

IRRA



COMMON GROUND

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION
FOR WESTERN NEW YORK

VOL. 1 NUMBER 3

FALL 1986

President's Message

This is my first opportunity to make a presentation in our newsletter, "COMMON GROUND". It is also my first opportunity to put in writing my appreciation to the membership for allowing me to serve as President of the Western New York Chapter of the IRRA for the 1986-87 year. It is my sincere hope that this year will be every bit as successful as last year, which was led by Geri Ochocinska as our president.

I have given much thought to selecting a theme for 1986-87 and I keep coming back to the subject of the economy of Western New York and how it will affect labor and industrial relations in our area. This theme will not allow us to paint a rosy picture, but rather will require us to look to the future with a strong sense of realism at the many problems in our area. Each problem certainly has a solution. Hopefully, our programs will offer some of these solutions or, at least, provoke enough thought to assist in a "home made" generation of these solutions.

It is my desire that our programs present diverse opinions, confront difficult issues and, if nothing else, compel each of us to think.

We have confirmed two speakers as of this writing. The first is at our September 24th dinner meeting. The speaker will be Richard Davis, Asst. to the President of the United Steelworkers of America. The second is at our October 29th

meeting. Our speaker will be Louis R. Reif, President and Chief Executive Officer of National Fuel Gas. Other meeting dates for the year will be: November 19, 1986; January 28, 1987; March 25, 1987; April 22, 1987; May 20, 1987.

On February 14, 1987 we will again have our social night following the format of the last two years, a theatre party preceded by a reception and buffet at the Lawsons'.

I am looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our meetings during the coming year. Plans for these meetings are progressing and will probably be finalized by the time you read this. It's not too early to be thinking about next year! Ideas for future programs are always welcome, and all members should feel free to send along suggestions at any time.

Lloyd E. Hahn

Editor's notes

This is the first of what we hope will be four issues of COMMON GROUND during 1986-87. A fair bit of effort has been expended to improve both the content and the appearance of the newsletter, and the acid test of whether we've succeeded is the extent of its interest and

(Editor cont.)

☆☆ Milestones ☆☆

usefulness to you. In that regard, we'd certainly appreciate your feedback, but even more we'd appreciate your help in providing material for future issues. Information appropriate for the **Milestones and Coming Events** features would be especially useful. Also, if you run across anything in your professional literature that you think might be of general interest to the membership, please call it to our attention and we'll consider excerpting or reprinting it. You can send material to Howard Foster, 160 Jacobs Center, SUNYAB, Amherst 14260 or call 636-3427.

Financial news \$\$

IRRA coffers have remained healthy in the capable hands of Norm Stocker, our Treasurer for as long as anyone can remember (well, almost anyone). Here's a brief synopsis for 1985-86:

Opening balance:	\$ 6,860.44
Receipts:	\$15,739.41
Disbursements	
Monthly Meetings:	\$8,826.71
Postage:	\$1,287.21
Other:	\$3,369.34
Closing balance: as of (6/30/86)	\$9,116.59

For more information on the finances of your organization, contact Norm Stocker (838-2737). Also, any member should feel free to offer suggestions on how the resources of the organization can best be utilized. Convey your suggestions to President Lloyd Hahn (857-7145) or President elect Eric Lawson (885-1382).

Vice President **Msgr. Jim Healy**, Chairman of the New York State Mediation Board, was installed as President of the Central NY IRRA on May 19, 1986, in Syracuse (we thought priests weren't supposed to have divided loyalties.)

Past President **Ed Kelly** was cited on May 4 as the St. Joseph's Guild Man of the Year. The Guild is an organization of catholic trade union activists. Kelly was also honored by the Buffalo AFL-CIO Council, the International Longshoreman's Assn., and the Erie County Legislature for his 35 years of distinguished work as a labor reporter and his contributions to labor-management relations in the community.

Maurice L. Miller has become an associate in the law firm of FLAHERTY, COHEN, GRANDE, RANDAZZO & DOREN. The firm, all of whose partners are IRRA members, represents employers in labor relations and employment matters. Mr. Miller has a law degree from the University of Toledo and is a former Assistant Counsel in the Governor's Office of Employee Relations.

Vice President **Jim Schwan** and Advisory Board Member **Rich Wyssling** have helped form the new law firm of Wyssling, Schwan & Montgomery, with offices in Buffalo. Jim has been practicing law since 1972 after graduating from UB Law School. Rich is a 1968 graduate of the St. John's University Law School. The firm will specialize in labor relations law representing labor organizations.

Interview: A Talk with Joe Ritz

As most IRRRA members know, Joe Ritz is the veteran reporter who covers the labor beat for the Buffalo News. We thought it might be instructive for our members to get to know this important figure in the industrial relations family a little better, and Joe was gracious enough to let the editor of COMMON GROUND play reporter for a day.

Joe Ritz was raised in Ohio and graduated from Marquette University in Milwaukee. He's been a reporter all his professional life, starting as a news writer at a radio station in Flint, Michigan and moving on to newspapers in Gloversville, NY, and New Haven, CT. where he covered a variety of beats. He spent a couple of years as a public relations man for Fordham University before resuming his newspaper career at a Gannett publication in Newburgh, NY, where he covered City Hall and labor. While in Newburgh Joe wrote a book on the subject of welfare titled, **The Despised Poor**. He also worked on a series by a Gannett team on racial integration that won a Pulitzer Prize. That led to a job offer from the Courier Express which Joe joined in 1964. At the Courier Joe had a variety of assignments working the labor beat from 1967 to 1970. He stayed with the Courier until it folded in 1983 and joined the News three months later. In 1984 he took over the labor beat when Ed Kelly, the long-time labor reporter for the News and Past President of the IRRRA, retired.

Joe has been active in union affairs throughout his career, several times holding high offices in the Newspaper Guild. His interest in labor-management relations led him to seek out the labor beat when it became open at the Courier. He told COMMON GROUND that his background as a union leader has sometimes caused him problems as a reporter, as some other leaders have viewed critical stories or columns as a kind of

betrayal. He noted that they sometimes forget he's a reporter, not a p.r. person, and they don't expect him to write negative things about them.

What does a labor reporter do all day? For one thing, he works a regular shift, eight to four, which he sees as an important gain by his union. Within that time he pretty much controls the day, although he does get special assignments from time to time, especially on a Saturday. In a normal work day, he makes phone calls to his sources and writes news stories in the morning, and he conducts interviews and works on feature stories in the afternoon. It usually takes him an afternoon or equivalent to research and write his Saturday column. The amount of time Joe has to spend on what he calls "trend" stories depends on what needs immediate attention at the time. Lately, with fewer local strikes and other crises he's been able to spend about half his time on features. Right now he's looking at the plight of unemployed Steelworkers and the effects of unemployment on unions, like the United Steelworkers are now spending a lot of their time and resources on non-dues paying members. Joe sees his beat as concentrating on organized labor, although he spends sometime on stories that affect labor generally. He notes that it's a big enough job to cover the unionized sector. Where then does Joe see the labor movement going? He acknowledges the recent decline in union membership, but he thinks there will always be a need for unions. As long as there are employees and employers, he says, the employees need unions, or at least the threat of unions, to protect them. They certainly can't depend on the politicians, he opines. For unions to recover their lost membership, however, they'll have to start organizing more among white collar workers.

But will they be able to? At that point Joe accidentally knocked his crystal ball off the table, and we had to break it off.

 Coming Events

Arbitration Seminars one-day seminars sponsored by the Western New York Institute for Dispute Settlement and taught by Don Goodman and Tom Rinaldo in Syracuse. Topics include Arbitration Practice (Sept. 25), Arbitration Procedure (Oct. 14), Discipline & Discharge (Nov. 6), and Management Rights, Standards for Interpreting Contract Language (Dec. 11). Fee of \$90 includes lunch. For information call 884-6733 or 285-7172.

Discipline, Discharge & Patient Abuse in Health Care. One-day seminar on October 2 sponsored by WNY Institute for Dispute Settlement and taught by Tom Rinaldo and Don Goodman in Buffalo. Fee of \$90 includes lunch. For information call 884-6733 or 285-7172.

Contract Negotiations and Administration. A one-day seminar sponsored by Niagara University will be held in Buffalo on November 18 and taught by IRRRA members Don Goodman and Tom Rinaldo. Registration fee of \$100 includes lunch. For information call 285-1212, ext. 555.

Handicapped Job Fair. An employment service for the handicapped sponsored by the Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce and other organizations will be held on September 25 at the Convention Center in Buffalo. Goal is to match job ready applicants with companies seriously interested in hiring the handicapped. For information contact Pat Sullivan at the Chamber at 852-7100.

Women in the Workplace: Its Effect on the Employer and the Family. A half-day panel discussion on November 14 sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the Urban League. Part of "Equal Opportunity Day." For information contact Pat Sullivan at 852-7100.

How to Hire and Fire Employees: What You Can Do From a Legal Viewpoint. A one-day seminar on October 8 sponsored by the School of Management at UB. For information call 636-3200.

100th Anniversary Celebration of the NYS Mediation Board. Will be held at the Executive Inn on October 30. Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, donation \$50. For information call the St. Joseph's Guild at 886-4444.

The agency fee provisions of the Taylor Law is the subject of a conference sponsored by the NYS Public Employment Relations Board in Syracuse on September 9. Conferees will be asked to react to a report by Prof. Richard Briffault of the Columbia Law School. For information call PERB at 518-457-2676.

Buffalo Labor Studies, a two-year, credit-bearing certificate program for union leaders sponsored by the New York State School of Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell University, will be starting its 14th year this Fall. Application deadline is the last week in September. For information call Lou Jean Fleron at 842-6180.

Supervisory Studies, a one-year, credit-bearing certificate program for supervisors sponsored by the New York State School of Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell, will be starting its seventh year this Fall. Application deadline is the last week in September. For information call Irene Seitz at 842-6180.

The 23rd Annual Supervisory Skills Workshop Series for new and potential supervisors, sponsored by NYSSILR at Cornell, will begin in mid-October. The series includes four all-day workshops run once a week. For information call Dick Pivetz at 842-6180.

Welcome

COMMON GROUND WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS

Joining the IRRA since the first of the year are the following new members:

Jo Davenport, Secretary of the Tonawanda Education Association.

Michael J. Flanagan, Business Manager of Local 1139, IBEW.

Joseph A. Gentile, District Director, NYS Mediation Board.

Thomas S. Gill, attorney with the law firm of Saperston, Day, Lustig, Gallick, Kirschner & Gaglione in Buffalo.

Robert G. Hammer, Business Agent for Grain Millers Local 36.

Mark Higgins, Field Representative Service Employees Assn.

William B. Jackson, Jr., a student at Niagara University.

Edward J. Kelly, Assistant to the President for Faculty & Staff Relations, SUNY College at Brockport.

Doyle W. Lee, Vice President for Employee Relations, American Brass Company.

Jerome M. Lengel, Vice President, Lockport Memorial Hospital.

William J. McMahon, President and Business Manager, IBEW Local 2199.

Michael R. Moravec, an attorney with the law firm of Phillips, Lytle, Hitchcock, Blaine & Huber in Buffalo.

Miriam Rein, Dispute Settlement Center in Buffalo.

Edward J. Ryan, Director of Human Resources, Rich Products Corp.

Flora Miller Sliwa, Assistant Corporation Counsel, City of Buffalo.

John Solomon, Manager of Human Resources, National Fuel Gas.

Dawne M. Vullo, a recent graduate of LeMoyne College majoring in Industrial Relations.

Hot Tips

— ideas that work

Tips of the Month

■ **Invest a half hour** to maintain your sanity and remove occasional pressures. Make an extra set of keys for your car and office. Photocopy your appointment book for the next few months. Be sure an updated list of credit card numbers is easily available with the right places to notify. If you use a bureau for that, is your list current?

■ **Keep a list** of addressed labels for key colleagues and customers. Maintain one set in your office and another in your briefcase. The labels facilitate your writing a quick note to important people.

■ **If you're** thinking about learning another language, consider Spanish. Temple University just announced that it will require all who graduate in 1990 to speak Spanish fluently. President Liacouras noted that Spanish is the "majority language" of the Western Hemisphere.

■ **Think "you"** instead of "I" before you begin to speak to a group. Communicate to yourself that the "you" emphasis is vital by starting your presentation with "you." This forces you to take the listener's point of view as you share ideas.

Source: Decker Communications Report, 150 Fourth St., Suite 200, San Francisco, CA 94103.

More Mileage From Meetings

• Don't allow your meetings to start with a bang and end with a whimper.

Be sure you and the participants can comfortably answer these two questions as the meeting ends: "So what? What next?" The next steps and the commitment needed should be clear to all.



CALL TODAY TO RESERVE YOUR
PLACE AT OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

CONTACT MARIE AT 877-8800

EXT. 451

CALL TODAY!!



**IRRA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE
CHAIRMEN: 1986-87**

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- President-elect:** Eric Lawson
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- Chairman, Awards Committee:** Marilyn Zahm
- Chairman, Program Committee:** Lloyd Hahn
- Editor, COMMON GROUND:** Howard Foster
- Editorial Coordinator:** Linda Ochocinski