



# HIT THE BRICKS

Building Trades News & Commentary from the Industrial Workers of the World I.U. 330

## The Right Tools For The Right Job

By George Dozsa

Even as we grow and start to organize after decades of inactivity we are in danger of falling apart at the seams from the inability of administering the shops and campaigns we organize. For us to succeed in the very humble task of organizing workers on the job (our apriori purpose) we must not only be prepared to fight for our rights but also to organize for sustained, and sustainable growth. If we are to succeed in rebuilding our union we must commit ourselves to principled pragmatism and administrative skills. The two may seem odd when discussing a resurgent IWW but are never the less, vital keys to our future success.

Let me start with principled pragmatism. Many of us 330s are dual carders. We are not in the IWW to organize our jobs but because we are drawn to ideals and principles for which the IWW stands. And yet, we often within our own lives long for the “good old days” of strong trade unionism. There is nothing inherently wrong with this, and having worked heavy highway jobs where I made less money for harder work, without breaks while working third shift, it is not only easy to fall into, but also justifiable. But we are not here just for that, we are here to implement industrial democracy. It really doesn't matter how corrupt or reformed the business unions are. At their best the business unions advocate a system of social democracy in which the government runs a kind of welfare state for the benefit of the masses. It does not deal with the inherent imbalance between the working and employing class. Or to put it bluntly, the best we can hope from the labor movement as embodied by the business unions is an effective pressure group for the Democrats (and back in the day, Republicans as well). Don't get me wrong, I've benefited from this pressure and have suffered from its weakness, but regardless of strength or weakness in regards to the fundamental issue of liberty in relation to the job site, the business unions will always come up short. That is the principle.

Now here is the pragmatism. We are so far from being able to affect that change which we envision that it is not even

funny. Were we not dealing with people's livelihoods we would be joke, but we are not. As odd as it may sound for an anti-capitalist union we need to set about the business of building our union in a

way which recognizes the realities which we face today. We also need to not only take a critical look about how we organize, but also how we run our internal affairs. This is not a new problem for us. Even the wobblies of old had the same problem of sustainability. Which is why we've spent over half our union's existence without shops in which we represent workers.

Right now what we need to build the One Big Union is for the rank and file members across the country to start self recognizing as 330s (or 310's etc) and then get in touch with their Industrial Organizing Committee for ways that they can build the OBU.



These ways are simple, but make a world of difference. And that is precisely the point. Activities such as gathering intelligence on local industry, helping call your FWs in 330 to keep them in the loop and volunteer to attend Organizer Trainings are not inherently sexy, but it is precisely these pragmatic activities that can allow us to fulfill our principles. We must shed our quixotic notions of the OBU and start doing phone banks. Not exactly what I signed up for, but it is something that we all must step up to. That is the point of principled pragmatism. It is the recognition that in order fulfill our ideals we must build the infrastructure necessary for us to alter the balance of power on the job.

This sense of pragmatism leads us right into our second point which is paying as much attention to administrative issues as to organizing. While we have programs for teaching the A,E,I,O,U,'s of unionism we still don't comprehensive primer for say, starting a bank account or keeping up with members to ensure member retention. Our officers are extraordinarily ill-prepared for the tasks that await them upon election (hence the recent DOL audit). And those skills start within the IUs. We forget that back in the day the GEB was appointed from the Industrial Union Administrations who would have internal elections for that appointment. So the education of officers starts with us. This is sometimes a difficult task as we are all volunteers and most of us have daytime jobs and families. So yes, we often fall behind schedule on things we say we are going to do (this article is a over a week late in being written), but we must try to follow up and follow through. Just like on the job we must never stop learning and if we don't know something we must take the time to ask and learn. Yes there are pamphlets for delegates but there is currently no training

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# Welcome to the Business-Friendly Carpenter's Union

By David Correia

Today the UBCJ reflects the values of corporate America. In a Business Week article from the late 1990s, McCarron referred to carpenter's union members as his "strong product." "We have a product to deliver," he said "and we have to do it more efficiently." He has sought to position his "product" in the labor market by pitting worker against worker, pursuing growth at all costs, and replacing rank and file unionism with an authoritarian administrative structure.

McCarron has purged the union of dissidents, expelled political opponents and placed disloyal unions in trusteeship. He has removed rank and file carpenters from leadership positions within the union and replaced them with business agents who have never worked as carpenters. He has learned his corporate lessons well.

The changes under McCarron's watch began almost immediately following his election to General President. In 1996 McCarron purged the entire leadership of the New York District Council. He shut down locals and merged District Councils in Michigan, California, Nevada, New England, Pennsylvania and New Jersey into new administrative arrangements under his direct control.

The June 1996 purge of democratically elected New York District Council leaders heralded an astonishing new era in conservative unionism. The tactics, described by rank and file carpenters in a 1998 House Sub-Committee investigation of anti-democratic practices in the UBCJ, were ripped straight from a Pinkerton's playbook. McCarron seized the New York District office in a midnight raid complete with armed loyalists. McCarron's union willingly did the union-busting dirty work long reserved for hired thugs and bought-off politicians. McCarron, lauded by the business press, survived the purges and federal investigations. By displacing the administrative authority of locals and District Councils into regional bodies under his own authority, McCarron has effectively centralized control and undermined rank and file democratic unionism.

Once his authority was established he cozied up to corporate leaders and Republican politicians. He became a frequent companion of former President George W. Bush on Air Force One flights, invited Bush to his Labor Day Picnic and accepted an invitation to speak at Bush's anti-labor 2002 Economic Summit.

McCarron regularly stifles local control and dictates the terms of employment to local unions, using his business (school) agents as enforcers. Locals throughout the US and Canada have complained that McCarron routinely manipulates democratic procedures to deprive union members from voting on union contracts.

McCarron crushed a 1999 wildcat strike in the San Francisco Bay area after union carpenters refused to work under a McCarron-negotiated contract with a local contractor. McCarron sided with the contractor against his own union carpenters and complained that the strikers had caused the business owner to

"lose money for four days you just don't do that."

When British Columbia carpenters revolted against the corporatization of the carpenters union, McCarron redbaited his rank and file carpenters in the press. "There is a high influence of the communist party" in the BC local McCarron deadpanned.

Apparently the campaign in New Mexico is standard operating procedure for McCarron's UBCJ. According to dissident union carpenters in Chicago, it has become routine practice for the union to prey on homeless men as cheap labor to walk fake picket lines.

Union insurgents have recast McCarron's "Organize or Die" slogan as "Organize or Lie".

But McCarron and his flunkies are careful not to lie, of course, or better yet say anything at all, as the autocrats who designed the regressive New Mexico campaign have demonstrated. Meanwhile, the UBCJ panders to hack politicians and non-union contractors.

The corporate friendly leadership of Douglas McCarron places today's labor movement in stark contrast with the radical leadership of people like Eugene V. Debs and Big Bill Haywood. Haywood for example refused to impose labor agreements on rank and file members. "Agreements with capitalists" he once famously said "are the death warrants of labor."

Almost one hundred years later, McCarron has become labor's willing executioner. The union frequently signs concessionary contracts with non-union employers (known derisively by rank and file carpenters as the Rat Brigade) that giveaway overtime pay, construct multiple wage scales, exclude women and minorities and provide for non-union hiring quotas. And he gets these contractors by preying on non-union workers to man his fake picket lines.

One of the most troubling facts in the UBCJ's recent decent into corporate unions is that, in many ways, McCarron's tactics are a logical extension of long-held conservative UBCJ values. The UBCJ invented business unionism. McCarron perfected it. Long known as the "Big Bully" of American labor, the Carpenter's used the political clout that came from long being the largest trade union in the United States to force union contracts on contractors. Once union contracts were established the Carpenter's business agents policed contractors and carpenters alike to enforce the union dictates that governed work on a union job site. The UBCJ has always been pro-business. McCarron's innovation is that he has made the UBCJ not only pro-business but also anti-worker. 🍷

*This is an excerpt from a September 11-13, 2009 CounterPunch article. To see the entire article, visit [www.counterpunch.org/correia09112009.html](http://www.counterpunch.org/correia09112009.html).*



# “The Wobblies Show” Debuts

By Jim Del Duca

The Revolution Will Be Televised! In Billings Montana “The Wobblies Show: Exploring Economic and Social Justice Issues” has debuted on the city’s Community Access cable channel. Produced by local members with the assistance of the Two Rivers GMB of Missoula. The show will potentially reach over thirty thousand households in the metro area. The show’s producers hope to present the show to an even wider audience through rebroadcast on other area community access channels across the state.

The show was a result of the desire to reach more workers with the IWW revolutionary message. The usual method of flyers, posters, and coffee-shop meeting simply wasn’t working effectively to grab the attention of workers. Initially the Billings group considered an FM radio show, but got only the cold shoulder from the local NPR station. However, the community access cable channel was immediately encouraging, with the result being a show slated for weekly airing on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm.

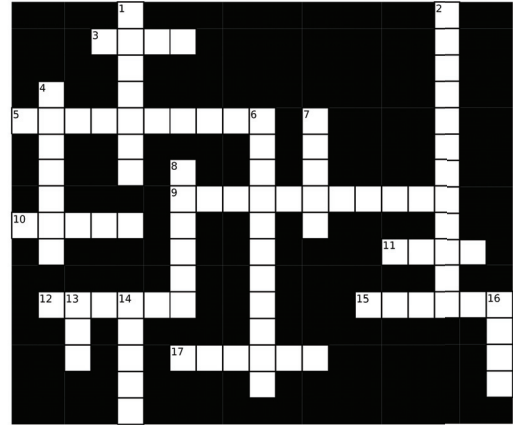
Community access cable is funded and made possible through the franchise agreement between the city government and the cable network. The station operates for the education and service of the citizenry. This meshes perfectly with the OBU policy of Educate, Organize, and Emancipate. A new full-power public access radio station is also under development, and they have been notified that when they are up and running, we want a show there too!

Other Wobblies who are interested in using cable TV outreach are encouraged to contact Billings Delegate Jim Del Duca at <mailto:delducja@gmail.com>delducja@gmail.com or (406) 860-0331. 🌐

## On the Job

Jay

### Terms of the Trade



- |           |   |         |                                    |
|-----------|---|---------|------------------------------------|
| 3 Across  | I'd get angry if I had a short one of these | 1 Down  | The latest version or model        |
| 5 Across  | Karen's and Richard's band                  | 2 Down  | Easiest direction for cutting wood |
| 9 Across  | Not direct                                  | 4 Down  | Assault and _____                  |
| 10 Across | Barter                                      | 6 Down  | Vodka and orange juice             |
| 11 Across | To throw something really hard              | 7 Down  | Slang for prison                   |
| 12 Across | Corporate, social                           | 8 Down  | An emcee who was too legit         |
| 15 Across | Basin or crescent                           | 13 Down | Basic unit of the answer to **     |
| 17 Across | Not alternating                             | 14 Down | _____ Sergeant                     |
|           |   | 16 Down | To break into a computer system    |

## The Right Tools *(continued from page 1)*

programs to help our officers, from delegates to the GST to ensure that we can all do our job to help build the OBU. Now these programs are in the works, but we must be insistent on the General Administration on following through and providing access to administrative training materials just as much as organizing resources.

The only thing worse than inaction in the situation the we find ourselves in, is ineptitude. We did not have these problems twenty years ago because we were not organizing workers then. These are growing pains which we can overcome, but we must take the proper steps to overcome them. Two great places to start are principled pragmatism and a focus on efficient administration. These two elements start with local organizers, delegates, Industrial Union organizing committees and goes all the way up to the General Administration. That is the only way in which we will be able to live up to the claim of the IWW standing for, I Will Win. 🌐



### Reader Suggested Books:

- 1) *Union Brotherhood, Union Town: The History of the Carpenters' Union of Chicago, 1863-1987* by Schneirov and Suhrbur, ISBN: 0809313529
- 2) *Wobblies on the Waterfront* by Peter Cole, ISBN:0252031865
- 3) *With Our Hands: The Story of Carpenters in Massachusetts* by David Goldberg & Mark Erlich, ISBN: 0877224331
- 4) *Millmen 550: History of the Militant Years of Carpenters Local 550* by Clyde Johnson
- 5) *Organize or Die: Smash Boss Unionism - Build Union Power* by Clyde Johnson
- 6) *Labor Law For The Rank & Filer* by Staughton Lynd and Daniel Gross, ISBN: 978-1-60486-033-7
- 7) *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence In America,* by Louis Adamic, ISBN:1904859747
- 8) *Solidarity Divided* by Bill Fletcher, Jr. and Fernando Gapasin, ISBN: 978-0-520-25525-8

### Other Resources & Organizations:

- 1) Labor Notes, [www.labornotes.org](http://www.labornotes.org), (313) 842-6262
- 2) Jobs With Justice, [www.jwj.org](http://www.jwj.org), (202) 393-1044
- 3) Union 1 Projects, [www.union1.org](http://www.union1.org)



### Crossword Puzzle Answers:

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Karen's and Richard's band                         | Carpenters   |
| 2. _____ Sergeant                                     | Drill        |
| 3. Barter   | Trade        |
| 4. Vodka and orange juice                             | Screwdriver  |
| 5. The latest version or model                        | Current      |
| 6. Not direct   | Alternating  |
| 7. Not alternating                                    | Direct       |
| 8. Assault and _____                                  | Battery      |
| 9. Corporate, social                                  | Ladder       |
| 10. An emcee who was too legit                        | Hammer       |
| 11. Basin or crescent                                 | Wrench       |
| 12. Easiest direction for cutting wood                | Withthegrain |
| 13. Slang for prison                                  | Joint        |
| 14. To break into a computer system, or a type of saw | Hack         |
| 15. To throw something really hard                    | Beam         |
| 16. I'd get angry if I had a short one of these       | Fuse         |
| 17. Basic unit of the answer to **                    | Amp          |



## A Word From Us To You

### Industrial Workers of the World Industrial Union 330 Construction Workers Organizing Committee



*Hit The Bricks* needs material to be published in this new periodical. Our focus is to help to create an environment within the construction industry that leads to a democratic, bottom up organized labor movement for all or its workers. If you have, or would like to write an opinion or educational piece, personal experience, or report news concerning the construction industry or a jobsite issue, send it our way to: [organizer@iu330.org](mailto:organizer@iu330.org) with the word “article” in the subject field. Try to refrain from topics involving inter-union politics and criticisms of other trades. We would particularly like to hear from jobsite stewards.

*Hit The Bricks* is now in the beginning stages and only available digitally. To get a digital copy sent to your e-mail, send your information to: [organizer@iu330.org](mailto:organizer@iu330.org) with the word “subscription” in the subject field.

Our immediate goals are to put out issues quarterly and in print, but for now were still learning to walk, so please bear with us.

**For more information, contact us at:**  
Email: [organizer@iu330.org](mailto:organizer@iu330.org) • Website: [www.iu330.org](http://www.iu330.org)



**Industrial Workers of the World  
Industrial Union 330  
Construction Workers Organizing Committee**