



SOLIDARITY

In The Sunshine

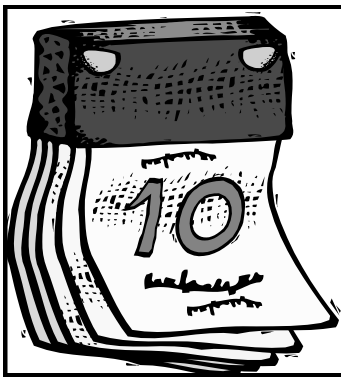
NEWSLETTER OF THE FLORIDA AFL-CIO

December, 2010

VOL. XI ISSUE 3

2010: A year in Review.

The holiday season is usually the time when we take a moment to reflect on what the year has brought us, both in successes and failures. The important part of this critical reflection is the question of how to energize ourselves for the battles that will shape the New Year ahead of us.



We, as a unified labor movement of Florida, have a lot to be proud of as we look back at 2010. This year was filled with historic victories, rallies and events in which we fought to improve the lives of all working families. This year was also one of defeat. Despite all of our efforts to elect candidates that care about working families; we were unable to curtail the “tsunami” of right wing turn out experienced across the entire country.

Due to Labors’ efforts in mobilizing on the ground in Florida and across the nation, health care reform in America became a reality when President Barack Obama signed the **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act** into law. Labor has been fighting to secure health care for all Americans for over a century. As we fought for health care reform, the country’s economic future depended on activists like you standing up for working families against corporate greed. Thanks to your dedication we have a law in which to build from; to make sure that if you are sick in America, you can get the help you need.

As our country continued to spiral down in an economic recession (and more and more hard working people continued to lose their livelihood), the future of working families has been put into jeopardy. The Florida AFL-CIO engaged in the **Good Jobs Now** campaign to offer solutions of how we can create an economy that works for everyone.

This economic meltdown became all too real for the brothers and sisters that work at Kennedy Space Center as the continuation of human space exploration was put into question. Unemployment in Brevard County was already considerably high, making the loss of these jobs equal to an economic doomsday for the area. Thousands of union families and alarmed citizens from across the state converged in Titusville, on an unseasonably cold and rainy day, to listen as leaders like Claudie Pouncey, President of the Space Coast AFL-CIO; Mike Williams, President of the Florida AFL-CIO; and Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO rallied people to understand the importance of job-generating legislation. The day might have been about the human space exploration, but overall the message was that we need to put our country back to work: that means creating jobs, not privatizing existing industries.

The same week as our rally in Titusville, we took the **Good Jobs Now** campaign to Orlando. There, leaders from across the state took part in a town hall forum with President Trumka, Congressman Alan Grayson and community leaders to discuss the economic situation of American workers. The town hall meeting featured testimonials from workers who have fallen on bad times due to the economic crisis, along with solutions of how to get out of this economic quagmire. The message of putting people back to work became a focal point for unions as we combat Wall Street greed and a banking system that brought us to the verge of collapse.

For the first time in recent memory, Labor was a major player in one of the biggest legislative battles and, with your help, secured major victories for Florida’s working families. This time last year, we were the leading organization mobilizing against the **CSX sweetheart deal**. This deal would have created a rail line that privatized key services and forced hundreds of union workers to lose their representation (if not their jobs). Furthermore, this deal would have set events in motion that would have threatened hundreds more of the state’s most qualified rail safety workers; with losing their union and their jobs, putting the safety of our rail system in jeopardy. Our unified hard line on this issue forced the Tallahassee politicians to compromise, protecting rail transportation in Florida and hundreds of good union jobs while ensuring that Florida moves forward in this critical area of transportation infrastructure.

Months later, we participated in an historic campaign to push back against the Legislature’s attempt to destroy the very fabric of our state educational system. Affiliates of the Florida AFL-CIO joined our brothers and sisters in FEA, concerned parents, and students in fighting against



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the disastrous **SB 6**. This piece of proposed legislation would have eliminated teacher tenure, tied teacher pay to unproven, high-stakes standardized tests, and forced our children into becoming nothing more than test-taking lab rats while eliminating local control of our schools. **SB 6** created a groundswell of grassroots activism across the state, blurring party lines and ideology. Students walked out in protest. Teachers and parents joined on social networking sites to plan and coordinate events. The state dramatically said "No!" to SB 6. Due to this impressively loud voice of dissatisfaction with the proposed legislation, Governor Crist vetoed it, saving public education in the state of Florida for now.



These victories proved to the Tallahassee insiders, and their special interests masters, that Florida's Labor Movement is engaged more than ever before. With your help, we sent a message that whenever working families are threatened; the affiliates of the Florida AFL-CIO will be there, fighting back.

This year was also a time of grassroots activism with our partners. We worked with allied groups such as **Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW)** who were fighting against the slave labor conditions in the fields of Florida. Their main corporate target this year was Publix who refused to negotiate with the farm worker organization over their circumstances in the fields of Florida. Union members from across the state joined activists in a three-day march from Tampa to Publix's headquarters in Lakeland. These rallies brought pressure to Publix who finally agreed to negotiate with CIW. Victories like this empowered our rank and file membership to engage in solidarity struggles and demonstrated the necessity of a unified movement.

This year was a midterm election year, and the Florida AFL-CIO and its affiliates did not sit passively on the sidelines; instead we worked tirelessly on the **Labor 2010** electoral campaign. Councils across the state engaged in the political process unlike ever before. Thousands of union members were contacted through leafletting on the worksite, phone calls or receiving mail from their union. One of the many highlights of Labor 2010 came when hundreds of union members from across the state converged at the **IUPAT DC 78** hall in Orlando Florida. Every union member living in Alan Grayson's Congressional district was canvassed. This was an empowering day filled with solidarity and activism. The statewide labor walk showed a committed and vibrant labor movement that is prepared to mobilize on issues that concern their locals and families. While our electoral successes were few, this election allowed us to try new approaches, programs and structures. The experiences we had in Labor 2010 will prove invaluable to the work that lies ahead.

An important success was the passing of **Amendments 5 and 6** which will ensure that the days of the politicians drawing their own political districts to stay in power are over. This year, we will have the full weight of Florida's Constitution behind us as we fight for districts that put people and their interests over power and special interests.

So where are we now? As we look towards 2011, we know we have to fight like we have never done before. We have to continue to be the voice for dignity and respect at the workplace proving and making sure that the American Dream is accessible to everyone in Florida. We have to look towards the future with optimism and the realization that there is opportunity in adversity; with the firm resolve that, together, we will capitalize on those opportunities and build a brighter future for Florida.

Changing of the Guard or "How I Became Communication Director"



Hello, my name is Joshua Anijar. As of last month, I became Communications Director for the Florida AFL-CIO. Don't worry, Rich Templin (the former Communications Director) hasn't gone anywhere; he rather has been promoted and is now the Legislative and Political Director for the state. A big congrats to Dr. Templin in his new position!

Though I am new to this position, I am not new to the organization. I have met many of you in the field; on a picket line, at a conference or in your union hall. For the last four years I have been a Zone Coordinator for the Florida AFL-CIO. I first worked in Zone 3, which represents the West Central Florida Federation of Labor and then transferred to Zone 2, which represents the Central Florida AFL-CIO, Space Coast AFL-CIO and Volusia Flagler AFL-CIO. Both zones have given me invaluable hands-on experience with Florida's labor movement.

The Florida AFL-CIO will be using the most up-to-date mediums to ensure that you stay informed on the issues facing Florida's working families. To accomplish this, we will be rebuilding our communication infrastructure --- granting organized labor an opportunity to get our message to our activists in new and creative ways. It is important to note that the ways we get information is changing constantly. We, as Labor, need to look at new avenues of communications created by social media sites, blogs, and online streaming videos; all of which will keep us relevant to today's union member. Even with these new mediums of communications, we will be reinforcing our traditional forms of communications to make sure everyone is included in our discussions.

However, in order to know what is going on in the state, I need to hear from **YOU**. Notify me if you have a contract dispute, a rally, a community project, or an organizing drive. If you write a blog, use Facebook, or Twitter, let us know about it so we can work together on getting the information that your members need to see in their hands.

If you have any ideas of how we can better utilize our communications, how I can be of assistance to your local, or most importantly, how we can disseminate what occurs in Tallahassee and throughout the state to your members, contact me: my phone number is **850-228-9841** and my email is Janijar@flaflcio.org.

Florida is my home, so regardless of what the Legislature wants to do, I will be fighting tooth and nail to educate and mobilize our members to stand up and fight against injustice and exploitation for all working families. Together we can create an environment in Florida in which all workers have dignity and respect on the job, but only if we work, and most importantly, communicate with each other.

Disney Workers Show Their Struggle in New Movie

Millions of guests pour into Disney World every day. For some, this is a well-earned vacation. For others, it's their first experience in America. Either way, Orlando is a never-ending tourist Mecca with people making pilgrimages to see Mickey Mouse® and enjoy the wonders of this masterpiece of Florida's tourism.

Disney has dominated Central Florida as the region's largest employer since 1971, making them vital to the sustainability of the local economy. So what happens when the wages that Disney pays no longer keep their employees above the poverty line? Furthermore, what does this do to *all* wages in the Central Florida area, when Disney is what many companies compare their wages to?

When the lights to the Magic Kingdom are turned off and all the tourists go back to their hotels, there is another story that remains; a story that never gets told in an animated movie. This is the story of the workers (called "cast members") that make the "magic" of Disney a reality.

Many Disney workers barely earn more than the minimum wage; forcing many "cast members" to take second jobs in order to survive. This creates economic hardships for the union members, forcing them to either "[buy] medicine or [put] food on the table..." says Jim, a long time Disney "cast member" "...Naturally, I have a family so food comes first" he says. The irony is that Disney contributes a lot of money to charitable foundations to show their "investment" in Central Florida's economy. But as Jim says, "Disney workers have to go and get food stamps because they can't afford to feed their families...so when Disney is giving all this money to charities they are just feeding their own workers".




The Service Trades Council represents approximately 20,800 full-time workers at Disney World, including housekeepers and cooks to costumed characters and monorail pilots. This year, the Service Trades Council began bargaining their new contract with Disney. After six months of bargaining, the first contractual offer by the Disney Corporation was rejected by the "cast members". The company proposed increases in health insurance premiums by more than their proposed wage increases. This results in a net loss of 8 cents per hour for the average worker. Instead of bargaining in good faith and providing their workers with basic economic stability, Disney continued the practices of the majority of employers- by neglecting the concerns of workers for their own concerns of profit. Doug, a union member, talks about the economic sacrifices he has to deal with due to his low wages at Disney, "For me and my family to survive, we have to go to the Churches. We go to the churches and we get handouts, I can't help it, I have to survive".

In response to Disney's offer, the Service Trades Council created a video called **Mouse Trapped 2010**. This movie highlights the low wages and benefits at the theme park and was made to add pressure on the company to bargain fairly.

Mouse Trapped 2010 is a short documentary that has workers describing in their own words the hardship that they must tackle in order to work at Disney World. The movie shows the heart breaking sacrifices of these workers and highlights the corporate greed of a large multinational company that refuses to be fair to their workers. As Bryan says in Mouse Trapped, "I love what I do but I can't stand what I get paid, I live pay check to pay check...and when I heard insurance was going to go up again I said there is no way, I would have to leave the company and I don't want to do that". The testimonials in this video show a dedicated workforce that loves their jobs, but can't afford to work there in today's economic climate.

You can watch the Mouse Trapped 2010 at the **Florida AFL-CIO's You-Tube site (youtube.com/floridaaflcio)** or by just searching "MouseTrapped 2010" into You-Tube. Please take a look at this video, to see firsthand what occurs at one of the largest union jobsites in Florida, so you can be prepared to help in what is sure to be a major battle of 2011.



Remembering where we came from...

"Ten thousand times has the labor movement stumbled and fallen and bruised itself and risen again; been seized by the throat and choked into insensibility; enjoined by the courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by the militia, shot down by regulars, frowned upon by public opinion, deceived by politicians, threatened by priests, repudiated by renegades, preyed upon by grafters, infested by spies, deserted by cowards, betrayed by traitors, bled by leeches and sold out by leaders. But not withstanding all this, and all these, it is today the most vital and potential power this planet has ever known."

Eugene Debs

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Notes from the Legislative/Political Coordinator – Phyllis Garrett

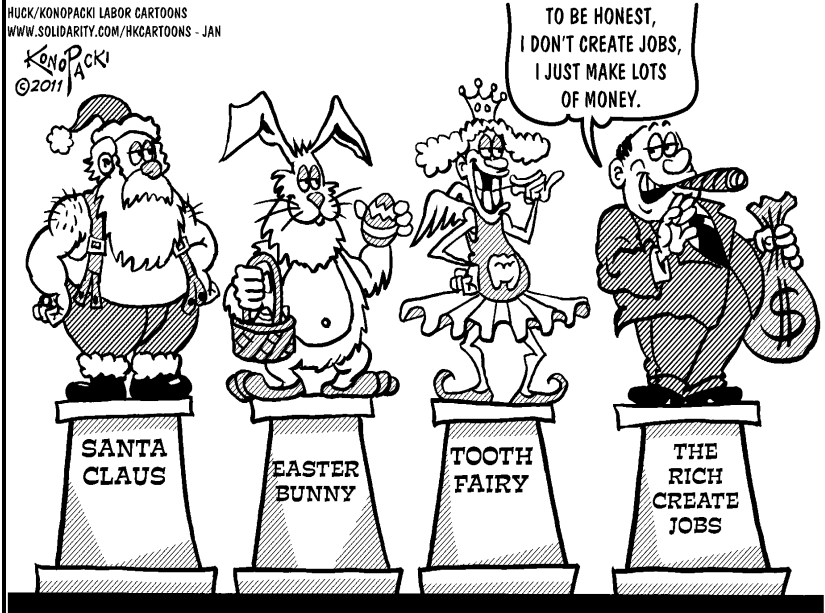
Planning for Legislative Session has commenced! The Florida AFL-CIO, CLCs and Affiliates will work to schedule two activists a week from each CLC to come to Tallahassee and lobby from **March 7th through May 6th**. This means a minimum of 180 union activists will be on the hill over the nine week Session. Any activists who is interested in being a part of this exciting new lobbying program should contact their local union leadership and let them know you would like to participate.



Strategic/Political Planning Meeting- The Florida AFL-CIO, affiliated union and council leaders, CLC officers, CLC Coordinators, Political Coordinators, and our Statewide Affiliate leadership will be updating the State Federation plan while working to encompass the Strategic Goals of CLC's and Zones. We will expand the Strategic Plan to include the 2012 Political Plan. We urge all to attend this meeting. The meeting will convene at **9:00 AM, Saturday, February 26th and will adjourn approximately 12:00 PM, Sunday, February 27th**. We will be at the **Lake Buena Vista Palace, 1900 Buena Vista Drive, Orlando, FL., 32830**. For more information on hotel reservations or a meeting registration form contact Phyllis Garrett at 850-566-9281 or email her at pgarrett@flafcio.org

SAVE THE DATE – Florida AFL-CIO Biennial Convention scheduled for **October 9-12, 2011 in Orlando**. More information to follow.

One Last Thing Before You Go...
 Did you enjoy reading this? Think others would too? Then pass this on! You can share this two different ways, either physically pass this on to your brothers and sisters after you are done reading it OR go to our website (<http://www.flafcio.org/>), and get a digital version; which you can then email, or post to your Facebook or Twitter account.
 If you were a lucky person that got this from someone else and would like to be added to our mailing list so you can receive "Solidarity in the Sunshine" then please email or call **Joshua Anijar at janijar@flafcio.org or 850-228-9841**. Please title email "Sign-me up" and we will add you to our mailing list.



Great American Myths

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Published by the Florida AFL-CIO Public Relations Department for our affiliates only. Send address corrections to Charlie Bell, Solidarity in the Sunshine, 135 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32301. Phone 850-224-6926, FAX 850-224-2266.

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