



The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc County Democratic Party

www.mantydem.com

Join or Renew Membership On the Web

April 2009

MantyDems April Meeting

— Public Invited —

Monday, April 27th – 7:00 PM
Gotham City
902 York St. - Manitowoc



Kerry Trask, Ph.D. Wisconsin's Unique Political Heritage

A scholar of early American history, Trask is a newly-retired professor from the University of Wisconsin–Manitowoc, earning his Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. A native of Canada, he is particularly interested in the early history of the Great Lakes region. He is author of the highly acclaimed *Black Hawk: The Battle for the Heart of America* (2007), and *Fire Within: A Civil War Narrative from Wisconsin*, which was awarded the Council for Wisconsin Writers' Leslie Cross Book-Length Nonfiction Award in 1996.

Rave reviews from Trask's students:

"Kerry Trask dominates. His lectures are incredibly riveting and informative. If you don't learn a lot about history in his class, you're not showing up."

"Quite simply, Trask RAWKS the house! I had the pleasure of taking his classes in the mid 90s, and he is the best professor I have ever had."

"Trask retired recently and the campus is falling apart. I petition to bring him back."

Support the Employee Free Choice Act – EFCA

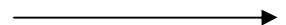
"Revealing your wage or discussions about wages with other employees is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including discharge."

From an Employee Rules and Policy Handbook – 2010.

Can you believe this? It sounds too bizarre – archaic – to be true, but true it is. In this particular company, the 'rule' applies to office personnel only (*the manufacturing force is unionized*). Wage and salary tables for the 'white collar' and 'pink' portion of their workforce are secret, and any discussion of salaries among employees is totally *verboten*.

This is the situation in one Wisconsin manufacturing company, and one shouldn't be surprised to find it to be the norm in most others. Since the Reagan Era, unionized labor has shrunk to about 10% of the workforce, non-union employees terrified to discuss unionizing for fear of termination.

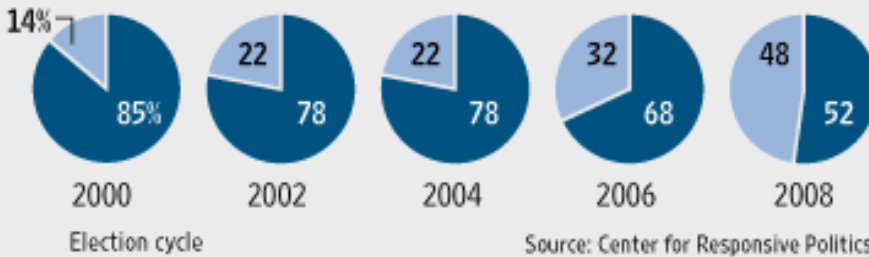
This terrifying grip on employees has been a contributing factor behind the growing disparity of income in the workforce – and is one of the Draconian tactics used by management to hold their employees in submission. Linking this with what I call the 'Un-Happiness Factor' – the inability of employees to move from one job to a more fulfilling job for fear of losing their health insurance – positions too many of us as slaves to the corporate oligarchy, limping along with little zest for our jobs. Attaching the threat of outsourcing our job to countries with little or no civil rights, low wages, and environmental degradation helps to place our country in the lower tier on the 'Happiness' scale. And - Might you suppose? - contributes to the downsizing of American productivity on a global scale.



Shift in Support

Wal-Mart political action committee contributions to federal candidates

Portion to: ■ Democrats ■ Republicans



Anyone who was surprised at the economic collapse has not been paying attention. A country flourishes when there is a more even distribution of wealth; the greater the disparity the faster the decline.

It is time for change. And hopefully it will be coming with the passing of the Employee Free Choice Act. On March 10, 2009 versions of the bill were reintroduced in the Congress by Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Representative George Miller (D-CA)

The overall purpose of EFCA, says Miller, is “allowing employees to make their own decision about whether they want to bargain together – to advocate for fairer wages, benefits and working conditions – without the threat or fear of harassment and retribution and fear of losing their livelihood.”

The basic change is to give **employees** the right to choose a secret-ballot election in cases where less than a majority of employees have chosen to unionize through card-check. If a majority of workers have signed cards declaring their choice for union representation, a secret ballot would not be necessary.

Currently, it is the employer’s choice to hold secret ballots.

Representative George Miller (D-CA) and co-sponsor of the bill stated:

The current process for forming unions is badly broken and so skewed in favor of those who oppose unions, that workers must literally risk their jobs in order to form a union. Although it is illegal, one quarter of employers facing an organizing drive have been found to fire at least one worker who supports a union...

Even when employers don’t break the law, the process itself stacks the deck against union supporters. The employer has all the power; they control the information workers can receive, can force workers to attend anti-union meetings during work hours, can force workers to meet with supervisors who deliver anti-union messages, and can even imply that the business will close if the union wins. Union supporters’ access to employees, on the other hand, is heavily restricted.

As Senator, President Obama co-sponsored an earlier EFCA, and supports the current bill. *“I support this bill because in order to restore a sense of shared prosperity and security, we need to help working Americans exercise their right to organize under a fair and free process and bargain for their fair share of the*

wealth our country creates.”

Passage of the bill, hopefully in May 2009, will not be easy. We have the CEO’s and other despots of the corporate realm ranting and raving, screaming in desperation.

Bernie Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot calls the bill “the demise of a civilization...If a retailer has not gotten involved with this, if he has not spent money on this election,” then these retailers “...should be shot; should be thrown out of their goddamn jobs.”

Walmart has been moving funds into the hands of Democrats towards this end (*see above chart*) – no doubt to discourage passage of the bill, preventing millions from organizing.

Tracking of the 22,000 union organizing drives between 1999 and 2005 shows that only one in five cases that filed an election petition with the National Labor Relations Board ultimately reached a first contract, this despite all the cases had shown substantial and likely majority support for representation.

The time for change is now. Please help the American workforce. This is where **you** can contribute to make America a better place to live and work. Workers of America need your support. If you have not contacted Herb Kohl to support this bill – *he was a past co-sponsor but is now waffling* – please do so. Do your part to put this bill on Obama’s desk. He can’t sign it if it doesn’t get there.

Senator Herb Kohl

<http://kohl.senate.gov/>

Phone: (202) 224-5653

**330 Hart Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510**

Information and quotes for this article from Wikipedia.

An old one, but very relevant, and worth repeating....

Did you hear the one about???

A woman in a hot air balloon realized she was lost. She lowered her altitude and spotted a man in a boat below. She shouted to him, "Excuse me, can you help me? I promised a friend I would meet him an hour ago, but I don't know where I am."



The man consulted his portable GPS and replied, "You're in a hot air balloon approximately 30 feet above a ground elevation of 2346 feet above sea level. You are at 31 degrees, 14.97 minutes north latitude and 100 degrees, 49.09 minutes west longitude."

She rolled her eyes and said, "You must be a Democrat."

"I am," replied the man. "How did you know?"

"Well," answered the balloonist, "everything you told me is technically correct, but I have no idea what to do with your information, and I'm still lost. Frankly, you've not been much help to me."

The man smiled and responded, "You must be a Republican."

"I am," replied the balloonist. "How did you know?"

"Well," said the man, "you don't know where you are or where you're going. You've risen to where you are due to a large quantity of hot air. You made a promise that you have no idea how to keep, and you expect me to solve your problem. You're in exactly the same position you were in before we met but, somehow, now it's my fault."



Bullets

Nan Hallock, Chair

chair@mantydem.com or 920-652-0016

- **6th CD Convention – April 18th.** Hosted by Dodge County at Feil's Supper Club southwest of Beaver Dam. All members may attend, but only Delegates may vote. Pre-registration fee is \$20.00. Registration will be \$25.00 at the door. Checks may be sent to Angela Sutkiewicz at 434 Erie Ave, Sheboygan, WI 53081. The pre-registration deadline is April 10, 2009. Angela can be reached at 920-452-3717 or asutkiewicz@excel.net.
- **Three resolutions were adopted** at the March Meeting and will be submitted for adoption at the 6th CD Convention:
 - 1 - Resolved, that DPW supports the public funding of Supreme Court and other Judiciary elections
 - 2 – Resolved, that DPW supports the ban of chapter 527 [soft money] in all judiciary elections.
 - 3 - Resolved, DPW supports voting rights for non-incarcerated felons.
- **Democratic Leadership Institute April 25-26th** – MantyDems will absorb tuition for two Young Dems. Interested candidates should submit written request with brief reason for wishing to attend to Nan Hallock (*see above*). *Registration forms can be accessed at www.wisdems.org.*
- **Think Tank meets Saturday, May 9th** and the 2nd Saturday of each month following. 9:30 AM, at the Lakeshore Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 421 N 8th Street, Manitowoc. *If you like talkin' politics – it's the place to be. Newcomers encouraged to attend and are always welcome. It's fun!*
- **Mark Swanson, Superintendent of Manitowoc Public Schools** is our guest speaker for our May 25th Meeting, 7:00 PM. Mark you calendar. Place TBA.
- **Camp Wellstone: May 29-31st. Green Bay. Activist and Campaign tracks for interested persons.** This 2.5 day training, running from 3-9pm Friday, 9am-6pm Saturday, and 9am-3:30pm Sunday, combines lectures from highly experienced trainers, stimulating exercises, and interactive simulations. Help build campaigns for the future, and elect progressive candidates to office. www.wellstone.org/camp-wellstone-green-bay
- **Democratic Party of Wisconsin Convention – Jun 12-13th. Green Bay.** There is still time to become a delegate. If you can't make the 6th CD, but would like to attend the State Convention, contact Nan Hallock.

The Manitowoc Progressive

The Voice of the Manitowoc Democratic Party
PO Box 1373
Manitowoc WI 54221-1373

Calendar of Events

- Sat, Apr 18th** **6th CD Convention.** All members welcome.
- Apr 25-26th** **Democratic Leadership Institute** – There is still time to enroll. See attached flyer for activist Track. Youth Track available online at www.wisdems.org
- Mon, Apr 27th** **Membership Meeting, Kerry Trask, Ph.D., WI Unique Political Heritage**
7:00 PM, Gotham City, 902 York Street, Manitowoc
- Mon, May 4th** **Executive Committee Meeting** – 6:00 PM – Hacienda Santa Rosa
- Sat, May 9th** **Think Tank / Newsletter Committee** – 9:30 AM, at Unitarian Fellowship
- Mon, May 25** **Membership Meeting, Mark Swanson, Supt. Manitowoc Public Schools**
7:00 PM, Place TBA
- May 29-31st** **Camp Wellstone, Green Bay. Register on line.**
- Mon, Jun 1st** **Executive Committee Meeting** – 6:00 PM
- Jun 12-13th** **DPW State Convention – Green Bay**
- Mon, Jun 22** **Membership Meeting, Keeley Crowley presenting on Women’s Issues**

MantyDems Officers

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Chair

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Yes, I'll Join the Party and Help Democrats Win!

Mail to: Democratic Party of Wisconsin ■ 110 King Street ■ Suite 203 ■ Madison WI 53703

Name/s _____

Address _____

City/Zip _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Employer _____

Employer Address _____

Occupation _____

Fees include membership to both the State and County Parties.

\$1,200 Investor* \$45 Activist

\$1,200 Investor* \$35 Pairs

\$600 Patron* \$25 General

\$240 Friends* \$10 Senior/Student

\$120 Supporter* \$10 Limited Income

\$75 Family* Other _____

*includes all family members

Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation and name of employer of individuals whose contributions, in the aggregate, exceed \$200 in an election cycle. Please provide all information on the membership form.