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Label Letter

Union Label & Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO

Chicago Labor Unions Among Investors in Sun-Times and Weekly Reader Newspaper Purchase

In June, a group of investors led by former Chicago Alderman Edwin Eisendrath that included several Labor unions, submitted a bid against Chicago Tribune parent company Tronc, Inc. to purchase the Chicago Sun-Times and weekly Chicago Reader.

Eisendrath and the group of investors, which includes several labor organizations and about a dozen other investors, made a bid of \$15 million to buy the Sun-Times and Reader from Wrapports, LLC.

Eisendrath tweeted about the bid, writing, “[P]roud to make a bid to purchase the @Suntimes and @Chicago_Reader with a group of great Chicagoans including Labor.”

Tronc had published a letter of intent to purchase the Sun-Times, Reader and other media assets owned by Wrapports in May.

David Roeder, consultant for the Chicago New Guild, which represents reporters and other media members said that they were “elated that there is at least one strong bid to counter Tronc. We just hope the Department of Justice (DOJ) will look at this and see there are better alternatives to Tronc out there.”

The DOJ’s Antitrust Division was involved in the sale because of its opposition to a single entity controlling multiple media operations in the same market, as would have been the case if the Sun-Times were sold to Tronc.

In early July, Eisendrath and Bob Reiter of the Chicago Federation of Labor said that the group had met a DOJ deadline to prove that it has funds to operate the newspaper, saying that investors had raised “in excess of 11.2 million.” And, the DOJ released a statement saying that the “public sale process resulted in alternate buyer of the Chicago Sun-Times.”

The group purchased the Sun-Times, the Chicago Reader, and Answers Media, a digital production center. Answers Media headquarters will serve as the headquarters of the Sun-Times when the newspaper’s lease expires at its current location.

SHAREHOLDERS OF SUN-TIMES ACQUISITION HOLDINGS, LLC

CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

The Chicago Federation of Labor is the third-largest central labor council of the AFL-CIO in the United States representing approximately 300 local unions comprised of over half a million union members in Chicago and Cook County.

LIUNA CHICAGO LABORERS’ DISTRICT COUNCIL

LIUNA Chicago Laborers’ District Council represents a diverse group of over 20,000 hard working men and women in the construction, municipal, and industrial sectors, belonging to fifteen Laborers’ Locals in the nine counties covering the Chicagoland area.

CHICAGO REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CARPENTERS’ LABOR & MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Chicago Regional Council of Carpenters’ Labor & Management Committee represents tens of thousands of working men and women throughout 72 counties in Illinois and Eastern Iowa. Our members include professionals trained in these specialties: General Carpenter, Residential Carpenter, Exhibit and Display Installer, Interior Systems Carpenter, Lather, Cabinetmaker and Millworker, Flooring Installer, Pile Driver, Millwright, Insulation Installer, Shingling and Siding Installer, and Concrete Forming. We are

proud to be a positive force in building communities®.

GOMPERS-LEWIS MEDIA CORP.

Gompers-Lewis Media Corp. is an LLC owned by the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 150, a labor union representing 23,000 working men and women employed as heavy equipment operators in Illinois, Indiana and Iowa.

SEIU HEALTHCARE ILLINOIS INDIANA MISSOURI & KANSAS

SEIU Healthcare Illinois Indiana Missouri & Kansas represents 90,000 home care, hospital, childcare, and nursing home workers across the four states.

SEIU LOCAL 1

Service Employees International Union Local 1 unites 50,000 workers throughout the Midwest, including janitors, security officers, higher education faculty, food service workers, and others. Local 1 is committed to improving the lives of its members and all working people by winning real economic justice and standing at the forefront of the fight for immigrant, racial, and environmental justice.

The following investors have given permission for their names to be shared. Others are remaining anonymous.

- Jeff Bohanson
- Bill Brandt
- John Eisendrath
- Stuart Ellison
- Leonard Goodman
- Sidney Herman
- Elzie Higginbottom
- Linda Yu

Are you ready for some football?

Football season is here. Whether you are entertaining at home or heading out and plan to tailgate, we have some great union-made products to help you enjoy the game this fall. Maybe you are headed to the stadium to watch your favorite NFL team. Players in the NFL belong to the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA). And workers at most stadiums are unionized. Food and drinks are brought to you by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM), the UAW, Machinists (IAM), the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) and the Teamsters (IBT).

CHIPS AND DIPS

- » Kraft/Heinz Cornnuts
- » Frito Lay
- » Dan Dee Pretzels
- » Mikesell's Potato Chips
- » Mission Chips
- » Old El Paso Chips
- » Old El Paso Dips and Salsa
- » Pace Salsa
- » Stacy's Pita Chips
- » Tostitos Chips and Salsa

MAIN DISHES AND SIDES

- » Alexander & Hornung
- » Always Tender
- » Ball Park
- » Banquet
- » Butterball

- » Dearborn Sausage Co.
- » Farmer John
- » Farmland
- » Hebrew National
- » Hormel
- » Omaha Steaks
- » Oscar Mayer
- » Thumann's
- » Tyson
- » B&M Baked Beans

BEER

- » 1845 Pils
- » Bass Pale Ale
- » Beck's
- » Blue Moon
- » Budweiser
- » Busch

- » Butte Creek
- » Goose Island
- » Hamm's
- » Henry Weinhard's
- » Hoegaarden
- » Iron City
- » Keystone Light
- » Killian's
- » Kingfisher Premium Lager
- » Kirin
- » Labatt Blue
- » Land Shark Lager
- » Leffe Blond
- » Lionshead
- » Michelob
- » Mickey's
- » Miller
- » Molson Canadian
- » Moosehead
- » Natural
- » O'Doul's (non alcoholic)
- » Olde English 800
- » Pabst
- » Red Stripe
- » Red Tail Ale
- » Rolling Rock
- » Sam Adams
- » Schlitz
- » Shock Top
- » Steel Reserve
- » Steelhead
- » Stegmaier
- » Stella Artois

RECIPE

From the kitchen of:



Union-made Buffalo chicken dip
1 (8 oz.) pkg. Horizon Dairy or Kraft Philadelphia Cream Cheese, softened
1/2 cup FRANK'S RedHot Original Cayenne Pepper Sauce or FRANK'S
RedHot Buffalo Wings Sauce

1/2 cup Kraft Bleu cheese or Hidden Valley Ranch dressing
2 cups Shredded cooked Foster Farms fresh chicken.
1/2 cup Kraft Crumbled bleu cheese or your favorite Hilland Dairy shredded cheese

DIRECTIONS:

PREHEAT oven to 350°F.

BAKE 20 min. or until mixture is heated through; stir. Serve with Nabisco crackers, Bimbo Bakeries breads and/or Mann's Carrots and other crunchy companions by Eurofresh Vegetables.



WALK IN MY SHOES

Groundbreaking Medical Advancement, With the Help of an IBEW Family



THE WHITEHEAD FAMILY OUTSIDE THEIR HOME IN PHILLIPSBURG, PA. FROM LEFT, KARI WHITEHEAD, EMILY WHITEHEAD AND TOM WHITEHEAD.

Reprinted with permission from IBEW.org

Last October, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Media Department told the story of Johnstown, Pa., Local 459 member Tom Whitehead, his wife Kari and daughter Emily, who was in remission from leukemia after undergoing a revolutionary treatment at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Fellow IBEW members rallied around the Whiteheads and supported them both financially and emotionally during a time of crisis. Here is their story.

Soon, Emily's treatment likely will be available to children around the world.

On July 12, the Food and Drug Administration's advisory panel unanimously recommended approval of Novartis Pharmaceutical's T-cell therapy for acute lymphocytic leukemia. The treatment was developed at the University of Pennsylvania, led by gene therapy pioneer Carl June. It was tested in studies on 68 children, according to the Philadelphia Daily News. Formal approval by the full FDA is expected in the next few months.

The first test subject was Emily. She was suffering from acute lymphoblastic leukemia with little hope for survival when Tom and Kari decided to enroll her in the then-experimental treatment.

There were some initial side effects. Emily's temperature spiked to 105 degrees. But she was leukemia-free by May of that year and has lived a healthy life ever since.

Now 12, Emily and her father attended the advisory panel's hearing and urged for approval. There was some concern about the side effects, but the T-cell therapy has been effective. About 75 percent of the children in the trial remained cancer free after six months, according to the Daily News.

Tom Whitehead told the panel the treatment saved Emily's life. He said he thinks it could do the same for others.

"Our daughter was going to die and now she leads a normal life," he told the panel while choking up with emotion, the Daily News reported. "We are honored to attend this hearing and be a part of this process."

Emily was diagnosed in May 2010 and IBEW members stepped up to aid the family immediately.

Local 459 members rallied to donate vacation days and money to allow the Whiteheads to continue to be with Emily during her treatments. So did workers at Penn State, where Kari worked as a research and evaluation associate in the school's Clearinghouse for Military Family Readiness.

Tom said he took 280 vacation hours in 2011 – almost seven weeks. In 2012, when Emily's condition was at its most dire, he took 520 hours – 65 full days, thanks to vacation days supplied by fellow IBEW members.

Donations covered most of the expenses not covered by insurance or Medicare, which the Whiteheads qualified for. The Penn State Dance Marathon, which annually donates millions of dollars to childhood cancer causes, also supported the Whiteheads.

Emily's treatment was so new and revolutionary that she and the rest of the family reached something of celebrity status. They were profiled in media outlets around the world, including in the New York Times, and have started the Emily Whitehead Foundation to aid child-cancer research.

Tom Whitehead has never forgot those IBEW members stepping up in the family's time of need.

"I never missed a 40-hour paycheck," he said. "We never missed a meal. To know they were willing to donate to me to save my daughter's life, it's really hard to put into words how much it meant to us." ■

Put a Union Label on It!



Nurses Buy – and Forgive – \$2.6 Million in Medical Debt for Minnesotans

By Michael Moore, Editor, Saint Paul Union Advocate

Twain Cities community members overwhelmingly supported Allina nurses during their historic strike last year. Today, members of the Minnesota Nurses Association offered a thank-you gift for that support, purchasing and forgiving the past-due accounts of 1,800 families facing a combined \$2.6 million in medical debt.

MNA, a union of more than 20,000 registered nurses, located and acquired the accounts with help from RIP Medical Debt, a New York-based non-profit. Like a collection agency, the organization buys medical debt at a fraction of its value.

Rather than aggressively pursuing the debt it purchased, though, MNA immediately forgave it.

“Nurses are happy to allow these families to be free of their debt,” MNA President Mary Turner said. “They’ve had this medical debt hanging over their heads for two years or more. It’s cost them their credit, pushed them toward bankruptcy and hurt them in so many ways.”

MNA paid \$28,000 for the \$2.6 million balance.

Names and other details regarding the forgiven accounts will remain private, but one Minnesotan struggling to pay down medical debt, Debra Puchala, agreed to tell her story during a press conference at MNA’s headquarters in St. Paul this morning.

Debra Puchala speaks about her battle to get out of medical debt. (MNA photos by Chris Reinke)

After undergoing hip replacement surgery in September 2015 and shoulder surgery the following year, Puchala owes various medical providers more than \$5,000.

“The bills kept coming,” she said. “When you have surgery, you know, you get more than one bill, and ... everybody

wants their money right away. I was told that I was going too slow.”

One of her six bills wound up in collection, and as a result, Puchala said, “I can’t make a regular medical appointment. I have to go to either urgent care or, if it gets bad, emergency.”

In January 2017, faced with the prospect of tacking on another \$5,000 to her debt load before reaching the insurance plan’s deductible, Puchala dropped out of her physical therapy regimen, and she continues to put off knee replacement surgery, she said, “because I can’t take on the debt.”

MNA has long derided the U.S. health

“Medical bills are now the No. 1 reason people are contacted by debt collectors,” Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson

care system for forcing patients like Puchala into consumer decisions that pit their wellness against their other needs, like food and rent.

Medical debt is the No. 1 cause of bankruptcy in the U.S. Past due accounts to health care providers are cited in 62 percent of bankruptcy cases, and bad debt to medical providers is expected to top \$200 billion by 2019.

“Medical bills are now the No. 1 reason people are contacted by debt collectors,” Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson said at the MNA press conference. “Even people with health insurance face unpaid medical bills due to the very high deductibles in many insurance policies.

“The Minnesota Nurses Association is generous to have relieved people from the weight of this debt.”



MNA President Mary Turner (L) and Executive Director Rose Roach rip up medical debt for 1,800 Minnesotans.

The union was inspired to acquire Minnesotans’ medical debt after several members watched a report on HBO’s “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” about RIP Medical Debt.

“We’d had many discussions about how to repay the community for what they gave nurses during the strike,” Turner said. “The John Oliver show inspired us, and we decided to see if we could do the same thing. MNA is grateful to RIP Medical Debt for helping us make this happen.”

About 5,000 MNA members who work at Abbott Northwestern, Mercy, United and Unity hospitals and Phillips Eye Institute spent nearly a month and a half on the picket line last year in a campaign to keep their high-quality health insurance, improve workplace safety and protect patients from staffing shortages. ■

ARE YOU ON OUR E-MAIL LIST?

Have you joined our blast e-mail list? Have you visited us on facebook or twitter? The ULSTD is active on social media, posting union news and product information we believe is important to union members. If you haven't already, find us on facebook, and make sure you sign up for our email list on our website at unionlabel.org to receive important news right in your inbox. ■

Oregon Passes Fair Work Week Act Other Jurisdictions Striving to Give Low Wage Workers Schedule Predictability

At the end of June, Oregon became the first state to pass the Fair Work Week Act – a law that requires employers to provide schedules with two weeks’ notice, pay overtime for shifts scheduled with an insufficient amount of rest time between, and protect employees from retaliation when requesting their schedules.

“This is a huge step in the right direction for workers across the state whose unreliable work schedules make it impossible for them to plan for childcare, pursue higher ed, or obtain a second part time job,” declared Oregon Working Families in a statement about the bill.

New York, San Francisco, Seattle and Washington are among major cities that have enacted similar measures. And in December, six major retailers announced that they were abandoning on-call scheduling amid growing pressure from state attorneys general concerned it might con-

flict with existing labor laws.

“In the 20th century, we had to stop employers from overscheduling workers in industries such as manufacturing and construction,” said Rich Kline, president of the Union Label and Service Trades Department. “Now, we’re fighting to get our vulnerable workforce to have schedules that feed and protect their families and give them a chance at a better life. We’ve got to do better.”

Since the recession, the number of workers in low wage, no benefit workplaces – such as those found in the retail, food service, and healthcare industries – has dramatically increased. Many of these industries use what is called “just in time” scheduling to minimize costs, but the practice harms workers. Many employees cannot predict their week-to-week or even their day-to-day income and find themselves underemployed. Other prob-

lems with just in time scheduling include difficulty in securing childcare, problems scheduling doctors’ appointments, and difficulty planning for schoolwork. Many workers will find themselves under the threshold to qualify for insurance or other benefits.

According to the Fair Work Week Initiative, one in two hourly workers, including over 45% of parents, report that their employer schedules them without their input. America’s 28 million part-time workers earn, on average, a third less per hour than their full-time counterparts. Low-wage women and workers of color, especially in Black communities, are especially hard hit by this trend. ■

Missouri Governor, Legislature Choose Big Business Over Workers

It has been a tough year for workers in Missouri. With pro-business, anti-worker, Republican Governor Eric Greitens and the Republican-held Legislature, workers have seen their protections stripped, wages lowered and union rights attacked.

The first attacks came with the passing of the so-called right-to-work bill rammed through the GOP-controlled Legislature earlier this year, and signed by Gov. Greitens. Now, with the passing of new legislation in May, workers in Missouri will have a harder time proving they were fired because of their race, gender, age, religion or heritage.

The new law, which Gov. Greitens signed in June, raises the standard of proof required in lawsuits claiming discrimination in housing and employment. Previously, the law required proof

that discrimination was a contributing factor — the new bill would raise that standard requiring proof that discrimination was the primary motivating factor.

The Missouri ACLU and NAACP say that the law strips workers of protection and gives the state one of the toughest standards for proving discrimination in the country.

And in August, St. Louis residents will see their newly increased minimum wage slashed back down to \$7.70 an hour, as the Missouri Legislature passed a pre-emption law — which specifically targeted St. Louis’ new \$10 an hour minimum wage increase — that will override the increase. How much more can Missouri workers take? ■

UNION LABEL CONVENTION TO BE HELD IN ST. LOUIS, OCTOBER 21, 2017

The Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO will hold its quadrennial convention in St. Louis, MO at the America’s Center Convention Complex on October 21, 2017. The Union Label Department’s Constitution requires the Department to convene quadrennial conventions during the week prior to the Convention of the AFL-CIO for the purposes of electing officers — president, secretary-treasurer, and 17 vice presidents constituting the Department’s executive board — to four-year terms.

As the supreme governing body of the Union Label & Service Trades Department, the convention is also empowered to entertain resolutions submitted for consideration 30 days in advance of the convention (September 21, 2017) and to conduct normal business related to the policies and programs of the Department in accordance with the convention rules.

UAW Files New Charges Against Company, Seeks Federal Court Order to Prevent Future ULPs

Reprinted with permission from UAW

Following an unprecedented campaign of corporate threats and intimidation, Nissan employees tonight fell short in their bid for a union.

In a two-day election supervised by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), blue-collar employees at Nissan's Canton plant voted 2244 to 1307 against employee representation. Voting began Thursday — less than a week after the NLRB issued the latest in a series of unfair labor practice complaints against Nissan.

"The courageous workers of Nissan, who fought tirelessly for union representation alongside community and civil-rights leaders, should be proud of their efforts to be represented by the UAW," said Dennis Williams, president of the UAW. "The result of the election was a setback for these workers, the UAW and working Americans everywhere, but in no way should it be considered a defeat.

Williams added: "Perhaps recognizing they couldn't keep their workers from joining our union based on the facts, Nissan and its anti-worker allies ran a vicious campaign against its own workforce that was comprised of intense scare tactics, misinformation and intimidation."

In its latest complaint against Nissan, the NLRB alleged that the company recently threatened a loss of wages and benefits if employees support a union, threatened closing of the Canton plant if employees support a union, interrogated employees about union support, and promised increased benefits and improved working conditions if employees oppose a union.

During the days and weeks leading up to the union election, Nissan's unfair labor practices significantly intensified at the Canton plant — one of only three Nissan facilities in the world, including two in Tennessee, where workers are not represented by a union.

Acting on behalf of Nissan employees and in response to the events of recent weeks, the UAW filed a new round of unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB shortly before the polls closed in Canton at 7 p.m. CDT. The charges allege additional

violations of the National Labor Relations Act, including widespread surveillance of worker union activity, threats that benefits would be taken away if the Nissan Canton workforce votes for UAW representation, termination of a pro-union Kelly worker, threatening another worker that she could be terminated if the UAW was to become the representative of Nissan workers, a threat that UAW's bargaining with Nissan would be futile, and Nissan's denial of equal access to voters.

Moreover, the union is asking the NLRB to proceed with a trial to stop Nissan's serial commission of unfair labor practices in Mississippi. Beginning in November 2015, the NLRB issued a series of complaints against Nissan and the company's temp-worker agency Kelly Services, alleging that they are "interfering with, restraining and coercing employees in the exercise of their rights."

Currently, the complaints are awaiting trial by an administrative law judge. If Nissan is found to have committed the unfair labor practices that are alleged, the NLRB can go to federal court and seek a binding court order against Nissan that will stop the company from committing such unfair labor practices in the future.

"We're disappointed but not surprised by the outcome in Canton," said Gary Casteel, secretary-treasurer of the UAW and director of the international union's transnational department. "Despite claiming for years to be neutral on the question of a union, Nissan waged one of the most illegal and unethical anti-union campaigns that I've seen in my lifetime.

Casteel added: "Clearly, Nissan will not honor workers' right to be free of coercion and intimidation without a binding court order requiring the company to stop.

Nissan employees, with legal and technical assistance from the UAW, on July 11 announced the filing of an election petition with the NLRB. Almost immediately, Nissan managers and supervisors stepped up threats and intimidation inside the plant.

Beginning in mid-July, Nissan supervisors pressured employees with anti-union

messages in group and one-on-one meetings. The company broadcast anti-union videos inside the plant instructing workers to "Vote No" and launched a sizable anti-union cable-television buy in the central Mississippi media market. Nissan made implied threats to close the Canton plant if workers unionized and threatened employees with layoffs if they unionized — similar to the unfair labor practices previously alleged by the NLRB.

Additionally, after examining contact lists for Nissan employees — which are required by the NLRB to be shared with union organizers — the UAW found large numbers of errors, including inaccurate names, mailing addresses and phone numbers.

"On top of Nissan threatening and intimidating employees inside the plant, the company gave us lists that were terribly flawed with inaccurate information which complicated efforts to distribute accurate information outside the plant," Casteel said. "Nissan had unlimited captive-audience access to workers in the plant, but its faulty lists limited the ability of the union to contact workers by phone, email or at home."

Looking ahead: The UAW and the Mississippi Alliance for Fairness at Nissan (MAFFAN), a coalition of faith and community leaders, pledged to redouble efforts to work with labor allies at Nissan plants around the world to keep pressuring the company — and to educate the French government about Nissan's threats and intimidation against its predominantly African-American workforce in Mississippi. With an approximately 20 percent stake in Renault, the French government is the largest shareholder in Renault, which in turn is the largest shareholder in Nissan.

"American workers need champions now more than ever," Williams said. "The workers of Nissan deserve to have the job security, safe working conditions and collective bargaining power that come only from belonging to a union. The UAW will continue to be on the frontlines of that fight for all workers." ■

In This Issue...

Unions, Investors Purchase Sun-Times News.	1
Do Buy	2
Walk in My Shoes.	3
Minn. Nurses Buy — and Forgive — Medical Debt . . .	4
UAW Files for Election at Miss. Nissan Plant.	6
AFL-CIO National Boycotts	7

PERIODICALS
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EndNotes

By Rich Kline, *President, UL&STD*



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We Live in a Time of Uncertainty



This *Label Letter* contains hopeful, inspiring and disturbing news. We live in a time of uncertainty which bring out the best in some and the worst in others.

We can take pride in the achievements of those who are fighting for workers rights, free expression of ideas and upholding the commitment to solidarity. It's all here in this issue.

We note that progressive legislation in Oregon passed the nation's first statewide Fair Work Week Act with important guarantees for employees. The Minnesota Nurses Association found a creative, impactful way to thank the

community for its support during a historic strike: it bought and forgave the \$2.6 million dollars in medical debt.

The IBEW's assistance to a member's family led to advances in treatment that will help others with leukemia.

Nissan workers at the company's plant in Canton, Miss., failed to win UAW representation in the face of outrageously unfair company interference. The NLRB should compel Nissan to cease its violations of workers' rights.

Sadly, we also report on the continued opposition of far-right politicians and greedy corporations to workers' right to organize. How can anyone stand with politicians like those in Missouri who pass right-to-work-for-less, weaken discrimination protections and stamp the minimum wage down to \$7.70 an hour. These abuses must be protested against, and we will know our friends in public life by their actions in doing so. ■