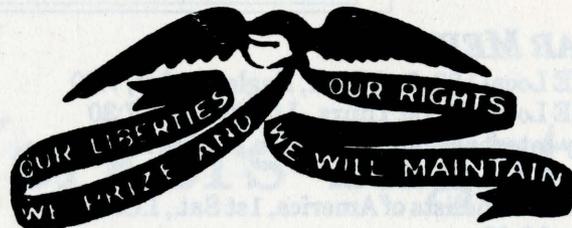


# THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE



**A NEWSLETTER FOR IOWA'S DEMOCRATIC LEFT**

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## THE PRESS CITIZEN:

# All the News that Fits

**THE** "new" *Iowa City Press-Citizen* takes the Gannett tradition seriously. Promising to give its readers "more" of everything, the *Press-Citizen* actually gives: more quotations from *People Magazine*, more horoscopes, more two-paragraph summaries of world events, more celebrity tidbits, more excerpts from the life of Frank Sinatra (also available to Iowa Citizens in the Gannett-owned *Des Moines Register*), more "ask a stupid question" contests . . . in short, more McNews from the nation's largest purveyor of the informational equivalent of fast food. Newsburgers and fries have their place, but in the case of the *P.C.*, more is less.

Under the stewardship of managing editor Lark "Boredom" Borden, the paper has gone from bad to worse. For example, coverage of county government is nearly non-existent. City Council activities receive some coverage in the

### COMMENTARY

BY "PRAIRIE DOG"

**"... In short, more McNews from the nation's largest purveyor of the informational equivalent of fast food..."**

*Oppressed-Citizen*, but we rarely read of individual votes on specific issues. The council is in the process of spending large sums of public money on the few people who use our public airport, while planning to reduce our bus system to a skeleton service during mid-day and evening hours. Who on the council supports this public transit policy, and who opposes it? Don't trust the *PC* to tell you.

AFSCME Local 183 sponsored a forum in October called "Alternatives to Cutbacks:

Preserving City Services in the Eighties." A panel of five articulate community leaders, including State Representative Minnette Doderer, exchanged ideas with a vocal audience. The *Press-Citizen* couldn't manage to send a reporter, but interested citizens can enjoy a videotape of the forum by watching Channel 29 on public-access cable TV.

Also in October, a member of the African National Congress spoke to over sixty people on the current state of apartheid and of her personal experiences as a politically active woman in South Africa. You didn't read about this DSA-sponsored forum in the *Depressed-Citizen*, but an excellent account appears in the November 14 issue of the *City High Little Hawk* (the best paper in town, and not owned by Gannett).

If you're aware of something newsworthy which was ignored by the *Press-Citizen*, tell the *Prairie Progressive*. Inquiring minds want to know! •

# Calendar of Events

## REGULAR MEETINGS:

- AFSCME Local 183, 2nd Wed., Eagles Lodge, 7:30
- AFSCME Local 12, 1st Thurs., I.C. Rec. Ctr. 7:30
- Amnesty International, 2nd Thurs., Old Brick, 7:30.
- Democratic Socialists of America, 1st Sat., I.C. Pub. Lib., 10:00
- Iowa City Fed. of Labor, AFL-CIO, 3rd Thurs., I.C. Rec. Ctr., 7:30
- Women's Resource & Action Center, Brown Bag Series on Ageism and Classism, Wed. at 12:10 during term, WRAC, 130 N. Madison.

## DECEMBER

- December 10: WRAC Brown Bag Series, film: "The Elders" 12:10 PM.
- December 11: Central America Solidarity Committee, Beans and Rice Supper, Hillel House, 6:00 PM., followed by planning meeting for the mid-January public protest against deployment to Honduras of 389th Battalion of Army Reserve in Dubuque.
- December 13: Democratic State Central Committee Meeting, 2116 Grand Ave., Des Moines, 10:00 AM. Open to the public.
- December 14: Bread and Roses Local of Iowa Socialist Party, Regular Meeting, I.C. Pub. Lib., 2:00 PM.
- December 14: BEYOND WAR will present an award to the foreign minister of Venezuela for his role in the Contadora process. 3:30-5:30 PM, Des Moines Convention Center.
- December 14: Bill of Rights Birthday Party, 4211 Grand, Des Moines, 7:00 PM. Sponsor: Iowa Socialist Party. Speaker: Cryss Farley, ICLU.
- December 17: Planning Meeting for Iowa Central America Network, People's Church, Cedar Rapids, 7:00 PM.
- December 20: GWEN Tower Vigil, Mechanicsville, 12 noon. Sponsor: Peace Alliance.
- December 21: Citizens for Peace Pot Luck and Silent Auction, St. Timothy's United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, 6:00 PM.

## JANUARY

- January 11: Iowa Socialist Party State Committee, I.C. Pub. Lib., 2:00 p.m. Open to public.
- Mid-January: Public protest against the deployment of army reserve troops from Dubuque in Honduras. For more information, call: 338-4169.
- January 18: Citizens for Peace, St. Timothy's United Methodist Church, Cedar Falls, 7:00 P.M. Speaker: Dr. Basheer Nijim of UNI on the Middle East Peace Process.
- January 21: WRAC Brown Bag Series, "Class, Class Consciousness and Classism: Definitions for Change," 12:10 p.m.
- January 28: WRAC Brown Bag Series, "Working on Class," 12:10 p.m.

## Announcements

**TUITION INCREASES.** The Board of Regents will consider a proposed 12% tuition increase for in-state students during the week of December 15. Please help fight this proposal to restrict education to those who can pay for it. Contact Mike Reck, U. of I. Collegiate Associations Council, 353-5467; Gordon Fisher, LASA, 353-6605; or Joe Hansen, Student Senate, 353-5461.

**U. OF I. PROGRESSIVE FACULTY NETWORK.** An informal Progressive Faculty Network to address issues such as tuition, arms-related research, and the CIA on campus is in formation. For more information contact Jeff Cox, 353-8975; Sheldon Pollock, 353-7125; Margery Wolf, 353-6624; or Stephen Vlastos, 353-6628.

**OUT OF IOWA.** American Gothic Couple in Safari Garb. 5-Color art on quality white t-shirt. S-M-L-XL. Exclusively at Prairie Lights Books in Iowa City, or send \$9.95 to IOWARES, Box 1945, Iowa City, IA 52244.

**UNION LABEL SHOPPER.** For a free copy of this new union label mail-order catalog, phone (515) 472-5662, or write American Union Shopper, 508 N. Second St., Fairfield, IA 52556.

**1987 WAR RESISTER LEAGUE CALENDARS.** Available for \$6.95 from the Iowa Socialist Party. Call Karen Kubby, 338-1321.

**SUBSCRIBE TO THE PRAIRIE PROGRESSIVE FOR 1987.** Send \$5.00 to DSA, 728 1/2 Oakland, Iowa City, IA 52240.



# Any Hope for Workers' Rights?

■ *By Matt Glasson*

One of the hallmarks of the Reagan Administration has been its willingness to put the foxes in charge of the chicken coop. That has certainly been the case with the National Labor Relations Board. Reagan's appointments to the Board have been noteworthy chiefly for their violent opposition to the rights of workers and their unions.

These attitudes have had a profound effect on the Board's interpretation of labor laws. There has been a consistent disregard for precedent. Chairman Dotson has publicly stated that the Board under his leadership has reversed precedential cases in eleven major areas.

A study conducted by the AFL-CIO Lawyers Coordinating Committee cites more than 30 cases in which significant precedent was reversed, including some precedents which date back to the 1930s and 1940s. The overall decision record is just as bad.

Prior to 1982, the Board consistently found that 80%-85% of complaints against employers were well-founded. This figure remained fairly constant under Democratic- and Republican-appointed Boards. Under Chairman Dotson, only 50% of the complaints against employers have been successful.

While these statistics are appalling, they are not as bad as they might be. Unions are still successful about half the time. Some of those decisions are significant (though none of the precedent changes have been

favorable to unions). Four examples from 1986 follow.

- In *Restaurant Corp. of America* the Board upheld the rights of a union organizer to talk to other employees about joining the union on company time even though that violated a no-solicitation rule. Unfortunately this decision was reversed by the D. C. Court of Appeals.

- In *Carson Cable TV* the Board found that five separate cable TV companies really constituted a single employer for collective bargaining purposes, and found that a single bargaining unit for all five would be appropriate. The separate companies had apparently been set up (in part) to make it difficult for the union to organize them. The Board focused on the fact that a single "management company" set labor relations policy for all the separate companies. This decision was affirmed by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.



***"...If the evidence is strong enough, the Board will still do its duty and enforce the law...."***

- The Board gave a strong reprimand to the employer in *Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital*. During the course of a strike, the hospital administrator had called many of the striking employees and asked them to resign from the union and come back to work. After a majority of the workers crossed the picket lines, the

hospital announced that it would no longer recognize the union. It then threw out the contract and set employment conditions on its own terms. The Board found that the solicitation of resignation was an unfair labor practice. It ordered the employer to continue to recognize and bargain with the union and to undo all the changes it had made in terms and conditions of employment.

- Perhaps the most startling decision from the Board this year was *B & P Trucking*. In that case a trucking company closed its terminal in Sioux City rather than face an NLRB election. It then subcontracted all of the business which would have been done out of that terminal. The company claimed that it had *not* done so to avoid the election, but merely because it was losing money on its Sioux City operation. The Board was not persuaded. It found the plant closing and subcontracting to be an unfair labor practice. The employer was ordered to reopen the Sioux City terminal, rehire the employees, and to recognize and bargain with the union—without requiring the union to complete the election process! Although the Board has this power, it has rarely exercised it under Chairman Dotson.

These decisions, in four different areas of labor law, show that if the evidence is strong enough, the Board will still do its duty and enforce the law. More than that, they show that the basic structure of labor law exists and can be rebuilt when we throw these rascals out. •

*Cedar Rapids attorney Matt Glasson edits Labor Law Hotline.*

# Can We Save Our Bus System?

By Frank DePirro

With no Federal energy conservation policy and the concomitant trickling off of Federal Revenue Sharing funds to the cities, local governments are quilting a patchwork of service cuts, reduced labor costs, and higher taxes. The quilting continues until some indefinite future when Economic Development becomes a verb and develops.

Transit systems in small metropolitan areas like Iowa City expect large cuts in FY88. The City of Iowa City is currently revising its FY88 budget to close the gap on a near million-dollar deficit projected after the death of revenue sharing in October and the adoption of a swimming pool referendum earlier this year.

At its September 15 meeting, the City Council directed City Manager Steve Atkins to include in his overall budget revision \$362,000 in savings from the projected \$2.1 million Iowa City Transit budget. In a September memo to the Council, Atkins had outlined a five-point plan "to establish the financial health of the system, and maintain our other municipal services." The first four points detail a plan to finance a transit reserve fund, using end-of-the-year transit fund balances and \$200,000 each year from the projected \$300,000 parking fund balance through FY91, \$100,000 for transit operations and \$100,000 for the reserve fund. Atkins estimates that by FY92 the transit reserve fund would have accumulated \$850,000, resulting in annual interest revenue of \$65,000.

The fifth point in Atkins's plan, service reductions, was criticized by citizens and bus drivers at the September 25th council meeting. Atkins's primary recommendation is to institute hourly midday service from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. every day of the year. He also wants to combine the N. Dubuque and Manville routes, combining evening routes, and cut Saturday night service.

Labor and transit management have been creating an alternative to Atkins's plan, to be submitted to Atkins and the Council the week of December 1 prior to an as-yet unscheduled public hearing on transit service cuts. The goals of this alternative plan are to continue to provide reliable, integrated transit service in this season of budget cuts; to minimize the inevitable decrease in usage that comes with service cuts, which would only justify further cuts; to save jobs and the quality of those jobs; and, essential to the plan's adoption, to save real money.

Given that Atkins's first four points are adopted, labor and transit management recommend the following:

- Maintain half-hour midday service Monday through Friday.
- Provide hourly midday service 53 days a year when the schools are out of session.
- Combine N. Dubuque and Manville routes.
- Pair half-hour Hawkeye service with hourly Wardway and 7th Ave. service.
- Maintain the integrity of night service but economize by using five buses instead of seven.
- Eliminate Saturday night service.
- Charge \$.50 fare instead of \$.40 on Saturdays.

It is estimated that this plan would save \$226,189 while providing better service than Atkins's plan. •

Frank DePirro is President of AFSCME Local 183.