

THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT

Published by Iowa City Democratic Socialists of America, 112 S. Dodge, Iowa City IA 52240. Labor donated. Subscriptions \$5.

LABOR DAY 1986

Labor Day Greetings from *The Prairie Progressive*, a new newsletter published by Iowa City DSA. We hope eventually to serve the Democratic Left throughout Iowa by providing a forum for communication between activists who now work separately for women's rights, peace in Central America and around the world, civil rights for working people and their unions, civil liberties for gays and lesbians, a clean environment, a revived left-labor movement in the Democratic Party and other parties, the elimination of racism, and an economy that provides a fair share for working people and a decent standard of living for everyone. We also hope *The Prairie Progressive* will get better with each issue. If you like what you see, please subscribe or volunteer to help. Suggestions and contributions are always welcome. •

LABOR DAY GREETINGS FROM THE FOLLOWING SUPPORTERS OF *THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE*:

Jan Corderman
David Leshtz
Karen Kubby
John Schacht
David Tucker
Tom Jacobs
Sheldon Pollock
Ross Atkinson

Karen Massetti-Miller
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124 E. Washington
Iowa City
351-3500

“In Solidarity More than Ever”

Carpenter's Local 1260

Iowa City

Barry Kucera

Business Representative

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

REGULAR MEETINGS:

AFSCME Local 183, 2nd Wed., Eagles Lodge, 7:30

AFSCME Local 12, 1st Thurs., IC Rec Ctr, 7:30

Amnesty International, 2nd Thurs., Old Brick, 7:30

Democratic Socialists of America, 1st Tues., IC Pub Lib, 7:30

Iowa City Fed of Labor, AFL-CIO, 3rd Thurs, IC Rec Ctr, 7:30

Women's Resource and Action Center, Brown Bag Series on Sexism, Wed. at 12:10 PM, WRAC, 130 N. Madison.

SEPTEMBER

September 7: Benefit for the *Iowa Idea*, state paper of the Iowa Socialist Party, 7:00 PM at The Mill, \$3. Women in Arms, Charity Grant & Guy Drollinger, Tess Catalano, Rosie Gowdry and others.

September 10: Deadline for applications for one of three vacancies on the Iowa City Committee on Community Needs. The CCN is a citizens' committee that advises the city council on how to allocate Community Development Block Grant funds, which are designed to benefit low- and moderate-income people. This is an excellent way to find out about how city government works. Potential city council candidates, take note! For more information, contact Karen Kubby, the current chair. The application forms may be picked up at the Civic Center.

September 10: Deadline for applications to serve on the Advisory Board of the Women's Resource & Action Center. For more information, call 353-6265 or stop by the Center at 130 N. Madison.

September 10: 12:10 PM, WRAC Brown Bag Series: "Women—Fighting Back," JoAnn Castagna, 130 N. Madison.

September 17: 12:10 PM, WRAC Brown Bag Series: "Sexism—The Legal Oppression of Women," June Cargile and Martha Chamallas, 130 N. Madison.

September 20: Johnson County Democratic Fall Barbeque, Izaak Walton League.

September 24: 12:10 PM, WRAC Brown Bag Series: "Sexism: A Cultural View," 130 N. Madison.

OCTOBER

October 16-18: National University Rural Crisis Conference at UI

October 16: 4:00 PM EPB 90. Marc Richie, Minn. Dept. of Ag., "On the Economics of the Rural Crisis."

October 16: 7:30, Van Allen Lec. Room 1, Helen Waller, President, National Save the Family Farm Coalition.

October 17: 7:30, Van Allen Lec. Room 1, Senator Tom Harkin.

October 17/18: Workshops on farm/labor coalition building (Dave Willoughby, UAW); Arms Race (Billy Marchick, AFSC Des M.); Environmentalism (Dixon Terry, Iowa Farm Unity Coalition Pres.), Rural Crisis and the University (Dave Ostendorf, Prairiefire); Women and the Ag Crisis (Linda Terry); Ag Crisis and Stress (Joann Dvorak, Farmer Helping Farmer); Student Organizing (Dan Levitas, Prairiefire).

October 18: Democratic Party Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner, Des Moines.

October 20: 7:30 PM, IC Public Library, Room A, a talk by Thami Sindelo of the **International Bureau of the African National Congress**, Lusaka, Zambia. Sponsored by DSA.

October 20: Last day to register to vote by postcard.

October 25: Last day to register to vote.

October 27: 1:00 PM, International Center, 2nd Floor Jeff Bldg., Daniel Nuñez, President of Farmers and Ranchers Union of Nicaragua (UNAG).

Prairie Fights

15 S. Dubuque
Iowa City

A F S C M E

50 YEARS CARING FOR AMERICA

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

LOCAL 183
JOHNSON COUNTY AREA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES
P.O. Box 2357
Iowa City, IA 52244

Founded 1974

CALENDAR OF EVENTS CONTINUED

NOVEMBER

November 4: ELECTION DAY. A new law allows you to vote at your current residence *even if you have moved*, as long as you were registered at your previous residence *within the county*. However, you might have to cast a challenge ballot. The safest thing to do is re-register each time you move.

November 7: 8:00 PM, MacBride Auditorium, Benefit Concert for Central America Solidarity Movements. Stone Soup and Trapezoid.

November 13/14: Labor Law Update for Unionists, UI Labor Center, N251 Oakdale Hall. Simultaneous workshops for private- and public-sector unionists. OSHA update; Right to Know implementation. For more information, call 353-5355.

November 21: Celebrate the FIFTEENTH ANNIVERSARY of the New Pioneer Cooperative Society at the banquet and dance at Old Brick. Tickets **must be bought in advance** at the New Pioneer, 22 S. Van Buren.

Prospects for Progressive Politics in Iowa City

By Sheldon Pollock

Viewed as a whole, the progressive community of Iowa City is lamentably disorganized. Communication between its different sectors is rudimentary and haphazard; only a fraction of a potentially huge base has been consolidated; inroads into established political power at the local and state level have been negligible.

The forces for social transformation found in Iowa City include the non-interventionist and solidarity groups working on Central America; the feminist and, particularly, the lesbian community; the freeze movement; the left wing of the Democratic Party, including possibly some labor unions. The student movement at the University is at present negligible.

The most significant factor retarding the growth in influence and effectiveness of all these constituencies is their mutual isolation. Aside from numerically insignificant exceptions, there is little cross-over between groups.

If we are to move forward in Iowa City—and there would be no point discussing this if the potential for

movement were not really there—this exclusivity must be replaced with a flexible though coherent structure, one that allows diversity within unity.

The Rainbow Coalition suffers from potentially debilitating organizational and leadership problems at the national level. Iowa City's progressive community should first develop an indigenous structure, while understanding that a national coalition has precisely the same logic and necessity in its context as a local coalition has in its context.

The slogan might be, "No more dogma. Neither right nor left, but forward."

An Iowa City Progressive Coalition should include every sector prepared to accept and assertively promote a minimal set of principles, e.g.: fundamental racial, gender, and affectional-preference equality; nuclear disarmament; de-militarization of the economy; global non-interventionism; environmental responsibility (in particular, anti-nuclearism). Among the tasks of

the Coalition at the theoretical level would be to argue out the inter-relatedness among these issues, and so to re-affirm continuously its own *raison d'être*.

The Coalition should be conceived in ways that avoid the old and unusable conceptualizations and nomenclature of the past; the slogan might be, "No more dogma. Neither right nor left, but forward."

The perennial controversy over electoral and other avenues of political change should as far as possible be suspended. The Coalition should work on every front available to attain its goals: *mass education and organizing* (including an ICPC newspaper) to open up a progressive political culture to a larger population eagerly seeking to recover a sense of community and direction: *direct action* for areas closed to political change; and, where appropriate, *electoral politics*, beginning at the city and county level.

The late 1980s and beyond will be a time of increasing US militarism abroad and regressive social policies at home. We should be ready with a mass coalition to channel emerging energies in a new political direction for our community. •

Simmy's

A CASUAL RESTAURANT BAR

208 NORTH LINN STREET

IOWA CITY, IOWA

338-0519

Laborer's Local #1238

IOWA CITY

Bill Gerhard

Business Representative

One Woman's View

By Judy Wilson

In 1980, I had the distinct pleasure of hearing Rev. Gilbert Dawes speak before a UAW gathering in Des Moines. Bear in mind he was sharing the stage with Jane Fonda; in my viewpoint, he upstaged her. Not by design I'm sure, but simply by the fact that it was so refreshing to hear a Methodist minister talk as he did. He talked of class warfare, and, while it wasn't and isn't a new discussion, his words were strong ones that left a clear and simple message: Corporate America keeps winning!

Have you ever thought of why, as workers—professional or non-professional, white-, pink-, blue-collar, we are *all* workers—we are not paid on a daily basis? Corporate America works off our money by paying us bi-monthly.

Have you ever wondered why high school students aren't taught more about the history of the American labor movement? Few of us stop to think about the struggle for the minimum wage, enacted in 1938. Yet, since 1950, we've only come from \$.75 per hour to \$3.35 per hour. I imagine the number of individuals who work for minimum wage is an absolutely staggering figure.

How much thought is going into the current class warfare taking place between rural and urban dweller? The income gap is getting wider and the benefits of our democracy fewer for many who can least afford to have less of *anything!*

What does corporate America want from the workers, those who produce goods and services? Their

answer is always: "We want the best service or product developed at the most efficient price," right? Every statistic in the country proves that we, the American workers, whether we belong to organized labor or not, have given that to our employers, whether they be public or private. What has the worker gotten in return? Corporate America has given us polluted air and water. Who then is left to pay the bill for the cleanup? The worker!

Corporate America wants parents to leave their children at home or in privately provided-for day-care facilities and join the 40-hour work week; yet, when the worker asks for workplace child-care facilities, we are told by the "company store" that "we just can't afford that but really wish that we could"—as they write the check for new corporate jets and lease cars for every junior executive imaginable. These too come at the worker's expense.

My belief is that the majority of Americans will want to work—when given the opportunity to do work that makes sense, yields a decent living, and doesn't hurt others. We watch on the sidelines as corporate America keeps building more and more office buildings, high-rise apartments, and bigger plants; we hope with all our hearts these will bring jobs to us, to keep the promises so often made.

But because our society isn't into five- or ten-year growth planning, particularly at the public sector level, corporate America overbuilds for our existing infrastructures. Most American cities can't handle the loads on their sewer and water lines, let alone the increased usage

of the road systems. Corporate America gets their share at the expense of others.

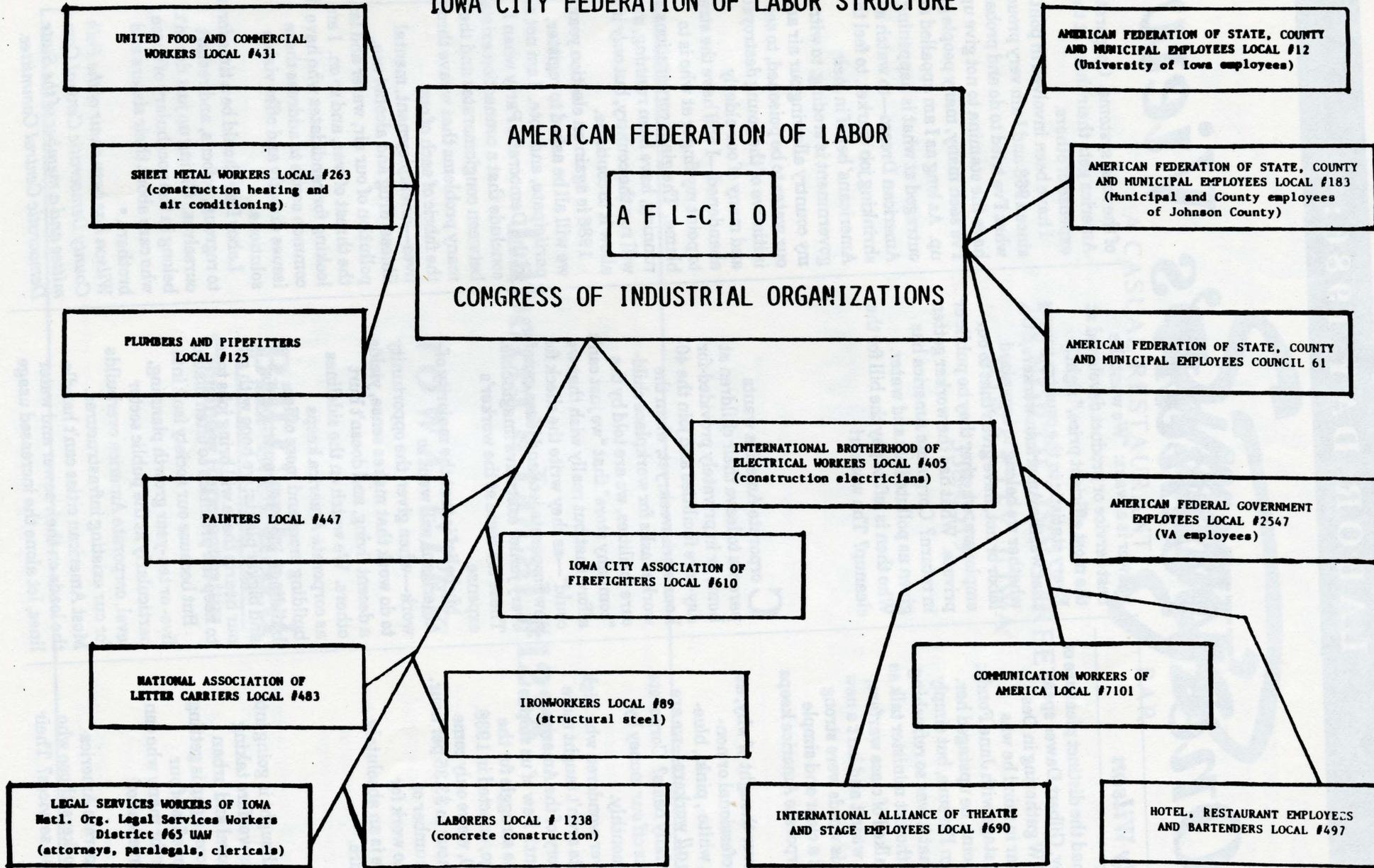
I have been involved in politics since 1968 and I am very proud of what I've tried to do and probably have the stamina to not give up, but I've seen many, many people give up. As long as I am appalled and outraged at what is happening to the American Dream—to watch a shrinking job market, to feel that Americans' belief in *their* government is eroding, to witness my country allowing our air and our water to be poisoned, to see the initiative of the young destroyed and many of our elderly abandoned—I will have the strength to point my finger at who is to blame. The giant corporations are running, have been running, and will run the country, but *only* if we allow it to continue.

1986 is again an election year and we will all be asked to register, participate, and vote. I am not alone in the Democratic Party when I conclude that a connection exists between conglomerates and the many problems that weave through the fabric of each of our lives—unemployment, mental illness, drug and alcohol use, pollution of our air, water and land, the threat of war, and so on. I am looking for candidates who have the common sense to address these issues directly and offer viable solutions.

Labor Day should be a time for us to regroup, refocus, and restart ourselves. Giving up just doesn't belong in the vocabulary of those who care about their sisters and brothers. •

Wilson has been chair of the Polk County Democratic Central Committee and a member of the State Democratic Central Committee.

IOWA CITY FEDERATION OF LABOR STRUCTURE



THE IOWA CITY FEDERATION OF LABOR CONSISTS OF 17 AFFILIATES TO THE AFL-CIO. SEPARATE LOCALS SERVE THE NEEDS OF THEIR MEMBERS AND ELECT DELEGATES TO THE CITY-FED BODY.

THE IOWA CITY FEDERATION OF LABOR PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE, LABOR HISTORY COMMEMORATION, LABOR MOVEMENT ADVOCACY, AND POLITICAL ACTION.

Central America Solidarity Committee

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Duane Rohovit

**Tim Sodawasser
Davenport City Council**

Shel Stromquist

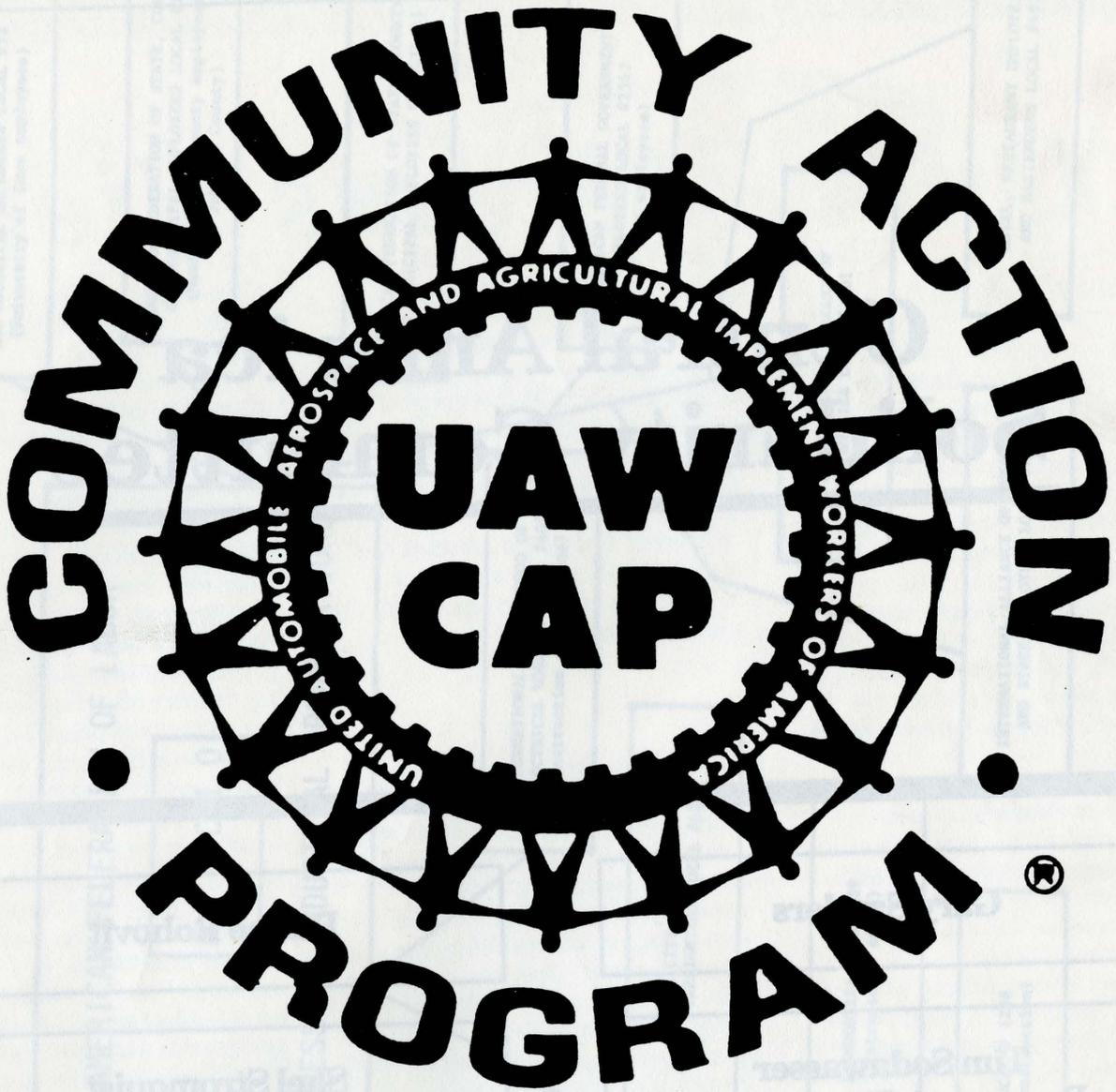
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Karen Kubby

**"This, too, shall pass.
Keep the faith."
Kim Jones**

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715 River Street
Iowa City, IA
(319) 337-9845**

IOWA



CHUCK GIFFORD, PRESIDENT

THE IOWA CITY FEDERATION OF LABOR PARTICIPATES IN COMMUNITY SERVICE,
LABOR HISTORY COMMISSION, LABOR HISTORY ADVOCACY, AND POLITICAL ACTION.