

Delegate's Meeting Minutes DRAFT FOR APPROVAL

Metropolitan Washington Council, AFL-CIO

June 16, 2008

Meeting called to order at 6:35P.

Union Cities Coordinator Chris Garlock introduced special guest St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter **Philip Dine**, author of "State of the Unions:

Delegate attendance:

Allen, Fred GCC/IBT 538-C
Boardman, John UNITE HERE 25
Cavanagh, Terry SEIU Maryland/DC State Council
Cernak, Louis IUOE 99
Collins, Cynthia SEIU 400 PG
Cuttitta, Merle SEIU 500
Dugan, Dan Fire Fighters 36
Dyer, Dan OPEIU 2
Falwell, Sandra DCNA
Ferruffino, Ruben Dario Laborers 657
Frederick Sr., Anthony Laborers 657
Garland, Anthony ATU 689
Geety, Harry IUOE 99
Greenhill Sr., Larry IBEW 26
Hogan, George IBEW 26
Ingerick, Jessica OPEIU 277
Johnson, Gwend CBTU DC
Kahraman, Joe Newspaper Guild 32035
Lichter, Jaclyn SEIU 500
Newman, Elaine L. NCAUR
Reed, Carnell SEIU 400 PG
Renne, Gino UFCW/MCGEO 1994
Reyes, Victor Laborers 657
Rodich, David SEIU 500
Shelton-Martin, Wanda DC-APRI
Starin, Eric OPEIU 2

Others in Attendance: Jos Williams, Chris Garlock, Rick Powell, Kathleen McKirchy, Gene Bruskin, UFCW Justice@Smithfield Campaign, Philip Dine, author and St. Louis Post-Dispatch reporter, Beth Levie, AFL-CIO.

How Labor Can Strengthen the Middle Class, Improve Our Economy and Regain Political Influence." Dine said that he wrote his book because "Nobody talks about what's going on with labor anymore; I argue that it's no coincidence that the time of greatest expansion was the time of greatest strength for organized labor. What works – and how did they do it -- and what doesn't? Good communications is our greatest failing; that said, what do we do right and what can we do to turn things around? Almost always it's leading with our members, making it into a human rights issue, arouse the moral indignation of the community. Wins are not just in the union's interests, it's in the interests of everyone in the country." Dine added that when he spoke recently to business leaders at the Chamber of Commerce he argued that "You don't have to agree with what unions say to understand how critical unions are to the future of the country. It's in no one's long-term interest to have management calling all the shots. Media does a poor job covering labor; we call it a labor dispute, for example, when it's a labor-management dispute, or call union leaders 'labor bosses.' Most reporters are union members but their bosses are not, and use smaller labor movement as excuse to cut back labor coverage." Dine can be reached at Philipdine.com or philipmdine@aol.com.

Garlock then introduced Gene Bruskin of the **UFCW's Smithfield campaign**, who spoke enthusiastically about the June 19 'Buy Better Than Smithfield' DC campaign launch. Bruskin reported on the latest developments in the campaign, reporting that "It has been so effective that Smithfield has been trying to use a RICO anti-racketeering statute against UFCW to try to shut down the campaign. You would think that after 16 years of fighting, the workers would have given up, but they're working harder and more creatively than ever. DC is the biggest market for Smithfield products, so we're doing a two-month campaign to say that Smithfield pork is packaged with abuse and you can do better. Massive media and outreach campaign featuring worker stories: 'They beat us when we tried to vote' etc. Sunday is Smithfield Day at the Nationals ballgame and we'll be there at the Metro stop to raise this issue."

- Beth Levie of the AFL-CIO reported on the **June 21 Atlantic City demo** supporting casino workers who are trying to organize with the United Auto Workers: she reported on the struggle of casino workers to win a union. "They're exploited and taken advantage of. Many casinos benefit from union convention business and yet have the nerve to fight efforts by their dealers to win a voice at work. Casinos fought the

election, then simply refused to bargain a contract." Encouraged delegates to go.

- Patrick Young of the **United Steel Workers of America** reported on their upcoming July 9 action in DC to "Make trade issues a bigger issue in upcoming elections. Unfair trade hurts workers here and overseas. It's also hurting consumers, with huge boom in toxic trade, toys with high lead, etc. coming into the US. On July 9 toy companies and the Bush administration are holding a trade safety summit on how to allow companies to regulate themselves with optional standards. We will do a demo with street theater and puppets and should be lots of fun."

May Minutes: moved, seconded and approved as distributed.

May Financial Report: moved, seconded and approved to receive.

Correspondence

Moved, seconded and approved the following Executive Board recommendations:

- Pride at Work Membership Fee: \$100.
- Pledge for 89.3 FM WPFW: \$300.
- AFL-CIO & Solidarity Center George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award (June 25) to support programs

of the Liberian rubber workers: \$300.

- Delegate Brian Feldman: 6/16 Reception: \$250.

- The Executive Board recommended that Delegates authorize the Board to act on the DC City Council endorsements in July, since the next Council meeting won't be until September. Approved.

Union City

Chris Garlock reported:

- Indian hunger strike called off last month after gaining support from Congressmembers and activists across the nation.

- 2008 DC Labor FilmFest: June screenings of film on Bayard Rustin in honor of Gay Pride Month; two screenings on Wednesday, June 24 at American Federation of Teachers and Department of Labor (American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) 12) and one on Friday, June 27 at the AFL-CIO. Also pleased to report we're working on adding AFGE and the Communication Workers of America as venues beginning in September; still time to reserve ad space in FilmFest Program Guide.

Community Services Agency

Kathleen McKirchy reported:

- July 11 Labor Nights at the Nats; last year sold 5,500, 3,600 sold so far this year. Discussed ways of showing support for service workers at stadium.

- 2008 Golf Tourney: On September 29 this year.

COPE

Rick Powell reported:

- DC City Council Candidate Questionnaire: we are doing

training session on how to use/access online questionnaires; sending our questionnaires next week; deadline for candidates to return the questionnaires will be Friday, July 11; interviews starting will run July 16-July 19, with a recommendation to the Executive Board by Monday, July 21.

- Noise Bill: Powell reviewed the background and history of the noise bill issue and the impact it would have had on free speech in DC as well as the successful campaign to defeat the bill last month. Noted anti-labor remarks made by some Councilmembers, including Tommy Wells, David Catania and Mary Cheh, who's a board member of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The bottom line is that labor acted as one, ran an effective campaign, and the losing Councilmembers didn't like that.

- ACLU "Safe Neighborhoods" campaign: the Metro Council has joined the ACLU protest of police barricading of DC's Trinidad neighborhood.

- DC Councilmember Jack Evans Ward 2 request for labor turnout at Ward 2 Democrats endorsement meeting.

- Labor 2008: The Metro Council is working with colleagues in Northern Virginia, which is a battleground state for the first time in years and could go Democratic for first time since 1964.

- Maryland 4th District Special Election Tuesday June 17: The Metro Council is supporting labor-endorsed candidate Donna Edwards.

The meeting concluded with a screening of "DC Labor SCRAPBOOK '08

The Year So Far..." a slide show presentation of over 100

photos of activities by DC-area unions and allies since January 2008, accompanied by soundtrack of music by Billy Bragg and Tom Juravitch; delegates gave the presentation - which was put together by Chris Garlock and Andy Richards - a round of applause at the end. Garlock thanked everyone for sending in all their reports and photos of 2008 actions; President Williams noted that the presentation will be updated as the year progresses, with a final 2008 overview to be shown at the 2009 Evening With Labor, as in previous years.

Meeting adjourned 8:03P

50/50: Larry Greenhill Sr., IBEW 26; five Labor Chorus CDs were also raffled off.