

COMMON ground

LERA LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

Winter 2010 • irrawny.org

Western New York Labor Management Relations on Display in Dublin, Ireland and Tokyo, Japan

On Thanksgiving Day 2009 in Dublin, Ireland the European Foundation examined the global automotive industry. The conference entitled: "The Automotive Sector: How Can Social Dialogue Assist A Sector In Crisis," focused on automotive case studies from around the world.

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/irglobal.htm>

"We have a great working relationship at the facility. This is my third plant experience at GM and the difference is leaps and bounds better here. UAW Region 9 is much easier to work with and show a willingness to try new things," Steve Finch, plant manager GMTP

2009-2010 Officers

President

Jean Doerr, ALJ

Public Employment Relations Board
The Electric Tower
535 Washington Street, Ste. 302
Buffalo NY 14203

President-Elect

Florence "Flo" Tripi

President, CSEA Region 6
120 Pineview Drive
Amherst, NY 14228

Executive Secretary/Treasurer

Wendi J. Bazemore, PHR

Executive Vice President

Patrick Phelan

Secretary to the Executive

Secretary/Treasurer

Sandy Luedke

The Buffalo News
One News Plaza
Buffalo NY 14240

Editor

Arthur Wheaton

Cornell University ILR School
237 Main Street Suite 1200
Buffalo, NY 14203



UAW Local 774 President Sal Morana, GM Tonawanda Powertrain plant manager Steve Finch and Duane Paddock from Paddock Chevrolet provided their insight and assistance in this global analysis of the auto industry crises.

"The international union and upper GM management recognize the strong relationship we have here in Tonawanda," Sal Morana



Duane Paddock provided key insights for an international conference hosted by the International Labor Organization. The "ILO Asian Regional Workshop for the Automotive Industry" in Tokyo, Japan in early December.



"General Motors was a lot more respectful than Chrysler. Chrysler gave 14 days notice and no financial relief. We didn't like it but GM gave dealers until October 2010 to wind down and some form of cash payouts. I have to give GM credit, they did it in a more respectful and palatable way," Duane Paddock

Western NY LERA has many other shining examples as well.

Written by: Art Wheaton

Remembering Jack Canzoneri

I am a very lucky person. Jack Canzoneri was a good friend of mine. In fact he was one of the first people I met on coming to Buffalo in 1975.

His infectious good humor and enthusiasm made him a pleasure to work and be with.

He was one of the few individuals whose outstanding reputation as a labor leader enabled him to be a successful representative for two unions, Teamsters local 375 and then the Service Employees International Union, local 200 C.

It is not a given that everyone can make the leap from the role of an advocate to being a neutral in the field of collective bargaining and succeed. In 1992, Jack, did exactly that, he was appointed a Commissioner with the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service and worked in the Syracuse and Buffalo offices where he handled some of the most complex negotiations in the area. Working with management and labor in manufacturing, health care, service and transportation industries throughout central and western New York, Jack brought the same optimism and tenacity to the role of mediator that had characterized his activities as an advocate.

In 1999, the Industrial Relations and Research Association recognized his lifetime of contributions to better labor relations in our area by naming him the Citizen of the Year.

Following his retirement in 2000, Jack relocated to the phoenix, Arizona area and worked on a part time basis for the Service Employees handling grievances and contract administration issues in one of their largest locals in the Las Vegas area for six years.

A memorial service for Jack will be held at 11:00 a.m., on Saturday, March 13 at Teamster local 264's hall, 35 Tyrol Drive, in Cheektowaga.

The family will be in attendance and all of Jack's friends are welcome to join us in a brief celebration of his life of public service.

Written by: Kevin Powers

Reflections: Professor Jim McDonnell

The Western New York region has produced many accomplished contributors to the field of labor relations. Some years ago, Professor Jim McDonnell, a long-time fixture on the WNY labor-management scene, wrote a series of profiles for this Newsletter, titled "Reflections," on veteran local practitioners of our craft. Recently, the editors asked Howard Foster, Professor Emeritus at UB, if he would be interested in resuming Jim's series for Common Ground. He was, and he suggested that the best subject to start the new series would be — Jim McDonnell. So here is Jim's story, and his "Reflections."

It has been nearly a half-century since the schoolteacher son of a Buffalo steelworker picked up and moved his family to Madison, Wisconsin, to pursue a Ph.D. in American history, with a specialization in American labor history. The journey from the steel mills to the campus was almost accidental, but the end result was a career that has encompassed a long string of achievements in both the academic and practitioner dimensions of our field.

Jim McDonnell grew up in a steelworking household, and as a teenager he followed his father into the bar mill during summers to work as a fill-in laborer. He fully expected that to be the story of his life, as it was for most of his friends in South Buffalo. But in his senior year of high school, desperate to get out of a despised English class, he went with his best friend Nick to hear a recruiter from Fredonia State College. Jim's academic record was short of stellar, but he interviewed well, and the recruiter said he could be admitted on probation. That sounded good; Jim and Nick could drink and fool around for a semester, and then go into the steel plant. So off they went.

After three weeks at Fredonia, Jim and Nick decided to try attending a class. Lo and behold, it wasn't so bad. "We can do this," they decided. In due course, they both graduated and eventually took separate paths to doctoral studies. Jim first taught high-school history and English in Clarence and Amherst, during which stint he picked up a master's degree at Buffalo State College. His master's thesis was on the history of Steelworkers Local 1743, which represented the workers at Republic Steel. The thesis attracted attention at Buff State, and a history professor there suggested that Jim consider pursuing a doctorate at Wisconsin, where the study of American labor history had its roots.

In 1960 Jim and his wife, Carol, a public school teacher, packed up offspring Jimmy and Heather and moved to Madison. While Carol supported the family with her teaching, Jim pursued his studies in American history, with a concentration in labor history. He used his master's thesis as a springboard for his doctoral dissertation.

Reflections: Professor Jim McDonnell

That study covered the turbulent history of the UAW and the Steelworkers in Western New York from 1935 to 1942, from the organizing strikes to first contracts. Jim had to leave Madison before completing his dissertation in order to generate income for his family. He returned to WNY in 1964 to take a teaching position in the History Department at Buff State, and he became Dr. McDonnell five years later. Later, the family found itself with two Drs. McDonnell in the house, as Carol went on to obtain her Ph.D. in anthropology at UB.

At Buff State Jim regularly taught large sections of 20th Century American History, with periodic seminars in Labor History, American Radicals, and Women in Labor. His basic American History course was always a big draw, as Jim developed a reputation on campus as an inspiring and entertaining teacher.

Jim's parallel career as a labor-management neutral started in the early 1970s, when he was enrolled in an Arbitrator Development Program sponsored by a coalition of organizations (IRRA, FMCS, AAA, PERB, and Cornell, among others). Wannabe arbitrators would attend classes, attend hearings run by established neutrals, and prepare mock awards for critique. A number of WNY's current mainline arbitrators were products of this program. Jim also got involved in mediation and fact-finding work for the New York Public Employment Relations Board. These experiences got him on various panels, from which the cases began to trickle in and then grow exponentially.

Jim did not teach courses in labor relations as such at Buff State, but he has been a frequent guest lecturer on the subject there and elsewhere. He also was engaged to give training sessions on conflict resolution for individual companies and unions, and he taught regularly in Cornell's Labor Studies Program.

In the 1970s, Jim was a central figure in the development and launching of labor-management cooperation efforts in several areas, the most notable one in Jamestown with the encouragement of then-Mayor (and later Lt. Governor) Stan Lundine. These joint committees, supported principally by FMCS both nationally and locally, actively promoted cooperative initiatives in hitherto adversarial relationships. Jim worked closely in these efforts with FMCS Commissioners Sam Sackman and Tom Colosi. In addition to helping to organize and install committees in Jamestown and Chautauqua County, Jim went on the road to assist similar ventures in Topeka, Kansas, and Green Bay, Wisconsin.

In another outreach venture in the 1970s, Jim teamed up with the late Ed Schmidt, a past president of IRRA (now LERA), and others to promote labor education for local teachers. In addition to establishing a resource center at BOCES for books and films on labor issues, the team gave lectures on how to teach labor subjects to students in high-school social studies classes. Also, teachers could request experts to run mock negotiations in class and to coach the student teams. The experts would also act as mediators and coach the students in conflict-resolution techniques.

These services were very popular in their time, especially as the teachers were just beginning to

be exposed to collective bargaining in their own jobs.

With his reputation as a teacher and trainer in the work of labor-management neutrals growing, Jim was invited on three occasions in the 1980s and 1990s to give month-long courses at the University of the Philippines in Manila, teaching about this work to lawyers and academics who wanted to become arbitrators. He was invariably introduced as a "guru" on the subject.

After 27 years of teaching at Buff State, Jim took an early retirement in 1991. He has remained professionally active since then, however, with a steady arbitration practice and an abiding connection to the field through LERA and other organizations. As his friends know, Jim is also an accomplished singer, singing tenor on several barbershop quartets over the years, including one ensemble of members of the National Academy of Arbitrators. That one was called – naturally – "Sound Decisions."

For Jim, the historic role of unions and collective bargaining in our society must be understood as a piece of America's democratic experiment. Our society, he believes, is always conscious of three classes: the underclass, the working class, and the management class. The nation's founding documents – particularly the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution – are aimed at bringing rights to all classes, at infusing democracy in our workplaces and our politics, and at equalizing opportunity. Committed democrats (small "d") recognize the need to protect the working class.

Reflections: Professor Jim McDonnell

This outlook grows out of Jim's family background. Before emigrating in the 1920s, his father was a unionized coal miner in Scotland, with a strong left-wing outlook. When he came to the U.S., he was struck by the absence of unions, and he worked to bring unionism into the steel plant. He was active in the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, the John L. Lewis brainchild that eventually became the United Steelworkers of America. Jim's uncle became a staff person for the Union, and his father an officer. Growing up, an outing for Jim was a trip to a union meeting.

Despite this early background, which was reinforced at Wisconsin and informs his personal philosophy, Jim has remained professionally neutral. He is an effective teacher because of his skills at communicating concepts and organizing material so that the "story" of a lecture flows logically. He is a successful arbitrator because he understands his role as reading the parties' contract, not applying "his own brand of industrial justice." Jim is also apolitical, getting involved in a campaign only once, when UAW leader Tom Fricano ran for Congress.

So where is the field – and the labor movement – heading? Jim sees the steady decline continuing, especially in the private sector, as our de-industrialization proceeds apace. He does not see it turning around in his lifetime. The middle class will not turn to unions unless management "screws up." The field, in both its academic and practitioner domains, will continue to narrow as fewer and fewer people "do" labor relations. He does not see a strategy for a breakout.

In the end, Jim cites three major decisions that have shaped and enriched his life: marrying Carol, going to Wisconsin, and becoming active in the IRRRA. No doubt the benefits from all of these connections have flowed two-way.

*Written by: Howard Foster,
Professor Emeritus at UB,*

On behalf of our
LERA Officers
We welcome our 27
new and returning
LERA members

Upcoming LERA Events

February 17th

Health Sciences Charter
School and the health care
industry

March 16th

MVP Health Care and EBC
Employee Benefits Concepts,
mini-conference – **Where Do
We Go From Here?**
Adam's Mark lunch at noon
with networking to follow

May TBA

Meeting and dinner
regarding the 2010 Charles
E. Leonard Citizen of the
Year Award Dinner

August 18th

Annual United Way Day of
Caring

Remembering Jack Canzoneri

On March 13th at
11:00am a memorial
service for

Jack Canzoneri

Will be held at the
Teamsters Local 264
hall at 35 Tyrol Drive
in Cheektowaga

Friends are welcome to
attend



Labor and Employment Association
of Western New York
c/o Sandy Luedke

Phone: (716) 849-5466
E-Mail: secretary@lerawny.org

We're on the Web!
www.lerawny.org

LERA-WNY AGAIN FIELDS A TEAM FOR THE UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

For the second time in as many years, a team of volunteers from LERA-WNY came together for a good cause, and joined hundreds of volunteers from western New York to donate a morning of labor on August 19 to local charities and organizations. For their annual Day of Caring, the United Way matches agencies in need of help with groups of volunteers. Last year we were assigned to Project Flight. This year, our intrepid group of seven worked at the Baker Victory Services location in Lackawanna. Our assignment: paint the gymnasium walls from the floor to a height of 10 feet. Our team: Reynold and Dorothy Jennetti, Ramona Gallagher, Mary Kluczycski, Mark Jurenovich, Bill Grande, and Susan Meyer.

We started the morning with muffins, bagels and coffee at the HSBC Arena. The lobby was packed with enthusiastic volunteers waiting to board the buses to their assignments.

Our bus driver drove us to Baker Victory's campus, where we were warmly greeted by the project supervisor, Allan Farrar, and some of his staff before beginning our work.

We had helpers also: two of their students, and the project supervisor; even our bus driver pitched in! Working with their painter, we taped walls, removed switch plates, and wiped down conduit to prepare for the paint. As we painted the cement block walls, tunes from the 70's kept us rocking and "rolling." Then, we removed the painters' tape, replaced the switch plates, cleaned up after ourselves, and enjoyed some delicious cookies provided by the Baker Victory kitchen staff. Believe it or not, all of this was accomplished in only a morning.

We took the bus back to the HSBC Arena, where lunch and drinks were provided while we were entertained by the Elvis of Buffalo, Terry Buchwald. We plan to participate again next year, and invite you to join us for a day of fun and caring.

*Written by: Susan Meyer
LERA*

