

# LABOR EDUCATION PROGRAM

*"If capitalism is fair then unionism must be. If men have a right to capitalize their ideas and the resources of their country, then that implies the right of men to capitalize their labor."*  
- Frank Lloyd Wright

LABORLINE NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE FOR ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT / COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

## Upcoming Seminars

### Advanced Arbitration: Sharpening Your Skills

September 27-29, 2006

### Creating an Effective Newsletter for Your Local Union

December 8 and 9, 2006

### 9th Annual Leadership School

March 15-17, 2007

### Safety & Health Conference

April 28, 2007

### Advanced Collective Bargaining

*All union members are invited.*

*All seminars are presented in cooperation with the Arkansas AFL-CIO and are held in the Little Rock area. Details of upcoming seminars are enclosed.*

## LEP Showcases

### New Advanced Arbitration Class!

#### **Attention all experienced union advocates!**

Imagine that you are presenting the union's case in an arbitration hearing, sitting across the table from an experienced employer attorney. Every question, you ask of your witness is met by an objection from the employer attorney. This is distracting, breaking your rhythm, and making it difficult to present your case. What can you do?

Imagine a key witness to your case is not responding fully to your questions. How can you ask non-leading questions to get this witness' critical testimony?

The arbitrator has requested post hearing briefs. The employer's attorney smiles and says, "That will be great." You get a knot in your stomach.

If you have ever been faced with these or similarly stressful situations, LEP has designed a new class just for you! **Advanced Arbitration: Sharpening Your Skills** is designed for experienced union officials and representatives responsible for preparing and presenting arbitration cases. This is an advanced class – the meek need not attend! You will be concentrating on presenting evidence, handling difficult witnesses,

and developing the ability to write an effective brief. There will be plenty of hands on exercises and opportunities to practice your skills, including a new mock arbitration.

Those who have attended LEP's basic arbitration seminar, "Making Your Best Case," as well as those with experience presenting cases are strongly encouraged to sign up for this advanced version.

Join us in Little Rock at the Wyndam Riverfront Hotel September 27 – 29. See the enclosed flyer for details and registration.

**Heading into negotiations?**

**Does your committee understand the laws governing bargaining?**

**Do you have special concerns, like healthcare?**

**Call LEP and schedule a class!**

## Labor Rocks the Airwaves in Central Arkansas!

### "Walking the Line" - KABF 88.3 FM



On a Friday afternoon, in February, 2006, radio listeners of central Arkansas drove home from work to the sound of a new labor show on KABF 88.3 FM. Each Friday from 4:30 – 5:30 pm, workers throughout the state can tune in to KABF and listen to "Walking the Line", a show devoted to workers and workers' issues. "Walk the

Line" features discussion and music about unions and workers. This is not your typical talk show; it is vibrant and engaging and all about you. It's hosted by E. J. Miller (IUE/CWA), Grainger Ledbetter (LRCTA) and Rankin' Randy (okay, he's just the experienced music guy!).

Tune in and hear interviews with candidates on labor issues, organizing efforts in the south and music ranging from Woody Guthrie to the modern punk sounds of the Dropkick Murphys.

**-Randy Wright**

## IAM Members Show Support for Strikers

*See related article on Page 3*



## LR Teachers Face Obstacles to Contract Settlement

The Little Rock Classroom Teachers Association, which represents over 2000 teachers employed by the Little Rock School District, has called in federal and state mediators to assist with one of the most difficult negotiations in the union's history. "What has really complicated things," says Executive Director Grainger Ledbetter "is that two School Board members have publicly called for decertifying CTA and removing our contract."

Teachers are public employees and Arkansas has no state law protecting their right to bargain with management or be represented by a union at the bargaining table. "All it takes is a majority vote of the Board to remove the CTA as the bargaining agent for Little Rock teachers," Ledbetter added.

"The membership knows what's at stake," said Ledbetter, "over 250 teachers turned out at the May School Board meeting to support the Association and the bargaining team." According to Ledbetter, the issues dividing the parties deal with instructional preparation time, unpaid duty, the number of different classes a teacher can be assigned, and whether teachers can vote on merit pay plans. The parties will discuss salary on July 20, just eleven days before the current contract expires.

Despite the contentious atmosphere the District and the Association credited the mediators with creating a more positive tone at the table. "We had an honest discussion that would have been impossible without the mediators," stated Ledbetter. "Provided the District has a reasonable salary offer, all the ingredients for a settlement exist. The real question is whether the parties can bring themselves to trust each other."

**-Grainger Ledbetter**

### Common Sense Economics Corner

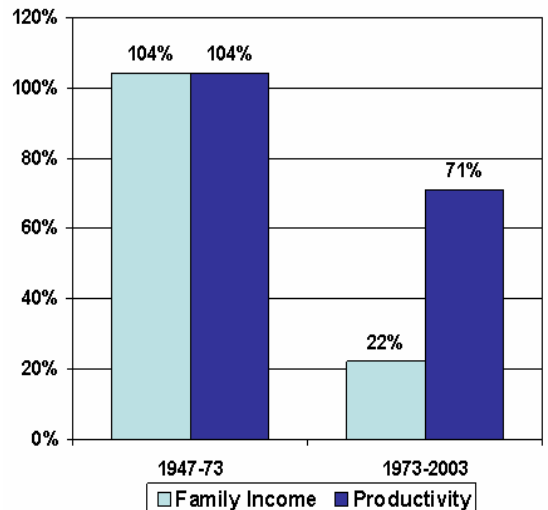
#### Productivity and a Higher Standard of Living: The Broken Promise

Can't seem to get ahead? Working harder (and more efficiently), but not seeing it in your paycheck? It's not your imagination. For the last thirty years, productivity has increased 71%, but real family income (adjusted for inflation) has only increased 22%. In contrast, in the post World War II era, the "American Dream" was realized as productivity was directly translated into rising family incomes.

What happened? Who has benefited from rising productivity? How do government economic policies shape the economic environment for workers? Contact LEP for a **Common Sense Economics** class and begin to understand the economy from a workers' point of view.

**-Diane Thomas-Holladay**

**Family Income Adjusted for Inflation 1947-2003**



Source: Economic Policy Institute, Snapshot, Sept. 8, 2004

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## Arkansas Strikers Permanently Replaced

On July 25, 2005, thirteen members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) walked off of their jobs as Service Technicians with Landers McLarty Ford in Bentonville, Arkansas and went on strike. Prior to the strike, the union had obtained signed cards from each technician authorizing the IAM to be their exclusive representative. The employer refused to recognize the union and, instead, hired replacement workers.

In Star City Arkansas, the 56 members of the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1671 who work at National Wire Fabric, Inc. (NWF) have been on strike since July 23, 2005. When NWF threatened to implement its contract proposals containing substantial changes, the USW struck. Since then, management has hired approximately 30 replacement workers in an effort to resume production levels. On July 5, 2006, the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette reported that this might be one of the "longest workplace actions" in Arkansas history.

Over the last 25 years, employers have become increasingly more willing to hire replacement workers in the event of a strike. Nearly seven in 10 employers in the manufacturing sector (69 percent) say they are at least somewhat likely to replace strikers, and 40 percent of non-manufacturing employers are in accord. (BNA, January 2006)

The United States is unique in the industrialized world in how striking workers are treated. U.S. labor law allows employers to permanently replace workers who participate in an economic strike and for replacement workers to vote out the union. Twelve months after the

strike begins, only permanent replacement workers can vote whether to maintain union representation. Without an agreement by the employer to return the striking employees to their jobs, the union could be destroyed by a simple vote of replacement workers.

A 2000 study by Human Rights Watch concluded that the doctrine of using replacement workers "runs counter to international standards recognizing the right to strike as an essential element of freedom of association."<sup>1</sup>

Past efforts to reform the National Labor Relation Act to strengthen the rights of workers have not been successful. The labor movement is currently promoting the Employee Free Choice Act, designed to allow workers to choose union representation with fewer barriers and quicker results.

**-Monica Bielski Boris and Randy Wright**

<sup>1</sup>*Lance Compa, Unfair Advantage: Workers' Freedom of Association in the United States Under International Human Rights Standards (2000).*



## Firefighters Spark at Communications Training

Looking for ways your members can improve their computer or communication skills, research the Internet, or make better presentations or arguments? Luckily, the Labor Education and Workplace Skills Enhancement Programs at UALR are perfectly equipped to design a customized training class based on your union's specific needs.

Recently, Local 34 of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) engaged UALR for assistance in these areas. Sponsored by the Arkansas Professional Firefighters, a two-day course of basic computer training was designed. Topics included using Microsoft Word to create fliers and memos, using Microsoft Excel to keep track of and sort data, and desktop publishing tricks such as adding graphics and pictures to documents. The training was held at UALR.



IAFF 34 Training: (left to right) Dan Oberste, Charles Hill, Bob Hunthrop

The local also requested assistance preparing applicants for the Captain's position. Promotions are hard to come by within the Little Rock Fire Department. Applicants must pass written and technical components, as well as oral presentations of how to handle situations on the job. In order to prepare its members for the process, IAFF Local 34 sponsored a class at UALR giving members time to practice their presentation skills, and a chance to give one another constructive feedback about how to improve. Members learned methods for handling stress, and how to make a professional, videotaped presentation, and received tips for organizing material into a logical sequence. If your union could use such services, please contact Laura Miller, LEP Developer at UALR.

**-Laura Miller**



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**LEP** LABORLINE

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*LEP courses and services can be found on the LEP web site at <http://www.iea.ualr.edu/lep>*