

# IRRA



# COMMON GROUND

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION  
FOR WESTERN NEW YORK

VOL. 1 NUMBER 4

WINTER 1986/87

## President's Message

So far during this Chapter year three meetings are already history. Another meeting is imminent. I believe your program committee has already proved its worth.

Dick Davis of the United Steelworkers spoke at the September 24th meeting. His talk was interesting and incisive. He gave us some innovative insights into today's labor relations climate.

Then on October 29th. Lou Reif, President of National Fuel Gas spoke on Energy and Labor Relations. We heard another perspective with his talk.

Those of you who attended these two meetings were amply rewarded by your presence. Those who were unable to attend certainly missed two good presentations.

Attendance, while being rather good, is still well below what it should be. I had promised diverse opinions and the examination of difficult issues. I believe sincerely that your program committee has delivered on these promises. A case in point is Henry Simon's appearance at the November 20th meeting, dealing with the subject of Trico's impending move to Mexico. This has been one of Western New York's biggest problems; the loss of employment in the area.

For January, Marty Idzik has put together a great panel to look at the NLRB and how its actions may affect the ability of representing unions to freely organize workers. This should strike some sparks and excite some real interest. It behooves you to be there.

All of our Committees are very active. They may require assistance. If you are asked to help, please do so. Your participation will be its own reward.

As always, I am looking forward to seeing you at our meetings.

Lloyd E. Hahn

## Attention No-Shows

At its September meeting, the Executive Board received the disturbing report that **25 percent** of confirmed reservations failed to show. Please note that cancelling a reservation (or, preferably, keeping it) is not only a matter of common courtesy, but also a matter of cold, hard cash for your organization. When we engage a room and order a number of dinners, we have to pay for those dinners whether they get eaten or not. So, **please**, if you find that you can't keep a reservation, call Marie Siegel at 877-8800 (ext. 451) and cancel it. We'll all be grateful.

## Meet Eric Lawson

IRRA includes within its ranks quite a few interesting folks doing interesting things. One of these folks is our President-elect, Eric Lawson, Jr., who, if the creek doesn't rise, will be taking the helm of the organization in May. COMMON GROUND thought IRRA members might like to get to know this fellow a little better, and Eric kindly consented to a talk with your humble and obedient servant (well, obedient anyway).

Eric came to Buffalo in 1976 as Chief Regional Mediator for the Public Employment Relations Board, after spending seven years as a staff mediator in Albany. Three years later, frustrated with having to work for a living, he left PERB to enter UB law school, and he was admitted to the bar in 1982. Eric's work continues to be concentrated in labor-management relations; he spends some 80 percent of his time in dispute resolution activities, with the rest in a general law practice. He shares offices in Buffalo with his wife, Dr. Beverly Lawson, a practicing psychologist. In addition to IRRA, Eric is active in the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution (SPIDR), the New York State Bar Association, and the Erie County Bar Association. He also serves on the Board of Directors of the Better Business Bureau, where he takes a special interest in (what else?) the BBB's rapidly expanding ventures in the dispute resolution field. He notes with emphasis that the BBB is the largest purveyor of dispute resolution services in the country.

Eric does a good bit of training work as well, and in that connection he's the founder and sole proprietor of CREST, an acronym for Conflict Resolution: Educational Services and Training. The idea for CREST came to Eric while he was teaching a course in Cornell's Labor Studies Program. He found that he was constantly looking in vain for training material and wound up writing much of the stuff himself. So he recruited his father, Eric Lawson, Sr., a Professor Emeritus of Economics at Syracuse University, and the two of them wrote a book titled **Essentials of Labor Arbitration**, billed as a "Practical Guide to the Principles and Procedures for Successful Grievance Arbitration."

Eric notes that the collaboration was not wholly without controversy itself (of the collegial kind, of course), and he tells of a four-hour drive during which the entire conversation focussed on two items in the **glossary**, only one of which was settled. The result of the collaboration, however, is a useful how-to roadmap for both beginning advocates and aspiring arbitrators. [Editorial note: it's also useful as a supplement in University-level courses, as it deals with a lot of nitty-gritty matters that seldom find their way into conventional textbooks.]

Working on the book led Eric to the notion of producing a tape to assist in arbitration training. He joined with a friend, Dr. Mollie Bowers of the University of Baltimore, and together they scripted an arbitration case, **Who's in Charge**, based on one Eric had decided in the D.C. area, and the tape was shot in Washington. Mollie plays the arbitrator, and Eric provides periodic commentary as the case progresses. The tape also comes with a user's guide, which includes documentary material that the instructor can distribute for consultation during the viewing. Unfortunately, as Eric is quick to acknowledge, the quality of the taping itself is not the best, at least partly because it was done on the thinnest of shoestrings, but it was a good learning experience for CREST.

From his regular attendance at PERB seminars, Eric got the idea of a training tape on mediation. PERB agreed to underwrite the production costs, and the result, called **Five Mediation Vignettes**, is an instructive and often entertaining illustration of various mediation techniques. The technical quality is first-rate, and both the dialogue and acting are realistic. Eric wrote the script (which involves negotiations in the City of — you guessed it — Bison Falls), deliberately including both constructive and dubious mediation activities. The shooting was done in Eric's house with a cast of local characters, many of them are familiar to IRRA regulars. The Union team includes Danny Jinks (CSEA) playing the aggressive field rep, Cliff Suggs (FMCS) playing the grizzled Local President and chief negotiator, and arbitrator Evelyn

## Eric Lawson *Cont.*

Hartman playing the neophyte bargaining team member. The management team features Norm Stocker (Town of Tonawanda) playing the crusty curmudgeon Finance Director (what do you mean, he wasn't acting?), Joe Randazzo (Flaherty, Cohen et al.) playing (what else?) the smooth lawyer-negotiator, and Judith Peters (Better Business Bureau) playing the former Labor Relations Director always wanting to confuse the issue with facts. The mediator's name in the tape is Rick Larson (guess who?), alternately effective and bumbling, the narrator is Mary Thomas Scott, and articulate commentary is provided by PERB Chairman Harold Newman. Anybody involved in training neutrals, or indeed teaching people who want to learn about mediation, ought to take a look at this tape. (It's available from CREST, 418 Linwood Ave., Buffalo 14209.)

Eric allowed that while CREST doesn't have any major new ventures on the front burner, he himself has developed a fascination for the application of ADR techniques to matrimonial disputes. The idea here is not to keep the parties together, but to make the breakup as civilized and free of acrimony as possible. The neutral, acting as mediator, helps the parties reach agreement on such issues as divisions of assets, custody, and visitation rights. Eric has been retained in this capacity in a couple of cases, and he has written a major article on the subject that will be coming out in the Erie County Bar Association *Bulletin*. Eric notes that there is evidence of the effectiveness of the techniques as measured by the reactions of the parties, the frequency of settlement, and the fidelity to the settlement (as compared, say, with a court-ordered outcome).

With all of his activities, Eric hasn't yet had time to work out his plans for the IRRA, but if his general diligence and commitment to tasks are any sign, we can surely expect some interesting initiatives in 1987-1988. The rest of us may be running to keep up.



## Upcoming Events

**The Center for Management Development at the UB School of Management** has several seminars scheduled that may be of interest to IRRA members. All are full day offerings and cost \$225. Topics include "Project Management" (Feb. 23, taught by Jim Lewis), "Basic Supervision" (March 23, instructor to be announced), "How to Build and Manage a Winning Team" (taught by Lou Imundo), "Managing Priorities" (taught by Jim Lewis), and "Dealing With the Difficult Employee" (taught by Jim Lewis). Further information may be obtained by calling 636-3200.

**The Buffalo Area Chamber of Commerce** will have its annual Safety and Health Workshop at the Convention Center on January 15. The theme will be "OSHA Record Keeping."

On February 24, the Chamber is sponsoring a special seminar on "Personnel Practices and Pitfalls in Small Business." The moderator will be Tom Gill of the law firm Saperston, Day. Those interested should contact Pat Sullivan at 852-7100.

**The Western New York Institute for Dispute Settlement** will be offering several Arbitration Seminars in Buffalo. All will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and are priced at \$90.00. Topics include "Arbitration Practice" (January 8), "Arbitration Procedure" (January 9), "Discipline and Discharge" (March 5), "Management Rights: Standards for Interpreting Contract Language" (April 2), and "Case Workshop" (May 14). Instructors for all seminars are Don Goodman and Tom Rinaldo. For further information and to register call 884-6733 or 285-7172.

The Spring semester of 1987 promises to be a busy one for the **Labor Studies Program at Erie Community College**. Course offerings will include "Topics in Labor Law I," "Grievance Procedure and Arbitration," and "Women in American Labor." The latter course will be offered in both the day and evening sessions. These courses are designed specifically for the Labor Studies Program. Students are given an

## Upcoming Events *Cont.*

opportunity to examine the advances already made by the labor movement, to strengthen their skills in current labor relations practices, and to explore trends, strategies, and goals for the future. Those interested in the Spring courses or in the Labor Studies Program in general should call Barry Nowicki at 842-2770.

**The 56th Annual Convention of the Association of Labor Relations Agencies**, hosted by the New York State Public Employment Relations Board, will be held in Albany on July 26-31, 1987. ALRA members include labor relations professionals from governmental agencies at the federal, state, and local levels in the U.S. and Canada. The group gathers annually to participate in professional development activities, exchange ideas, and engage in social activities. Of special interest to IRRRA members is the Advocate's Day Program (July 27). One of the themes of conference will be the civil rights of employees (such as drug and alcohol testing). Among the national speakers on the program will be Lynn Williams, President of the United Steelworkers Union. The cost for Advocate's Day is \$85, which includes lunch, reception, and materials. The cost for the full conference is \$175, which includes several meals, conference registration, and some social activities. Hotel prices at the Albany Hilton, where the convention will be held, are in the \$66-70 range. For more information, call Marilyn Zahm or Chuck Leonard at PERB's Buffalo office, 847-3449.

## Cornell Launches Special Training Program Hazardous Wastes

The New York State School of Industrial & Labor Relations at Cornell has recently received a grant from the New York State Department of labor to provide consulting and training about chemical hazards at the workplace. The program's director, Dr. Jim Platner, told COMMON GROUND that the venture has three client groups: small businesses (currently defined as having 100 or fewer employees), labor unions, and state and local governments (as employers).

The services are free except for the cost of transportation and materials.

Businesses are served through the Council of Small Business Employers (COSBE), and unions through such consortiums as the Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health (WNYCOSH). The program provides consulting services as well as training of supervisors and union officials. The goals are chiefly to advise clients about their rights and responsibilities under New York's "right-to-know" law and about the specific hazards they are likely to face in their particular areas or industries. The program will also run open seminars, such as one on "Workplace Chemical Hazard Information for Small Businesses" scheduled for February 4 at the Sheraton East.

The program was initiated in September 1986 and is funded for a year, although Dr. Platner advises that funding for a second year has been appropriated. IRRRAers desiring further information should contact Dr. Platner or Nellie Brown at 842-1124.

# \$\$

## Financial Report

We have managed to stay solvent. For the number mavens among you, here are the details:

Opening Balance: 7/1/86 . . . . .	\$ 9,116.59
Receipts . . . . .	4,006.16
Dues, etc.	3,791.50
Interest	214.66
Disbursements . . . . .	2,784.28
Summer Picnic	939.45
Printing	430.00
National Dues	186.00
Postage	330.00
Sept. Dinner	841.23
Miscellaneous	57.60
Closing Balance: 10/31/86 . . . . .	10,338.47

## Henry T. Schiro 1929-1986

Henry,

"I loved to hear him laugh!"

I first met Hank at an arbitration hearing and I knew immediately that he was a first-rate labor advocate and later I learned that he was also a first-rate person.

Henry Schiro, International Representative of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers, was one of the finest local labor leaders in common memory. He earned his reputation as a tough, honest negotiator, a skillful advocate at the arbitration table and a hard working representative for his membership.

Hank worked for his people. If there was an issue, problem or crisis that in any way affected his industry, he was always there making sure that something was done. He knew more than most chemists about what affected his workers, most of whom were involved with products that might have an influence on their health, now or in the future. He represented them with a knowledge and enthusiasm which was a wonder to watch. He was at home in the political world as well. He never missed a chance to chair a meeting, write a bill or raise funds needed to advance his cause.

And he had enormous skill in dealing with people. I saw him control and angry drunk at a public meeting; the crowd sat in awe of his tact and the heavy drinker left convinced that he had won his point. Of course, he had not; Hank saw to that.

Hank joined our IRRA Chapter when a small group of friends convinced him that we needed his input. During the year of his presidency a new enthusiasm returned to our programs and set the standards for a new level of excellence.

Beyond all of the above, I remember Hank mostly as a wonderful man, married to a beautiful lady and a true friend. The last time we talked he scolded me for not taking care of myself and warned me to follow without question my doctor's directions. I knew then of his health problems and I understood that he was really sharing with me his most personal concerns and fears.

I will remember Henry for all his wonderful qualities and the mark he left on all of us, but I will remember most the sound of his laugh.

"I loved to hear him laugh!"

Jim McDonnell

## In The News

On October 10, long time IRRA member GUS HEIN received the Legion of Merit Medal from the U.S. Army for his 34 years of distinguished service to the Army and the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. The Medal is a symbol of high achievement, ranking just below the Silver Star in the ranking of military awards. October 10 was declared "Col. Gus Hein Day" by Mayor Griffin. Gus has received numerous other commendations for his work in the army, and he is the West Point Regional Coordinator for the five WNY Congressional districts. The IRRA knows Gus better as the Vice President of Personnel and Labor Relations for Niagara Frontier Transit Metro System. COMMON GROUND joins Gus's many friends in both the labor relations and service communities in extending heartiest congratulations.

On November 10-13, the National Association of Area Labor-Management Committees, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Labor, sponsored a training program for new LMC executive directors in Louisville. IRRA Vice President BOB AHERN was tapped as one of the trainers for this program. Bob was the first President of the National Association and serves on its Board of Directors. COMMON GROUND salutes Bob for his continuing efforts on behalf of labor peace and cooperation.



## Whatever Turns You On

Tom Monaghan of the UAW tells a story about Bill Colbath, an administrative assistant to then Vice President Owen Bieber and a lawyer by training. It seems that in the heat of some delicate negotiations the Union had scored a major coup. Said Bill: "This excites me so much I feel like suing somebody!"

## Welcome to New Members

The IRRAWNY continues to bring in new members. Let's offer a hearty welcome to the folks who have come aboard since last July. They include:

Stanley Balko,

Assistant Business Manager of IBEW Local 41.

Robert Boroszko,

President of Steelworkers Local 897.

Margaret Hoffman,

Personnel Director of the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Frederick Huston,

Personnel Director for Flexovit USA, Inc. in Angola.

Paul Mathias,

an attorney with Blair, Martin & Messina in Buffalo.

Gerald Miller,

a Vice President of National Fuel Gas.

Richard Pivetz,

Administrator of management training programs for Cornell's ILR School in Buffalo.

Dennis Seeley,

a Vice President for National Fuel Gas.

Deborah Serafin,

Director of Personnel for Mount St. Mary's Hospital in Lewiston

Andrew Smith,

a Student at Niagara University.

Wayne Strong,

Manager at CPC Tonawanda Engine Plant.

### IRRA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

#### CHAIRMEN: 1986-87

**President:** Lloyd E. Hahn

**President-elect:** Eric Lawson

**Executive Vice President:** David Keicher

**Executive Secretary-Treas.:** Norman Stocker

**Chairman, Nominating Committee:** David Keicher

**Chairman, Membership Committee:** Eric Lawson

**Chairman, Awards Committee:** Marilyn Zahm

**Chairman, Program Committee:** Lloyd Hahn

**Editor, COMMON GROUND:** Howard Foster

**Editorial Coordinator:** Linda Ochocinski

