president, Local 3-N, Boston; Eddie Williams, president, Local 527-S, Atlanta; and Peter Leff, GCC/IBT general counsel.



## FOCUS ON WORKER STRESS AT MIDWEST CONFERENCE

**M**ental health issues were a focus at a recent meeting of the Midwest Conference in Chicago.

GCC/IBT leaders said covid-related staff shortages have caused increased workplace stress and left some members dealing with mental health issues.

In response, Kurt Reissenweber, president of GCC/IBT District Council 4, asked mental health experts from Rogers Behavioral Health, a nationally recognized organization with a branch in Skokie, Illinois, to attend the conference meeting.

“Their session lasted almost two hours – I couldn’t believe all of these old Teamster leaders opening up about personal stuff,” Reissenweber said. “It had such an impact that they lined up afterward to continue talking to the representatives and to get their card.”

In fact, the group was so impressed that they donated \$500 to Rogers Behavioral Health on behalf of the GCC/IBT – \$250 from the local and the remainder from a member who won \$250 in a raffle.

“They really went into teaching local leaders how to recognize that there is a problem and to not just blow it off – how to direct people right away to seek help,” Reissenweber said.

The issue hit home for Reissenweber when he had to deal recently with two members who developed mental health problems after excessive overtime.

Blair Famarin, outreach manager at Rogers Behavioral Health – which specializes in depression and mood disorders – said clinic professionals were grateful for the opportunity to address the GCC/IBT about mental health issues.

“We covered anxiety and depression, including defining it, discussing treatments, where to go for help, how to contact the Employee Assistance Programs – EAPs – to reduce stigma and begin an overall discussion around mental health,” Famarin said.

Famarin said delegates were particularly concerned about extra work demanded because so many workers have been afflicted with covid. In a booming job market, others have decided to look for other work creating additional staff shortages.

“The attendees seemed concerned about finding enough people to work and not overworking the especially strong employees who have had to cover all of their needs while people are out,” she noted.

Famarin said it was essential that local union leaders “speak honestly and openly about mental health and seeking mental health treatment.”

Reissenweber originally contacted representatives of the National Alliance on Mental Illness to speak at the conference but NAMI representatives said continued high demand for services during the covid health crisis made attendance impossible.

Union leaders said it is vital that mental health issues be addressed and that support be provided agencies offering assistance to those experiencing distress.

To aid the work of NAMI, for example, District Council 3, Detroit, donated funds from last year’s William Browning Golf Scramble to the NAMI branch in Detroit, according to Israel Castro, DC-secretary-treasurer.

“It’s time we start looking at mental health issues more seriously,” Castro said earlier this year.

Shops continue to cope with worker shortages related to covid-related illnesses, officials said, and management often expects healthy workers to step in. As a result, overtime hours pile up.

“Our members worked all through the pandemic and with business picking up, they have to work more hours,” Reissenweber told the Communicator this spring.

Reissenweber said workers want to help their employers but excessive overtime can take a toll.

“They’re seeking help because of the anxiety issues all of this has caused,” Reissenweber said.

## DC-3 AIDS AUTISTIC CHILDREN

**L**eadership at District Council 3 didn’t hesitate when Play-Place Autism & Special Needs Center sought a donation to help develop an outdoor resource for autistic children in southeast Michigan.

On the same day, DC-3 leadership arranged for a meeting to discuss plans for an “outdoor discoveries” area and donated \$10,000 for the project – funds coming largely from the district’s annual charity golf outing.

“We are proud of our activism in the communities we represent,” said Israel Castro, secretary-treasurer of DC3. “When we received this request for help we quickly decided to see how we could help the Play-Place Autism & Special Needs Center meet their goal.”

Representatives from the center – located in Sterling Heights, Michigan – also asked for the GCC/IBT’s assistance on another level: Some of the young people are getting older and will need jobs.

Castro said DC-3 is eager to help.

“We will approach some of our employers to find ways that have meaningful job opportunities for some of the kids who are now growing up to be adults who have autism.”



## PCA WORKERS AWAIT NLRB ELECTION DATE

**W**orkers at Packaging Corporation of America – formerly Field Packaging Group – in Bedford Park, Illinois, are getting closer to an election after two prior failed attempts.



Changes in management – from Field to PCA – led workers to realize “they needed to form a union now more than ever,” said Sergio Franco, president Local 415-S, Chicago, of the 115-member plant.

Workers eagerly signed authorization cards this time around, said GCC/IBT conference organizer Alejandro Guzman. A petition to hold an election was filed with the National Labor Relations Board in May. At press time, the NLRB had not announced an election date.

“They want to be treated fair and they want to be treated equal,” said Ernesto Vera, secretary-treasurer, Local 415-S.

Jose Luis Barrera, who has been with the company for 22 years, said he looked forward to the day when the voices of employees would be heard.

“This is why I am coming together with my coworkers,” he said. “We want to show our strength in numbers.”

## ‘SIGNIFICANT’ GAINS AT MONDI BAGS

**A**fter only four days of negotiations, District Council 2 won a three-year agreement with Mondi Bags USA that won the praise of workers at a 100-member shop in Salt Lake City, GCC/IBT leaders said.



“The increase in wages were significant,” said Clark Ritchey. The contract provides a 5 percent increase the first year and 3 percent the second and third.

Members also received an upgrade in the company’s 401(k) pension contribution – Mondi now will match employee contributions dollar-for-dollar – and an across-the board adjustment on wages in several classifications, Ritchey said.

In addition, the company will begin paying long-term disability – only short-term had been covered previously – and increase life insurance benefits.

“It’s a great deal,” Ritchey said. “The committee is experienced and they did a heck of a job – they held their ground. And members overwhelmingly approved the contract at 90 percent ratification.”

Ritchey gave high marks to members of the shop negotiating team. “It was a great job done by rep Mike Maddock and chief steward Danny Vigil and his committee,” said Ritchey, who also was a negotiator. “The core issue in bargaining was getting the wages up. We felt that with the economy and inflation going the way it is that we really needed to get something that was reasonable and would benefit our members.”

DC-2 has represented the Salt Lake City plant for more than 25 years and dealt with a number of owners including Graphic Packaging and Smurfit Stone. Mondi bought the plant six years ago.

Local Stops wants to hear from you. If your GCC/IBT local has been involved in organizing efforts, community outreach or volunteer work, e-mail a brief summary to reporter Dawn Hobbs at dawnhobbs@cox.net or call 805-284-5351.

## Las mujeres líderes del GCC/IBT aprovechan el momento y muestran su fuerza

Dawn Hobbs  
*Reportaje especial para The Communicator*

Desde los cafés Starbucks hasta las tiendas de equipo para acampar REI, la actividad sindical aumenta en todo el país, y las mujeres a menudo asumen papeles de liderazgo, algo que se refleja en el GCC/IBT, donde el número de mujeres líderes aumenta y el espíritu de solidaridad entre las activistas es evidente.

«Es un buen momento para ser una mujer dirigente sindical», dijo Janice Bort, secretaria-tesorera del Local 72-C de Washington, D.C. desde 2008. «Es inspirador ver a las mujeres luchar y trabajar más de lo que vi nunca por nuestros derechos en el lugar de trabajo.»

Bort dijo que las mujeres aprovechan ahora un momento en el que los sindicatos gozan de una alta aprobación

pública y el mercado laboral sigue siendo inestable tras dos años de una devastadora pandemia de covid.

«Ahora es más importante que nunca que las mujeres se mantengan unidas y lleguen a puestos de liderazgo», dijo.

Casi la mitad de la mano de obra del país es femenina, pero los activistas afirman que la discriminación persiste y que la representación sindical es la forma más segura de abordar las desigualdades.

«Dado que cuestiones como la remuneración, las prestaciones, los permisos pagados por enfermedad y familia, los niveles mínimos de personal, la flexibilidad de horarios, la salud mental y la seguridad en el lugar de trabajo se han vuelto cada vez más urgentes en medio de la pandemia, las mujeres... han surgido como líderes sindicales en todas las industrias como nunca antes», informó la revista Harper's Bazaar.

En el GCC/IBT, las líderes también dicen que se comprometen a garantizar los derechos básicos de todos los trabajadores.

«Mi objetivo es seguir haciendo que el lugar de trabajo sea más igualitario para mujeres y hombres en cuanto a salarios, prestaciones y reconocimiento», dijo Linde Shaw, que fue nombrada presidente del Local 14-M de Filadelfia y secretaria-tesorera del Consejo de Distrito 9, nombramiento que hizo John Potts tras su jubilación el año pasado.

Los Teamsters y el GCC/IBT llevan mucho tiempo instando a las mujeres a buscar puestos de liderazgo pero los avances han sido lentos. De los más de 110 altos cargos locales y puestos en consejos de distrito del GCC, sólo 11 están ocupados por mujeres. Son pocas las que forman parte de las juntas directivas y ninguna mujer ocupa un puesto directivo internacional.

El Presidente del GCC/IBT, Kurt Freeman, dijo que es vital que se busque y se contrate a mujeres para puestos de liderazgo.

«Necesitamos un amplio abanico de perspectivas para garantizar que el GCC/IBT responda a las necesidades de todos», dijo Freeman. «Las mujeres han sido esenciales para el éxito del movimiento Teamster desde sus primeros días. El GCC también se compromete plenamente a la igualdad de todos nuestros miembros, tanto en las filas como en los niveles de dirección».

Las líderes suelen venir de los puestos principiantes en sus locales.

Mary DeGratto, presidente y secretaria-tesorera del sindicato local 119/43-B de Nueva York, empezó como oficinista en 1990 y sus colegas varones la animaron a pasar a las filas de la dirección, aunque ella no había expresado interés.

## Les dirigeantes de la CCG-FIT sont déterminées à obtenir l'égalité des droits pour tous

Par Dawn Hobbs  
*Contribution spéciale au Communicator*

Des enseignes Starbucks aux magasins d'articles de camping REI, l'activité syndicale bouillonne partout au pays et les femmes y jouent souvent un rôle de premier plan – un changement qui se reflète au sein de la CCG-FIT où le nombre de dirigeantes est en hausse et l'esprit de solidarité parmi les femmes activistes est manifeste.

« C'est un bon moment pour être une dirigeante syndicale, a déclaré Janice Bort, secrétaire-trésorière de la section locale 72-C de Washington, D.C. depuis 2008. Et inspirant de voir des femmes lutter et travailler avec une énergie que je n'ai encore jamais vue pour défendre nos droits au travail. »

Selon J. Bort, les femmes saisissent l'occasion alors que les syndicats jouissent d'une grande cote de popularité auprès du public et que le marché de l'emploi reste volatil après deux années catastrophiques liées à la pandémie de COVID-19.

« Il est plus important que jamais que les femmes fassent preuve d'unité et accèdent à des postes de leadership », a-t-elle indiqué.

Même si près de la moitié de la main-d'œuvre du pays est féminine, les activistes estiment que la discrimination persiste et que la représentation syndicale est le moyen le plus sûr de s'attaquer aux inégalités.

« Étant donné l'urgence grandissante, en pleine pandémie, des enjeux comme

la rémunération, les avantages sociaux, les congés de maladie et pour motifs familiaux payés, les niveaux d'effectifs minimums, les horaires flexibles, la santé mentale et la sécurité au travail, les femmes... ont émergé comme jamais encore comme dirigeantes syndicales dans toutes les industries », a noté le magazine Harper's Bazaar.

À la CCG-FIT, les dirigeantes affirment aussi être déterminées à garantir les droits fondamentaux de tous les travailleurs.

« Mon but est de continuer à rendre le lieu de travail plus équitable pour les femmes et les hommes en ce qui concerne les salaires, les avantages sociaux et la reconnaissance », a indiqué Linde Shaw, qui a été nommée présidente de la section locale 14-M de Philadelphie et secrétaire-trésorière du conseil de district 9 à la suite du départ à la retraite de John Potts l'an dernier.

Les Teamsters et la CCG-FIT exhortent depuis longtemps les femmes à viser des rôles de leadership, mais les progrès ont été lents. Seuls 11 des 110 postes de direction des sections locales et sièges de conseils de districts de la CCG sont occupés par des femmes. Elles sont rares à faire partie des conseils exécutifs et totalement absentes de l'exécutif international.

Le président de la CCG-FIT Kurt Freeman juge essentiel que des femmes soient recrutées pour des postes de direction.

« Nous avons besoin d'un large éventail de perspectives afin que la CCG-FIT réponde aux besoins de tous,

a fait savoir K. Freeman. Les femmes ont été essentielles pour la réussite du mouvement des Teamsters depuis ses tout débuts. À la CCG, nous appuyons aussi à fond l'égalité entre tous nos membres au niveau de la base comme de la direction. »

Il arrive souvent que les dirigeantes grimpent les échelons à partir des postes de débutantes dans leurs sections locales.

Mary DeGratto, présidente et secrétaire-trésorière de la section locale 119/43-B de New York, a commencé comme employée de bureau en 1990 et ce sont des collègues masculins qui l'ont poussée à intégrer les rangs des dirigeants alors qu'elle n'en avait pas manifesté l'intérêt.

M. DeGratto affirme que sa maîtrise précoce de l'informatique – de loin supérieure à celles des hommes qui faisaient partie de la section locale à l'époque – a contribué à son avancement. « Je pense qu'ils m'ont fait avancer parce qu'aucun d'eux n'était versé en informatique et ils ne savaient pas comment se mettre à niveau en tant que syndicat. Je les ai fait entrer dans le siècle suivant. »

L. Shaw, qui est la nouvelle présidente de la CCG-FIT, a commencé en 1977 comme découpeuse à l'emporte-pièce dans une imprimerie spécialisée. Elle a monté les échelons lorsqu'elle a été nommée déléguée syndicale adjointe. Quatre ans plus tard, L. Shaw est devenue déléguée syndicale à part entière et membre du comité de négociation de la section locale 14-M.

« J'ai parlé avec énormément de collègues et beaucoup appris sur ce qui les préoccupait, a indiqué L. Shaw. J'ai décidé de m'impliquer davantage. Je crois qu'ils en ont pris conscience et c'est pourquoi ils m'ont demandé de faire partie de conseils exécutifs. »

Janice Bort a eu une trajectoire similaire.

Elle a commencé sa carrière en 2000 comme réceptionniste à temps partiel et a impressionné Paul Atwill, président de la section locale 72-C. J. Bort est devenue très vite gestionnaire de bureau, vice-présidente et secrétaire-trésorière. Elle a aussi fait partie de plusieurs comités, conseils et commissions.

« J'ai redoublé d'efforts pour faire mes preuves – et j'ai beaucoup lu pour me renseigner sur le droit syndical et l'histoire des syndicats, a expliqué J. Bort, qui est aussi secrétaire-trésorière de la Conférence des métiers spécialisés de la CCG, secrétaire de séance pour la Conférence de l'Est et secrétaire-trésorière pour le Washington, D.C. Allied Printing Council.

L. Shaw et J. Bort estiment qu'il faut en faire davantage pour encourager les femmes à assumer des rôles de direction.

« C'est très important qu'il y ait plus de femmes qui accèdent à ces rôles afin que nous puissions nous occuper des enjeux qui intéressent autant les femmes que les hommes, a affirmé L. Shaw. Le fait d'avoir davantage de femmes à des postes de direction va en pousser d'autres à leur emboîter le pas et à être plus productives dans le monde d'aujourd'hui. »



## ‘Giant Step’ in NY to Aid Freelancers

**F**reelance isn't free – and, in New York, that's the law.

The state legislature passed a bill – endorsed by the GCC/IBT and the New York Conference of Teamsters – protecting freelance writers and editors from the sort of exploitation common in some sectors of the publishing industry.

Freelancers in the so-called “gig economy” complain that they often have difficulty being paid, rarely are able to secure written contracts and face retaliation when defending their rights.

The New York measure – called the “Freelance Isn't Free Bill” and sponsored by State Senator Andrew Gounardes of Brooklyn and upstate Assembly member Harry Bronson – was pushed by the National Writers Union, a labor organization protecting freelance writers, editors, authors, screenwriters and others.

Among other safeguards, the law demands that freelancers be paid within 30 days and provides state support in gaining unpaid wages. NWU President Larry Goldbetter called the law “a giant step” toward fair treatment for freelancers.

Last year, the GCC/IBT signed a service agreement with the NWU and President Kurt Freeman joined the effort this spring to win passage of freelance legislation in New York. To promote the bill and underline GCC support, Dave Bartlett, business agent of Local 1-L, New York, and Mike Stafford, president of Local 503-M, Rochester, attended a press conference at the state capitol in Albany.

“This is a notable victory for freelance workers and demonstrates the power of organized labor,” Freeman said. “We were delighted to stand with our NWU partners in their campaign to make the gig economy responsive to basic principles of decency and fair play.”

In a note to Freeman and other Teamster leaders after passage, Goldbetter offered his thanks. “We couldn't have done it without you,” he said.



PAYMENT.COM VIA GOOGLE IMAGES

## Move to Restore Joy Silk Doctrine

**I**t will be a tough fight, but the Biden administration wants to bring back card check organizing.

The practice – once allowed under an NLRB standard known as the Joy Silk Doctrine but abandoned nearly 50 years ago – would “revolutionize” union organizing by eliminating the need for union elections if a majority of workers signed authorization cards, labor officials said.

Jennifer Abruzzo, appointed general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board by President Joe Biden, is asking the full NLRB board to revive Joy Silk, named for a 1949 case involving the United Textile Workers of America and Joy Silk Mills, a South Carolina textile company.

In a brief related to a Teamsters lawsuit charging that a firm called Cemex Construction Materials Pacific improperly interfered with a unionizing drive, Abruzzo argued that Joy Silk should prevail because current rules have “failed to deter unfair labor practices during union organizing drives and provide for free and fair elections.”

Under Joy Silk, employers could challenge the union's claim that a majority of workers had signed cards in which case the NLRB would investigate.

“If the board disagrees with the employer, it would order the employer to bargain with the new union,” said an analysis on the Bloomberg Law website. “If it found the allegations plausible, it could order a secret-ballot election.”

For organized labor, reinstatement of Joy Silk would be a profound development – and one union leaders have sought for years.

“...I think you could see a significant amount more workers being successful in their efforts to join unions.” David Madland, senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, told the website Fast Company.

Opposition from the business sector is apt to be fierce and lawsuits are all but certain, according to GCC/IBT general counsel Peter Leff. “This would revolutionize organizing, which is why employers will fight all the way to the Supreme Court.”

The move by Abruzzo to reinstate Joy Silk was her second major initiative aimed at giving union organizers a fair deal.

Abruzzo, former special counsel for strategic initiatives for the Communications Workers of America, also is seeking to end so-called “captive audience meetings” – management sessions that employees must attend at which company officials malign unions and intimidate workers. (See story on Page 9.)



CORNELL UNIVERSITY SC JOHNSON



CWA VIA POLYGON AND GOOGLE IMAGES

## Union Organizers Strike a ‘Spark’

**W**orkers are organizing – everywhere

As the labor movement continues to enjoy an upsurge in public support, union drives are surging – sometimes in unexpected places.

“After years of declining influence, unions are having a resurgence,” reported CNBC. “Employees from companies across the country are increasingly organizing as a means of asking for more benefits, pay and safety from their employers.”

Union drives at Amazon, Starbucks and the recreational equipment outfitter REI gained national attention but how about the one at Activision Blizzard?

A small group of workers at the video game company organized in May – a victory that could ignite similar moves across an industry known for poor pay, long hours and oppressive work conditions.

“It's going to be the spark that ignites the rest of the industry, I believe,” said Jennifer Gonzalez, a former Activision employee who now works for the Communications Workers of America, which has been helping workers organize at Raven Software, a subsidiary of Activision.

But organizing at big name companies still earns most of the headlines.

The Starbucks campaign has been especially notable with workers at more than 250 stores petitioning the NLRB for elections, according to a story in the online publication Truthout.

Starbucks employees have won at least 70 elections and lost only nine, Truthout reported. Many of the victories were in conservative states – Tennessee, Georgia and Kansas, among them – where organizers persevered against the odds.

“The Starbucks unionizing effort is remarkable, not only because of the stunning speed at which it has spread...but also because food and drink establishments have traditionally been among the least unionized workplaces in the United States,” said a report by National Public Radio.

NPR said widespread organizing activity was the results of many factors including labor-friendly policies of the Biden administration, a Democratic majority at the NLRB and a wide-open job market that has emboldened workers.

As Kate Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations told National Public Radio, success breeds success. “Organizing is contagious,” she said.

## How to Beat Inflation? Raise Prices

**B**ig business has found a way to escape the pain of inflation.

How? By putting the crunch on consumers.

The result, according to the Associated Press: Record profits.

“Big companies have successfully raised prices for their products – from cups of coffee to auto parts to cans of paint, because their customers have kept lining up regardless,” said the AP.

Earnings at S&P 500 companies surged more than 30 percent in the first quarter of the year and profits were better than ever.

Same old story, said analysts. “A lot of the price pressures are just getting passed along,” University of Pennsylvania researcher Alex Arnon told the AP. Cold-hearted companies know shoppers have little choice but to just keep lining up.



CWA VIA POLYGON AND GOOGLE IMAGES

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# Upbeat 'Mindset' at NANC

continued from PAGE 5

year after year, when you look around the room, we're still here."

Guzman's said his remarks at the NANC session were aimed at encouraging leaders to "elevate their organizing campaigns" and give top priority to expanding union membership.

"I hope none of us left unmotivated," he said. "I hope we left with a change of mindset. Motivation changes quickly but a mindset doesn't. A change of mindset is forever. I think people are very eager to organize."

GCC/IBT Secretary-Treasurer/Vice President Steve Nobles said organizing was the essential theme in Tempe and that the prospect of consolidation – not only in regard to yearly meetings but across the GCC/IBT structure – an idea worthy of serious thought.

"We need to consolidate our base and we also need to organize the unorganized," he said. "In some shops, internal organizing is the big thing – especially in the newspaper



locals that are still out there. There might be departments within those newspapers that aren't organized."

In a report to delegates, Nobles reviewed the status of the GCC's defense funds and national membership. He said the union has nearly 22,000 members, down 7 percent or so from a year ago due to several major plant closings.

He said consolidation could mean forming new district councils or merging locals.

"They both have the same objective – to increase our power," Nobles said. "Power within the Teamsters and power at the bargaining table. That's what we want to do."

*Zachary Dowdy is editorial vice-president of GCC/IBT Local 406-C, Long Island, and a former Newsday reporter who teaches at the Stony Brook University School of Communication and Journalism in New York.*

## SUMMARY OF MATERIAL MODIFICATION DESCRIBING A CHANGE MADE TO THE BENEVOLENT TRUST FUND PLAN DOCUMENT

The Graphic Communications Benevolent Trust Fund (BTF) provides a Death Benefit to Participants' Designated Beneficiaries. Participants are required to complete a Designation of Beneficiary form provided by the BTF, and to update it periodically as their situations change.

Under the terms of the BTF, a participant's signature on the Designation of Beneficiary form must be witnessed by an officer of their Participating Local Union or by a notary public. Effective March 30, 2022, the Board of Trustees has amended the Plan to allow the participant's signature to be witnessed by anyone other than a Beneficiary named on the Designation of Beneficiary form. Your signature therefore may be witnessed by any union official or union member, a family member, bank personnel, your physician, or your neighbors, etc., **provided the witness is not a named Beneficiary**. No notarization is required.

In addition, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, securing a witness can be burdensome to BTF participants. Therefore, the BTF Plan document has been amended by the Trustees to suspend the witness requirement during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency as declared by the US Department of Health and Human Services effective as of January 1, 2020 (the effective date of the current Public Health Emergency.) The requirement that Designation of Beneficiary forms be witnessed by someone other than a named Beneficiary will be instituted once the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency is declared ended by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Additional information about the BTF is available in your BTF Summary Plan Description or by contacting the BTF Office at (202) 508-6660.

## Funny Business

