

Postal Newsletter

Press

AMERICAN POSTAL WORKERS UNION

NATIONAL POSTAL PRESS ASSOCIATION

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'All we want are the facts, ma'am'

By Tony Carobine, President

For those of you old enough to remember the 1960's when the majority of television programs were in black and white and there were only a few channels on TV, you will likely remember the popular television series "Dragnet." Set in Los Angeles, this program was a crime drama about the cases of a dedicated Los Angeles police detective, Sergeant Joe Friday (played by Jack Webb) and his partner Officer Bill Gannon (Harry Morgan).

In his zeal to get to the heart of a case when interviewing female witnesses, Sergeant Friday would often say, "All we want are the facts, ma'am." Over the years, Dragnet's catchphrase became, "Just the facts, ma'am" although this version was never actually uttered by Joe Friday.

When you think about this phrase (or its altered version) that's exactly what our members desire when reading union publications and visiting union websites. Also, that is what the general public is looking for and expects when reading a mainstream newspaper or viewing a news broadcast.

Much has been written lately about the Postal Service in mainstream newspapers, websites and reported on television and radio broadcasts. The majority of these reports dealt with the Postal Service's alleged financial difficulties and most lately with the proposed closure of 223 mail processing facilities.

Unfortunately, many of these reports were misleading and unnecessarily painted a picture of doom for the Postal Service. For example, media reports proclaimed that the Postal Service lost \$3.3 billion in the first quarter of 2012.

The facts are that the Postal Service ac-

tually realized a \$200 million net profit delivering the mail during this period; quite an amazing feat as the country is exiting from the worst recession in 80 years. The 2006 congressional prefunding mandate accounted for \$3.1 billion of the quarter's expenses, with the remainder attributed to a non-cash actuarial adjustment to the Postal Service's compensation costs.

Were it not for the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act of 2006 the Postal Service would have netted a \$611 million surplus during fiscal years 2006-2010 instead of a \$21 billion deficit.

These facts are much different than

what the public is being lead to believe and that is why whenever such erroneous reports are published we have a duty and a responsibility to challenge them. This can be accomplished in a number of ways. For example, opinion-editorial pieces, letters to the editor, press releases and having a union spokesperson available for radio and television interviews.

Left unchallenged, the public will eventually buy into the falsehood that the Postal Service is at the brink of collapse and can only be rescued by a massive closure of postal facilities and other cost-cutting mea-

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Madison site of 2013 PPA Conference

Madison, Wisconsin will be the site of the 2013 PPA National Editors' Conference. The conference will be held at the Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club just one block from the state capital building, location of the now famous 2011 worker rebellion.

Hosted by the Madison Area Local, APWU the conference will take place from Thursday, August 22 through Saturday, August 24, 2013 with a pre-conference session on Wednesday, August 21.

A guestroom rate of \$127.00 per day single or double occupancy will be in effect throughout the conference, in addition to three days before and three days after the actual meeting dates. Current tax rate is 14.5%. The hotel will provide free ground transportation from the airport, free Internet access in all guestrooms and a reduced parking rate of \$7 per night.

Commenting on behalf of the PPA Advisory Council, PPA President Tony Carobine said, "We are thrilled to be holding the next conference in such a labor-oriented town. In addition to the great atmosphere, the resources available in Madison will enable us to present a conference that will not only be a special educational event but a very inspirational experience as well."

"We encourage PPA members, APWU officers and interested members to plan now on joining us in Madison on August 21-24, 2013," he said. "This is one conference you won't want to miss."

Further details will be forthcoming as they become available.

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Broadcast interview tips

By Lance Coles, Editor-at-Large

- Take control of the interview – focus on **your** message, stay on target. Focus on your words, voice tone, facial expressions and body language.

- Have stories, stats, and sound bites ready, but don't overwhelm yourself. Avoid rhetoric by giving personal examples. Use words like the best, the first, the only, the greatest. Use approximate numbers, if they want exact numbers, you can provide them if you have them, otherwise, tell them you will provide the information later. Define your message – rehearse, role-play and revise. Keep it simple.

- Use “bridging” and “flagging” to get to your message or key points.

Bridging: If you are asked a question that is not on your agenda, bridging is the effective way to respond. When you bridge, you first answer the question, but answer it briefly and then move or bridge to what you want to discuss.

For Example: “Don't know” to “do know.” “I don't know the answer to that question. What I do know is...”

Time – “historically, that was the case. Today, what's happened is...and it's made us have to ...”

Importance – “That used to be impor-

tant. But what's changed is ... and we're having to respond by ...”

Flagging: Flagging is a way of helping someone remember what you would like them to remember. It is a way of underscoring what is important by saying something like “The most exciting thing about this program is ...” or “The bottom line is...”

You “plant a flag” or highlight a point by stressing that point with your voice, using expressions like “the key point to remember” or simply by repetition of a point throughout the interview.

- It's ok to say “I don't know.” Be prepared for a hostile question.

- Be enthusiastic, and personal. Use “I” statements. The reporter cannot challenge you on it. Quote your enemies, especially if they agree with you. Include a second person – let the reader know what will happen to him or her, let the people know in your area, what will happen there.

- Sit on front of chair. If standing keep hands clasped, and stand still.

- Look at/talk to interviewer by name.

- Beware of distracting clothing & jewelry (no dark glasses!)

- Remain friendly, even when disagreeing.

'All we want are the facts, ma'am'

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sures that will result in a reduction of service and ultimately total destruction of the USPS.

The latest misrepresentation is the proposed closure of 223 mail processing facilities. In reviewing mainstream media reports of this announcement, it was disturbing to learn that the majority of news accounts proclaimed that the closures are imminent. The truth is the closures are not imminent. They cannot happen without a change in service standards or if Congress steps in and stops the Postal Service from proceeding with this plan.

This is yet another example of the misleading information being disseminated, perhaps in an effort to squelch efforts to stop the closures. Again, we have a duty and responsibility to our members, to the public we serve, to present the true facts.

Special attention should be given to our members. We cannot let them be misled into believing the battle is over and we lost.

As Sergeant Joe Friday said, “All we want are the facts, ma'am.”

We must continue the fight and never give up!

Photojournalism

Just as people like to read about people, themselves first and others second, people also like to look at people. Including photographs of the membership in a union publication is one way to make the pages of a union paper come alive and demonstrate that the union is indeed not some abstract institution located in a far away place, but an organization made up of real living and breathing people.

Where's your sense of humor?

By Jenny Gust, Editor-at-Large

I have been a member of the Postal Press Association since May 1980! A long time I am sure you will agree. I am proud that I am still here and publishing two newsletters. One for my local – the *Black Swamp Outrider* – Toledo Ohio Area Local, and one for my state, the *Ohio Postal Worker*.

Part of the enjoyment of being a member of the PPA is getting all the newsletters from around the country. In case you were wondering whether anyone reads your paper – I do! Unfortunately the number of publications being mailed to fellow PPA members is down. Because of budget cuts in most cases (including my own local) members are not sending their papers out to all PPA members. When the cost is added up – number of papers printed and postage – it isn't all that much. If you can't mail every month to all PPA members perhaps you could rotate each month. That is what I am doing.

The one thing I truly miss out of the papers I do get is cartoons. Original cartoons are few and far between now. Years ago we

had a good number of people who were quite good at cartoons. The people who are on the workroom floor day in and day out can tell you some funny stories about the post office. If a good cartoon is printed once and sent out you can be sure it will be copied (and hopefully credited) over and over. A sense of humor is so important – especially in times like these.

I am wondering if perhaps we haven't asked our members if there is anyone out there who can draw and add captions – either alone or with some help from a fellow member or members. A great cartoon can really pull people into reading your paper. They can't wait to see what the cartoonist will come up with next. Everyone likes to laugh! While cartoons aren't always necessarily funny – they can educate

and help people see things in a different way from what they might normally.

If you are not lucky enough to have someone to come up with a cartoon now and then, the PPA can help in that area. President Tony Carobine sends out monthly labor cartoons by Huck/Konopacki that you are encouraged to use in your publications. I know things aren't that great right now for postal workers but we need to make the effort to not be gloom and doom all the time. That will turn members off. So try each issue to have a cartoon, a joke or two, a funny story – just something to make our readers smile. We can't solve all the problems of the post office but we can at least give them a laugh, a chuckle, a little ray of sunshine and maybe a little hope that tomorrow will be better.

What did liberals do that was so offensive to the Republican Party?

By Lawrence O'Donnell, Jr.

I'll tell you what they did. Liberals got women the right to vote. Liberals got African-Americans the right to vote. Liberals created Social Security and lifted millions of elderly out of poverty.

Liberals ended segregation. Liberals passed the Civil Rights Act, the Voting Rights Act. Liberals created Medicare. Liberals passed the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act.

What did conservatives do?

They opposed them on every one of these things, every one. So when you try to hurl that label at my feet, 'Liberal,' as if it was something to be ashamed of, something dirty, something to run away from, it won't work, because I will pick up that label and I will wear it as a badge of honor."

PPA to participate in pre-convention workshops

The PPA is scheduled to participate in the pre-convention workshops sponsored by the APWU Research & Education Department being held on Friday, August 17 from 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel in Los Angeles.

Two half-day workshops will be presented by the PPA. *Union Publications – Reaching the Membership* will examine the need to communicate and the process of producing a member-oriented, high-quality union publication. *Legal Issues: Union Publications & Websites* will be devoted to a discussion on editorial policies, libel, copyright, internal union and federal election laws as applicable to union publications and websites.

More information on the workshops, as well as the online registration process can be found on the APWU's website at www.apwu.org, "Pre-Convention Workshops."



Activism – putting your m

By Cathy Hanson, Editor-at-Large

Communication is a key factor in activism, both in the Occupy movement and the Labor movement. If you don't get your ideas out there, or don't get your ideas out to the right people, you will never reach the ones who want to be involved and want to help. Earlier this month I spoke with a young man in Denver, CO. He decided to start an online newspaper called *Occupy the Press*. He printed it and handed it out as well in Denver. His name is A. J. Oscarson and he is the son of Tour 3 Manager, Roy Oscarson. I went to the *Occupy the Press* website and I was impressed with the paper and I asked him if he'd talk to me about it, do an interview, and he agreed.

Right now, he and some friends have decided to let the others go ahead with the *Occupy the Press* newspaper and they are concentrating on a magazine, trying to get a mockup done in order to find a publisher and get some funding for it. The magazine is called *The Medes*. The link to the website for funding it is <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/3132623/the-medes-magazine-issue-one> and the website for the magazine is www.themedes.org. I donated to fund it and I hope you will too.

A.J.: Right now, I am using my degree in journalism and time in newspapers to work with my current grad work in anthropology. The meshing of the two is amazing. My program is extremely supportive. At the moment, this magazine is not my thesis. The work inherent in it, however, is. I firmly believe that anthropology, and all academia, should use their experience and studies for the betterment of society. How this relates to the mission of this magazine is clear. If the people are provided with knowledge, they will make the right, moral choice.

We are an intelligent society, one that craves knowledge. So, why are we not getting it? I don't know if I will be in the publishing game later in my life. Regardless, I know that I will be chasing the same goals that this magazine does. Next academic year I will be writing my thesis and applying to doctoral programs (and hoping for the best, to be sure). I do know that I want to be in academia and I know that I want to use that

to help people who need it. What avenue that takes, I am not really sure.

Obviously, his love lies in journalism and anthropology, activism and grassroots organizing. During college, he garnered an internship in Belize, Central America. Belize is located on the north eastern coast of Central America and has a diverse society with many cultures and languages.

A.J.: My internship in Belize was in the city of San Ignacio, on the far West

other party, the PUP (People's United Party) had kept drilling out of the area and had dominated elections from the 50s on. Thus once the UDP gained control of the national stage they wanted to keep it - hoarding money and resources.

This is all background for the setting that meant the new government of Belize (UDP) did not want to spend money persecuting Belizeans, which afforded the gangs the leeway to kidnap girls



Police in riot gear in Denver near the Occupy Camp.

of the country. It was a sustainable farm that was built to demonstrate sustainable living. The other side being that the earth-bag homes we were there to construct were built to double as a shelter for orphans, of which an increasing amount were victims of the sex trade.

The sex trade in Belize has been gaining speed since 2008 when the UDP (United Democratic Party) won the general election. Credible sources from my time there allege that the UDP was able to essentially buy the election with an influx of dollars provided by American corporations. These corporations had paid for advertising, etc. for the UDP for access to oil fields in South Belize. Of course, the

from neighboring Mexico and especially Guatemala for prostitution. The government was doubly opposed to prosecuting Belizeans for a crime committed against foreigners. Adding to the problem is that the government rewrote the laws pertaining to orphans so they would be released from foster care at the age of 15.

So, the farm where I worked provided these children a safe place to live, and would teach a trade as well, whether it be construction, farming or cooking. Ultimately all I could do with my time there was try to help in any way, whether it was with money or time. There are a lot of people who fight everyday with this

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Money where your mouth is

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fantastically corrupt government and who are still doing some phenomenal work today.

This is interesting background for fighting social injustice back home in America. I asked him how this Occupy movement is affecting society, what's happening to change the world view. He told me America is used to a different type of activism – activism such as Gay Rights, the Women's Suffrage movement in the early 1900's – those were specific things targeting specific groups of people. This Occupy movement is a broad based frustration – after all, it encompasses the 99% - that's pretty broad.

Editor: How is the Occupy movement making their frustration known?

A.J.: Simply existing has changed the cultural language in our country. Before the Occupy movement, words like Income Inequality didn't mean much to the public in general.

I asked him about the lack of leadership in the Occupy movement. I hear this a lot from detractors – there is no leader. How do things get done? He told me those in the movement are demonstrating through example – every decision is voted on in the movement. Every one of them has a strength and that's the area each person works in, where their strength lies. If a person wants to help, there is a place for them. Leading by example is enlightening to me.

The Denver Occupy movement exists on donations only. They are feeding and clothing homeless people using donations only. Every day, things are different, depending on donations. They are showing by example that there is good in our society, there is empathy, compassion for their fellow man; good honest caring; taking care of their neighbors instead of turning their backs on them. This is how we come together in society, by caring for our neighbors. The newspaper, *Occupy the Press*, exists on donations only, as well as his own money – because he cares and believes in what he's doing.

The magazine he is starting now will be going through a website called Kick Starter, an organization that finds funding for worthwhile ideas. His idea is to go to trade journals, find scholarly and academic

articles and turn them into articles the general public can read and understand. These journals are unapproachable at best – translating them into something anyone can read will provide everyone with a better understanding of how the 1% is using the 99% to gain more wealth.

They'll be using compelling artwork to raise awareness to social injustice and give information to us so we can decide what to do with it. Right now, when the 1% speaks, they get heard because they are the ones writing the rules. Money talks and we all know it. I'd like to see this magazine get ahead – just from the previews I've had I'm going to say I would subscribe and I would also share it with my friends.

I asked him about specific experiences at the Occupy Denver camp that made him want to be involved and he related this story:

The police were starting to get more aggressive at moving people. The first night they came at about 11 p.m. and it took them until 8 a.m. to move people about 100 yards. One step at a time they moved them, completely non-violent. In subsequent moves, as they stepped up the speed some pushing and shoving started. After

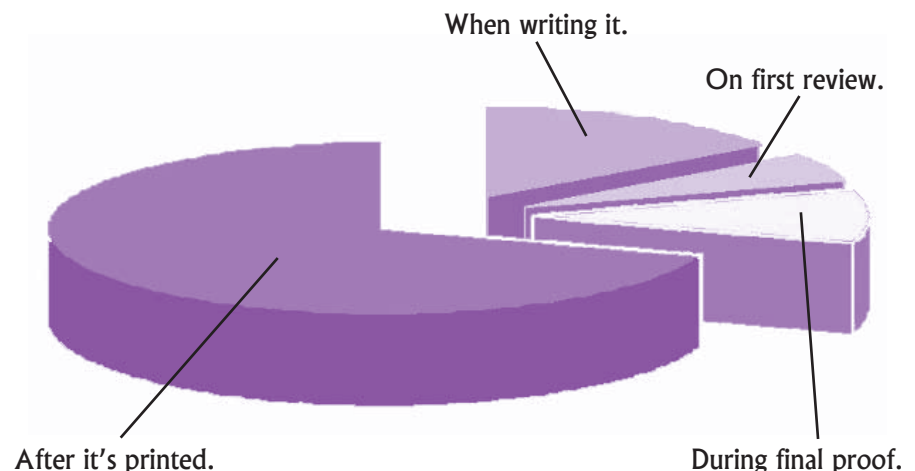
A.J. helped a pregnant woman up off the ground that a cop had pushed, he knew he wanted to be involved.

One day he was walking to the camp and he saw cops massing in a bunker, handing out shields and guns so he ran back to his car, grabbed his camera and press card and ran back. He saw a cop point a gun at a kid and the kid ran. The cops started chasing him so A.J. ran too, press pass visibly out in sight. When a cop stopped him and asked what he was doing, he replied that he was just trying to get the story and showed his press card. The cop hit him in the stomach and told him he wasn't getting any story there. His friend was hit on the elbow with a baton and A.J. said it was clear they were trying to provoke them into fighting back. They taunted them and provoked them for several minutes before turning their attention back to the crowd.

We do not live in a vacuum. The Labor movement has a lot in common with the Occupy movement in that we want to preserve what we have, make gains and make the rich pay their fair share. If we are not vocal and active, they're going to take everything we've worked for. Please get involved and do something. Anything.

The Postal Way

"When the Editor finds mistakes in the paper"



— *Auto City Flint Facts*

Getting the message across

By Frank Antinone, Editor-at-Large

A blank computer screen is often intimidating and it's not very hard to become overwhelmed about what to write about. Here are a few ideas for writing an article that may help.

Your readers may not know anything about what you are trying to say. What do they need to know first? Make it simple and to the point, not confusing.

Creating an outline is helpful if you're writing a longer article. Outlines help to keep your ideas in order. If you are having trouble defining your main theme, pretend that you have a short period of time to describe your position. This will be your main theme.

It is a known fact that most readers scan articles and read at a 7-8th grade level. Use simple, direct language and stay away

from long words. Your article should be as "reader friendly" as possible.

Use subheadings, bullet points, numberings and "out quotes" to break up an article. After all, what's easier to read; an article with long paragraphs or one that breaks up the page into short paragraphs with section headings and numbers?

Headers should grab the reader's attention, like questions. Questions help keep the reader engaged and curious. Adding graphs and charts is also a smart way to break up a long article. These are visual aides to not only keep the reader's eyes engaged, but they can communicate important information much more quickly.

Some readers are not perfect at spelling and grammar. They may not notice if you make errors. However, there will be some that do; and because of this, everything you write should be of a quality that every reader will find acceptable.

The enemy of good proofreading is speed and the lack of time. Many editors are always in a hurry to make that deadline when an article is turned in late and they don't have time to properly proofread an article. Try these easy and time saving tips for proofreading an article.

People often skip proofreading headers and subheads, and concentrate on the text of the body of an article instead. Just because headers are big and bold, it doesn't mean that they are error-free.

Read the document out loud because this forces the writer to go more slowly, so that you're more likely to catch mistakes. Also, use your finger to follow text as you read, that will also slow you down.

Start at the end of an article and proofread one sentence at a time, working your way from end to the beginning. This helps you focus on errors, not on content.

Identify your audience before you start putting your publication together. If you feel that there's too much information to include, create an outline to help organize your thoughts.

Learning different techniques will also help you write more clearly, and be sure to proof the final product. Like most things, the more you write, the better you're going to be!

Remember your audience

When preparing our publications, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that our audience, our readership is comprised of "real people" – brother and sister union members and their families. In that regard, we should strive to include real people in the pages of our publications. Following are some considerations:

Does the publication include labor or postal union history information?

Are longtime members periodically interviewed for a newsletter article about how pay and conditions were in the post office many years ago as compared to today because of the union?

Does the local recognize membership loyalty by honoring members in various ways for achieving union membership milestones; such as: listing their names and/or printing their photos in the paper for 5, 10, 15, 20, etc. years of union membership?

Does the publication use every opportu-

nity to include the membership in the paper; such as a "Members Speak Out" column whereby randomly selected members are asked their opinion on various issues?

Do stories in the paper about grievance settlements include direct quotes from members affected by the union's efforts?

Are members recognized in the union publication for their volunteer efforts in the community?

Does the publication use every opportunity to include photographs of members participating in various union activities?

The reasons for publishing a union newsletter extend beyond the need to inform the membership about the business of the union. As communicators we need to keep in mind that members are the lifeblood of the union and the union's strength depends on the loyalty of its members. Adopting a style of membership inclusion and education in our publications is a step towards building such a membership.

Avoid the charge of libel

You can always be sued. The suit may not prevail against you because the person suing may not want to pursue it any further, or the suit has no merit, but you can still be sued. Therefore, it's best to be careful with controversial subjects.

There is a rule of thumb: "when in doubt – leave it out," but this is not always the proper route. If you think, however, that running a certain photo, article, cartoon, or piece will bring out the worst in someone, strong enough for them to want to sue you

or your local, maybe you shouldn't run it.

Your local can be ruined by a large libel suit. So could you. You don't want your local to disappear just because of the newsletter you work hard to produce.

Unsure of whether or not an article is libelous or inappropriate? Your Postal Press Association can help. Upon request, (if the material has not already been published) the PPA will provide a confidential review and offer an opinion. Over the years this service has helped to avoid many potentially costly lawsuits.

Wisconsin Republican pressures UW School for Workers to cancel labor arts exhibit

Reprinted with permission from *The Progressive*

The University of Wisconsin's School for Workers was planning on hosting an "Art in Protest" festival on campus.

Now it's been canceled.

One Republican lawmaker in Wisconsin, Representative Steve Nass, who has been a longtime thorn in the university's side, was unhappy about the exhibit, and his chief of staff, Mike Mikalsen, gave an earful to the director of the School for Workers, suggesting that the exhibit could imperil the school's funding.

Corliss Olson, the director of the School for Workers, after consulting with other faculty, sent out an e-mail canceling the program.

"I regret to inform you that the School for Workers has concluded for a variety of reasons that this is not the best time to hold this Labor Arts Exchange," Olson wrote.

Mike Konopacki, a labor cartoonist who was working on the "Art in Protest" event, is not happy about this outcome, though he sympathizes with Olson's situation.

"I'm getting e-mails from artists who are saying, 'What the hell is going on?' This is a direct attack on freedom of speech, on freedom of expression, on academic freedom, and on labor education," says Konopacki. "We were celebrating all the art and creativity that people come up with at these protests. It's beautiful stuff. We've had the largest outpouring of protests in the state's history, and the School for Workers is not allowed to display this?"

Konopacki is worried that the Republicans in the Wisconsin legislature want to kill the School for Workers, which was founded in 1925 as part of the University of Wisconsin Extension.

"The School for Workers survived McCarthyism," he says. "It may not survive Walker."

Director Olson also seems worried.

"Our concern," she tells *The Progressive*, "is with the long-term ability of the school to serve workers and their organizations from a variety of political stances and viewpoints, as we have done for the last 87 years."

Olson met with Mike Mikalsen, Representative Nass's chief of staff, on February 15.



Nass and Mikalsen had seen a flier for the exhibit, which showed a fist overlaid on the outline of the state of Wisconsin – an iconic image from the labor protests over the last year. And they weren't happy about it.

"There are people from both sides of the issue who are paying taxes, and the question was whether this was an appropriate activity for the university," Mikalsen tells *The Progressive*. "And the timing was a question. We're just going into a recall election. Was this something the UW Extension wanted to get into at this point in time?"

Mikalsen says he also told Olson that

some of the protests against Governor Walker and the Republicans had gotten out of hand, and if something like that happened at the exhibit, "the consequences of that kind of activity would fall on the extension. They would have to own it."

Mikalsen denies that he out-and-out threatened to defund the School for Workers, though he says he told Olson that this is a "very tense time," and that an exhibit like this "makes it very difficult" to cooperate with the university.

"If something were to occur that would anger the Republican side or conservatives around the state, it would make it hard to continue to work cooperatively," he says. "Cooperation is a two-way street."

The exhibit, he said, could be "a festering sore" for the state-funded university.

Mikalsen says he and Nass "tried to be proactive" on this issue. "Rather than waiting till after an event comes off and then criticizing it after the fact, we tried to do this up front."

Olson says the School for Workers hopes to celebrate labor art at another time.

ADDENDUM

Statement issued by the School for Workers:

The School for Workers is the oldest university-based labor education program in the country. One of the first operational components of the Wisconsin Idea, the School and its faculty have long brought teaching, research, and outreach to thousands of workers, unions and employers throughout Wisconsin and the nation.

Last fall, the School for Workers joined with a number of other individuals and organizations in planning an event, scheduled for March 2012, entitled "Art in Protest." The event was modeled, in part, on longstanding events on the east and west coasts. These Labor Arts Exchanges are unique festivals commemorating the cul-

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The value of time

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day.



What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask

the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLI-SECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

UW School for Workers . . .

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tural and artistic expression of working people.

In 2011, Wisconsin's working people were confronted in ways unseen in decades. The unprecedented citizen involvement in response to the Governor's proposal to severely restrict the collective bargaining rights of public employees resulted in a dramatic array of artistic expression. Songwriters, poets, quilters, photographers, cinematographers and others have used their craft to convey their emotions and their messages. The organizers of the Labor Arts Exchange wished to recognize the creativity and artistic expression that resulted from these events and offer an opportunity for artists to share their work.

Art work from Wisconsin's protests has been sought out and chosen by the Smithsonian Institution because of its representation of this historic time. We are living history. The theme, "Art in Protest" was

chosen many months ago to recognize this momentous juncture.

In the course of developing this event, however, concerns were raised that this Arts Festival would be seen by some as a partisan event. While we disagree, we recognize that some might be unable to separate the art from the politics and we have concluded that despite our best efforts, it would be difficult to maintain the primary focus on art and respect for the culture of working people. While we do not hesitate to explore matters of public policy that affect working people and labor organizations, we have reluctantly decided that the March 2012 timeframe is not the ideal time for this first Labor Arts Exchange. We hope to find a more suitable time in the future to commemorate the artistic and cultural efforts of working people and their organizations, celebrating their art and creativity with a broader focus beyond the immediate political discourse.