

Long Island Chapter

Labor and Employment Relations Association

Newsletter

SHAPING THE WORKPLACE OF THE *FUTURE*



bug

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PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: A TIME FOR CHANGE

As I write this column, Senator Barack Obama has just become President Elect Barack Obama. In January, he will take the oath of office, and become the forty-fourth President of the United States. Long Island LERA members have diverse viewpoints. Some of our members welcome this coming change in national leadership, while others view it more pessimistically.



Thomas J. Lilly, Jr.

In January, Long Island LERA will also have a new president, as my two year term ends, and Beverly Harrison's begins. That is a change that all Long Island LERA members can anticipate with optimism.

If you know Beverly, you know that she is an individual of great talent and energy. She has been a tireless booster of our organization for years. Her contributions will, no doubt, be even greater when she becomes our president. I know Beverly is looking forward to the job, and we all can look forward to working with her.

Looking Back

As this is my last column as president, it seems appropriate to pause to review the last two years of Long Island LERA's life. I am happy to report that they have been good years for our organization.

Quantitatively, the accomplishments are obvious. Our membership is up 52% over the last two years. Attendance at meetings has increased 86%. We gave out \$5,000 in scholarships. We won two consecutive Star Awards from National LERA, as well as awards for outstanding programming, member innovation, community involvement, communications and chapter excellence.

Qualitatively, we have had outstanding presentations from leaders of government, industry and the labor movement. We increased the diversity of our membership. For

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

Please Add These To Your Calendar

Wed., Mar. 11, 2009

Black Forest Brew Haus

Farmingdale

Fri., May 8, 2009, Annual Conference

New York Institute of Technology

the first time, we got Continuing Legal Education credit for attorneys who attended our Spring Conference. We made meetings easy and pleasant to attend.

Involvement in Long Island LERA has always been helpful for any Long Island labor and employment professional. As we head into 2009, we have gone beyond just being helpful. In order to be a successful labor and employment professional on Long Island, involvement in LERA is increasingly important.

Looking Forward

Our chapter's accomplishments are the fruits of the labor of many talented people. If you even occasionally attend Long Island LERA meetings, you know that we have a virtual Who's Who of Long Island labor and employment professionals involved in making our chapter a success. If you are a regular attendee at LERA meetings, you also know that these distinguished men and women are great fun to talk with, eat with, drink with, argue with, and laugh with.

We do not have a chapter motto, but we could easily borrow New York's: Excelsior (or, for those of us

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who did not take Latin, Ever Upward). With the wonderful people we already have involved, and under Beverly Harrison's leadership, we can look forward to great things from Long Island LERA in the coming years.

Which brings me to the most important part of this column: Thank you. It was an honor to be president, and, more than that, it was fun. Being president allowed me to work with and get to know a lot of good people. I have been coming to Long Island LERA meetings for quite a while now, and I never met anyone there who I did not like.

Excelsior!

**Barbara Dienhardt,
Chair of the New
York State
Employment
Relations
Board**



**Dr. Gregory DeFritas, Director of the Labor
Studies Program at Hofstra University, speaking
at our Sept. 16 meeting.**



Barbara Deinhardt, New Chair of NYS ERB, Speaks at our June 6 meeting

At our June 6 meeting we were honored to have Barbara Deinhardt, newly appointed chair of the New York State Employment Relations Board, as our guest speaker. Formed in 1991 from the State Labor Relations Board and the State Mediation Board, Ms. Deinhardt asked for our collective feedback on how to make her agency an effective tool in reducing labor-management conflict in the private sector. She explained that NYS SERB operates as a state FMCS and a state NLRB. "Our unfair labor practice and representation jurisdiction is limited, but our conflict resolution services are available to all private employers in the state and their unions."

Under her leadership, SERB now has jurisdiction over new groups of workers, including home-based child care providers, who are self-employed but negotiate with the state. Ms. Deinhardt requests the assistance of labor relations practitioners to improve and expand the services that her agency can offer to labor or business leaders, arbitrators or attorneys who practice labor law. She noted that they have offices in Albany, Buffalo and New York City.

Labor Studies at Hofstra University

Dr. Gregory DeFreitas, the director of the Labor Studies Program at Hofstra University came to our meeting of September 16 at the Black Forest restaurant in Farmingdale to tell our members about the program. Labor Studies at Hofstra is an interdisciplinary program designed to offer students a broad background in the multiple perspectives on and analytical approaches to labor issues in an international context. The program coordinates courses from departments throughout the University, and includes opportunities for independent course work and internships with businesses, nonprofit organizations, government agencies and labor unions.

Both full-and part-time students are welcomed to take courses that can lead to a Certificate in Labor Studies or a B.A. in Labor Studies. For application forms and information about the part-time Labor Studies Certificate Program (UCCE) call (516) 463-5993 or email ucce@hofstra.edu. For the B.A. in Labor Studies call 1-800-HOFSTRA or visit www.hofstra.edu/admissions.

Review of *Employment With A Human Face: Balancing Efficiency, Equity, and Voice* by John W Budd

by Dr. John W. Coverdale, Reg. Dir., NYSUT

John W Budd is an Industrial Relations Professor at the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management. His book, *Employment with a Human Face*, takes an in depth, analytical, and well-balanced look at a wide array of issues critical to today's employment relationship.

Within the very first two sentences of Budd's introduction, one gets the sense that this book will be an interesting read. That sense is heightened by the context and fragility of today's economic times. Budd opines, "employment is a critical feature of modern society. The nature of employment determines the quality of individual's lives, the operation of the economy, the visibility of democracy, and the degree of respect for human dignity." To this already powerful assertion Budd adds, "It is therefore essential that modern society establish societal goals for employment."

Whether one agrees with this assessment or not, clearly more than economic peace of mind is at stake without such goals. Budd makes a very substantive argument for enhanced understanding of the intimate connection between work and quality of life. In fact, Budd offers that "respect for the importance of human life and dignity is more than an economic transaction, it requires that the fair treatment of workers also be a fundamental standard for the employment relationship." On this point Budd feels so strongly that he actually feels employee input and participation in work related decisions that affect workers lives should be mandated. This is partially because Budd sees the employment relationship in the 21st century as "turbulent," and supports this viewpoint with the well-established fact that the expectations of stable, lifetime employment have all but vanished.

While Budd's book does contain a lot of very interesting insights to the workplace, it is not what might be called an easy read. In fact, parts of it are extremely tedious, and on occasion Budd goes on way too long after his point has already been made. However, what Budd has done extraordinarily well is build upon economic, political, and industrial relations theorists such as Dunlop, Commons, and Rawls, to present his own theories designed to improve workplace functionality. One of the more illustrative examples is Budd's theory that the objectives of the employment relationship are efficiency (the well known standard of economic per-

formance), equity (the encompassing of fair employment standards in material outcomes and personal treatment), and voice (the ability to have meaningful input into decisions). Equity, Budd adds, includes a fair wage, basic social or private insurance coverage, vacation time, and non-discriminatory treatment, all of which he submits, are instrumental in providing the means towards greater ends such as food, shelter, healthcare, and leisure.

As if to make sure the reader has fully contemplated the significance of the aforementioned, Budd then gives us an effective overview of the many advantages to equitable treatment and employee participation. He states that they can "provide the avenues for reducing turnover, increasing employee commitment, and harnessing worker's ideas for improving productivity and quality." To enhance his point, Budd offers that "voice" is important whether or not it improves economic performance, and whether or not it alters the distribution of economic rewards. While Budd adds that equity and voice are the objectives of labor, he acknowledges the inherent conflict between efficiency and equity in the employment relationship, citing the many ongoing debates over minimum wage and the impact of unionization. Even though he acknowledges that globalization continues to put downward pressure on employment standards, Budd still feels that public debates should center on the question, what are the objectives of the employment relationship? This discussion would include the goals of employers, employees, and society, and the objectives are efficiency, equity, and voice.

Budd defines employment with a human face as "a productive and efficient employment relationship that also fulfills the standards of human rights." In 1999, the International Labour Organization called this simply "decent work." While either definition is both suitable and timely, Budd's definition offers a philosophical expansion that connects worker rights to human rights as an issue for today's progressive employers.

Employment with a Human Face presents an insightful look at many of the industrial, social, and economic issues employers and employees deal with in today's workplace. More importantly, Budd lays the groundwork for what would be a significant, highly relevant, and much needed discussion about the employment relationship and its impact on the lives of all employees, both inside and outside of

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the workplace. Throughout the major themes of this book it is very apparent that Budd sees the workplace as a foundation upon which social justice can be achieved more consistently. Thus, Budd's call for "a renewed industrial relations focus" is perhaps more appropriate today than at any point in the recent history of workplace issues.

LI LERA WEBSITE www.lilera.org

With the technical assistance provided by Executive Board member Tom Wassel (and some help from his firm, Cullen and Dykman) the following information is available for your perusal:

- Benefits of joining our chapter
- Executive Officer Roster
- National LERA constitution
- Dates and locations of upcoming meetings
- A membership application
- The last three newsletters
- Links to LERA national and other websites

Please take a look and let us know if there are any suggestions that will make the site more useful to those who consult it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, NOTICES

If you have an announcement or job posting that you would like to have published, send it for consideration to our editor 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***

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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