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The next presentation was made by Lisa Jordan of the United Steelworkers. This union is now really a federation of locals, many in rubber, health care, paper, in addition to the traditional locals of workers in the steel industry. One of their main goals is to save manufacturing jobs in America. They do traditional organizing plus. Neutrality agreements/Codes of Conduct with many employers. They help find customers and try to save companies. One unusual one is the car wash campaign in L. A. Because of international employers, they can use the policies of the European companies to help organize U. S. workers. They have organized rubber workers in Liberia and will try to organize anybody.

Paul Clark, Lois Gray and Paul Whitehead made the last presentation, which was the Results of a Longitudinal Study of Union Administrative Practices: Implications for Member Representation. Budgeting, Strategic Planning, Evaluation of Results, Management of Human Resources, were all measured by a survey done in 1990, 2000, 2010. Observers noted the absence of the above in union administrative practices. The survey indicates that some unions have been doing more of these things and it has been increasing. Most large unions have an HR director.

The plethora of additional panels that were presented over the two and one half days of the meeting covered virtually every aspect of labor and employment relations. Spanning the gamut from “The Enforcement of Labor Rights in Developing Countries,” “Women in Today’s Labor Market,” “The Role of Staffing Services in the New Economy,” “Innovations in Payroll Fraud,” to “Technology and Labor and Employment Law,” “Public Sector Bargaining Law and a New Breed of Governors.” Additional panels covered topics such as “Topics in Compensation and Human Capital,” “Social Media and the Na-

tional Labor Relations Act,” and “The Impact of Sports Collective Bargaining on Labor Relations in Society.”

Perhaps the most difficult task, when one attends the annual LERA meeting, is deciding which panels to attend. Obviously, it depends upon one’s professional and personal interests, but the committee that creates each year’s program must be praised for constructing a cafeteria of selections that will fill the appetites of any and all labor relations professionals.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NOTICES

If you have an announcement or job posting that you would like to have published, send it for consideration to me at: <jerryarb@optonline.net >.

You can write, I can edit and publish. Let’s get together. Have you had a case or incident in your practice that would provide insight to other practitioners? Have you read a book or article in a professional journal that you believe, others might learn from and enjoy reading? Let’s get together. Send me your manuscript via email to: jerryarb@optonline.net

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workers in the United States with the skills they need. Industries in science and technology are growing at a fast pace and there are twice as many openings than we have workers for, at a time where there is a lack of jobs. This is inexcusable; many of the younger generation are falling behind, compared to the college graduates in countries such as Japan and India. One part of the solution is to expand technical and vocational training. We need something like the W.W. II G.I. Bill that provided the veterans with the opportunity to go to school to enhance their skills and training. Also, as a nation, we must provide the funds for the institutions that will provide the education.

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The Long Island LERA Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Long Island Chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association.

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LI LERA
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Labor and Employment Relations Association
Newsletter
SHAPING THE
WORKPLACE OF
THE FUTURE



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PRESIDENT’S PERSPECTIVE:
Unemployment in America

Perhaps the most vexing question, from the point-of-view of workers today, is the problem of structural unemployment. There are four major types of unemployment: frictional; seasonal; cyclical and structural. The last two are the most serious and the ones that our labor



force has been experiencing for some time now. Cyclical reflects the ups and downs in the business cycle. Structural is a form of unemployment resulting from a mismatch between demand in the labor market and the skills and locations of the workers seeking employment. Even though the number of vacancies may be equal to, or greater than, the number of the unemployed, the unemployed workers may lack the skills needed for the jobs; or they may not live in the part of the country or world where the jobs are available.

Much technological unemployment (e.g. due to the replacement of workers by fewer workers who use machines) might be counted as structural unemployment. Alternatively, technological unemployment might refer to the way in which steady increases in labor productivity mean that fewer workers are needed to produce the same level of output every year. The fact that aggregate demand can be raised to deal with this problem suggests that this problem is, instead, one of cyclical unemployment. The demand side must grow sufficiently quickly to absorb not only the growing labor force but also the workers made redundant by increased labor productivity. Otherwise, we see a jobless recovery such as those seen in the United States in the early 1990s, in the early 2000s and in the two year period after the 2008 economic meltdown.

In his recent State of the Union speech, President Obama, addressed these problems and presented a set of

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

Please Add These To Your Calendar

Fri., May 4, 2012
Annual Spring Conference
Tam O’ Shanter Club, Brookville

Wed., June 6, 2012
Nassau Bar Association,
Mineola

Wed., Sept. 12, 2012
Black Forest Brew Haus,
Farmingdale

Wed., Dec. 6, 2012
Nassau Bar Association,
Mineola

recommendations for action that could deal with them. There are too many overqualified people settling for jobs they would have never taken ten years ago, because they can’t find a job. Offshoring jobs isn’t helping our economy, it is hindering it. Mr. Obama said, “It’s time to stop rewarding businesses that ship jobs overseas, and start rewarding companies that create jobs right here in America, I thought that was great that he said that, and that he was sending a positive message to big business and to the American people. Mr. Obama created a Trade Enforcement Unit that will be in charge of investigating unfair trade practices in countries like China. This will prevent counterfeit or unsafe goods from crossing our borders. It is also disappointing to hear business complain that they have no one to hire for these jobs because they cannot find

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LERA 2012 NATIONAL MEETING HELD IN CHICAGO

by Dr. Gerald H. Grayson

This year's national meeting of the Labor and Employment Relations Association was held in Chicago, in conjunction with the Allied Social Science Association meetings. The sessions began on Friday, January 6, 2012 at the Palmer House Hotel and the attendees from our chapter were **Thomas B. Wassel, Elizabeth M. Pearsall, Beverly Harrison and Jerry Grayson.**

This is the last year that LERA will meet with the other professional associations. A decision was made by the executive board to hold the next annual meeting in St. Louis in the summer of 2013. But back to the recent meeting. As usual, the multitude of meetings began promptly at 8:00 a.m. Before I summarize some of the sessions that I attended, I would like to present most of the remarks of the meeting's distinguished speaker.

Wilma Liebman: NLRB Reflections

At a Friday afternoon (Jan. 6) session at the 64th Annual Labor and Employment Relations Association meeting in Chicago, Wilma Liebman, LERA member, whose term as chair of the National Labor Relations Board ended in August, was the meeting's distinguished speaker.

She spoke in the Palmer House's elegant Honoré Ballroom. The title of her talk was "Rhetoric, Reaction and the Rule of Law at the NLRB." Controversy for the NLRB isn't new, she said. The 1935 National Labor Relations Act has proven to be "the most controversial and bitterly contested New Deal law." But "over the past three or four years, the conflicts have escalated.... By 2010 nearly everything we did started a firestorm."

Liebman spoke three days after President Obama made three recess appointments to the NLRB. Republi-

Below: Dan McCray (Cornell ILR) and Beverly Harrison



Wilma Leibman chatting with Joel Cutcher-Gershenfeld, past president of LERA.

can presidential candidate Mitt Romney described the new members (one a Republican) as "union stooges." Liebman allowed that the Obama recess appointments were necessary as Republicans in the Senate had vowed to block all of the president's appointees for the rest of his term.

Currently, the key theme, Liebman said, of political attacks on the NLRB is: "government is regulating American business to death and killing American jobs." Liebman's response: "Collapses on Wall Street, mine disasters in West Virginia and oil spills in the Gulf of Mexico don't suggest to me the need for less government regulation..." The good news, Liebman said, is that the NLRB "still functions." Citing other good news, she channeled Monty Python, "I'm not dead yet." A sense of humor was necessary equipment for her contentious 14-year tenure.

Make no mistake, she said, we are in an "existential struggle" over the legitimacy of American labor law and collective bargaining rights ... that is "more about politics than the law." She quoted historian Richard Hofstadter on his characterization of American politics as "often ... an arena for angry minds." Through it all, Liebman's view is that the last 18 months at the NLRB were marked by "modest but meaningful steps to keep the law vital. We need a living law not a dead statute or New Deal relic."

"Many agree that we need a renewed conversation about labor law, but beyond that there is no consensus. Some in the business and legal communities have never believed in this law. Then there are those who value the law but bemoan its ability to protect worker rights. They urge its revitalization. The NLRA has been almost totally resistant to legislative

change; there have been no significant changes since 1947." The result, said Liebman, is the "persistent challenge in adapting existing law to changing workplace realities."

Liebman nonetheless describes the enduring core values of the NLRA as critical to "fairness, [national] economic health and social stability."

Explaining those values, she said:

1. The NLRA provided "a system of governance" that substituted for the bitter, often violent, efforts by workers to secure union recognition by their employers. "The law transformed the way those disputes are resolved."

2. "The law protected freedom of association and gave working people a voice in the workplace."

3. "The law envisioned economic advancement of the nation by equalizing bargaining power between workers and business, thereby increasing workers' purchasing power."

4. Instead of government mandates, the "NLRA established a system where business and labor work out their own solutions through collective bargaining. In turn, the private dispute-resolution processes that have been negotiated have provided order in countless workplaces."

Through it all, Liebman regards the future of American labor law and policy with guarded optimism.

A well attended panel session on labor relations in sports.



Meeting of the LERA chapter leaders chaired by Bill Canak.

In the near term, manufacturing has ticked up, she noted. The silver lining of the NLRB controversies, such as the Boeing case, has been "increased public awareness about collective bargaining and labor law." And in some places, such as recently in Ohio, the public voted down an attempt to restrict the collective bargaining rights of teachers, police and firefighters.

Finally, Liebman said, we "will look to people like those in this room to provide the leadership to seize the greater public awareness and transform the rancor into a serious and creative public discourse ..."

Other Sessions Attended

As usual, the multitude of meetings began promptly at 8:00 a.m. The first session that I attended was a workshop that was entitled: **New and Strategic Approaches to Worker Representation: Innovative Union Practices and Other Worker Organizations.** The panelists included Thomas Balanoff of SEIU, Local 1 who presented their experiences. Using the "Brigade" approach, they had a success in Houston, organizing 1,600 and negotiating a contract and benefits. Members become leaders and take six weeks off. His final comment was that they must create mass organization in the private sector or value of workers' labor will continue to be pushed down.

The second speaker was Jose Oliva representing the **Restaurant Opportunities Center of Chicago.** They also developed Worker Organizing Networks. There are very few unionized workers in the restaurant industry although there are 13 million workers and they are the largest private sector employer in U. S. The average wage is \$7.96. Success involves getting settlement agreements, not exactly a union contract. They do a study of what exists. They are contemplating new campaigns against the large chains.

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