Collective Bargaining is a Human Right: Union Review for 2011

by Kathleen de la Peña McCook

Article 23. - Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)
(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests. (United Nations)

Librarians in public sector unions were among those targeted in Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, and Florida in 2011 by Republican governors and legislatures. Workers in education, training, and library occupations had the highest unionization rate in the United States at 36.8 percent (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2012). The most recent mean annual wage reported in the U.S. Occupational Employment Statistics data is $55,500 (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2011). In 2011 a variety of laws were introduced in several states to limit the strength of unions.

The necessity of collective bargaining is underscored by this anti-union legislation. Collective bargaining is recognized internationally in numerous conventions, constitutions, and courts as a human right (Boccardy, 2011). In Wisconsin Uprising: Labor Fights Back (Yates, 2012) labor journalists examine the causes and impact of events as workers in Wisconsin shook the nation with their colossal display of solidarity and outrage in 2011 (Monthly Review Press). Kimberly Freeman Brown, Executive Director, American Rights at Work, noted best moments for workers in 2011 were: the 99 percent fights back; Ohio voters repeal SB 5; and NLRB rules help protect workers’ rights (Brown).

Writing about librarians and labor that appeared during 2011 included multiple articles on the Wisconsin protests. Most notably Joyce M. Latham’s essay, “Walkerville, New Democrats & ‘Wishes in the Wind’: Rolling Back
the 20th Century in Wisconsin,” placed the Wisconsin spring 2011 protests in the context of the path to participatory progress in the twentieth century. Dr. Latham focused on the role of the Wisconsin Education Association as well as librarian involvement (Latham, “Walkerville,” 2011). Other coverage of librarians and the Wisconsin protests is included in articles by Barbakoff, Berry, Goldberg, McCabe, and McQueen.

Mike Hall’s entries at the AFL-CIO blog provide details about labor actions in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and elsewhere. They are a detailed and compelling story of action on the front lines. The complete analysis of union response to anti-labor legislation is yet to be written, as push-back by unions and their supporters including recall votes against bad laws and other grassroots protests are still in progress at this writing. (I am writing this summary in January 2012). 2011 is the year that labor took center stage in the fight for income equality.

Gerry W. McEntee, President of AFSCME exclaimed “We haven’t had this kind of energy, this kind of spark, in our union in decades….Look at the crowds that came out to protest in Wisconsin: 50,000, 70,000, 100,000. These people are jazzed up. They’re ready to do battle.” (Greenhouse, “Countering the Siege,” 2011). Emphasizing this direction we find Linkon and Russo asserting the need to organize in a time of class war.

Other library and union related publications in 2011 include:

Tracy and Hayashi address perspectives of academic librarians in Florida’s public universities concerning library work and advocacy for workplace rights by professional organisations and the statewide faculty union — the United Faculty of Florida.

Latham and Ditzler investigate the structures of unions within the public library in the United States by highlighting the complexity of composition, variance of relationships to library administration, and the simplicity of mission of the union leadership.

Latham wrote an important historical essay analyzing the history of the South Chicago Branch Library in the context of U.S. cultural change following the Great Depression and the “Age of the CIO (the Congress for Industrial Organization).” (Latham, “Memorial Day to Memorial Library,” 2011).
Worman and Samek discuss the new divide in LIS education—the digital labor shortage: looking at the shifting balance between management and labor in a computerized work environment.

McCook wrote the 2009-2010 review of librarians and unions for *Progressive Librarian #34-35*.

Two major labor history books were published in 2011 that PLG members will find of interest:


The PLG Project, Union Library Workers—a blog of library union news, is written by Braden Cannon as of January 2012. Braden is co-founder of the first Canadian PLG chapter at Dalhousie University in 2008 and co-founder of the chapter in Edmonton. He is an archivist at the Provincial Archives of Alberta and has been a member of the Industrial Workers of the World since 2002.

*January 2011*

§ Union activity was central to PLG action at the ALA Midwinter Meeting 2011. Mark Hudson, member of the coordinating committee of the Progressive Librarians Guild sent an e-mail to members to “Join Unite Here Local 30 on the Picket line at the Manchester Grand Hyatt on Friday, Jan 7th from 3:00-5:00pm and Saturday, January 8th from 11:30 am-1:30 pm.” Mark announced that representatives from UNITE HERE would attend the PLG meeting and a PLG dinner would follow the meeting at the Bandar Restaurant from 7-9. Kei Nagao, research assistant with SEIU Local 721 and Cindy Singer, public librarian in LA County spoke to the group about the rash of library privatizations by LSSI. They have started an anti-privatization movement and awareness campaign called Privatizationbeast.org. The group intends to highlight librarians and libraries, so elected officials don’t make decisions without knowing all the facts. They said that with budgets continuing to fall, this could become a bigger issue in the future. (SRRT Minutes). Letter by Gregory Horn in *American Libraries* provides additional reflection.
Resolution at ALA Midwinter relating to labor and unions. The resolution failed at Council, and is discussed at SRRT website: http://libr.org/srrt/news/srrt174.php

Resolution on Notifying Conference and Meeting Attendees of Hotels Named on “Do Not Patronize” Lists

WHEREAS, In 2009, about 25% of librarians were union members, about 24% of library technicians were union members, and about 19% of other education, training, and library workers were union members (Bureau of National Affairs, 2010 Union Membership and Earnings Data Book, Table 8a, Washington, DC);

WHEREAS, The American Library Association (ALA) recognizes the right of library employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers (ALA Policy 54.11, “Collective Bargaining”);

WHEREAS, The ALA’s essential set of core values for its members include working for “The Public Good” and “Social Responsibility” (ALA Policy 40.1, “Core Values of Librarianship”);

WHEREAS, The fair treatment of workers and their families is a considerable public good and a social responsibility.

WHEREAS, Workers at union establishments, including union hotels, are far more likely than their non-union counterparts to be paid a living wage, to receive employer-paid family medical benefits, and to enjoy freedom from work-related illness and injuries (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Union Members Summary, 2009; National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in the United States, March 2009, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, September 2009. Bulletin 2731);

WHEREAS, Convention centers and hotels with labor disputes and picket lines would likely be disruptive settings for many ALA members, and could easily delay or prevent those members from participating in conventions and exhibitions, major meetings, and other organizational activities;

WHEREAS, The First Amendment protects the right of an association and its members to support a union’s request for a boycott. There are no statutes or case law that indicates the First Amendment does not protect the right of an association and its members to support a union’s request for a boycott;

WHEREAS, National and local labor organizations maintain “Do Not Patronize” lists of hotels that are involved in labor disputes, and

WHEREAS, Library employees who believe very strongly in the right of workers to organize, picket, and strike need advance notice of labor disputes so that they do not plan to attend ALA events at a hotel that is on a “Do Not Patronize” list; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the American Library Association Executive Director, to the extent known at the initial announcement of conference registration and prior to the conference taking place, will inform attendees of conferences and exhibitions if a hotel is on the “Do Not Patronize” list of the local labor body during an ALA event, or is the object of a boycott because of the unfair labor practices of the hotel.
February 2011

§ February may go down in library labor history as the single most intense month of activism since public sector collective bargaining began. Thousands of people protested in Wisconsin. (Latham; Walkerville; Barbakoff; Berry; Goldberg; McCabe; McQueen) opposing the proposed Budget Repair Bill and diminishment of the collective bargaining rights of public employees.

Wisconsin State Capitol Rotunda-February 18, 2011

§ Not only did librarians play active roles in protests, but solidarity actions took place and statements were issued by the Library of Congress Guild, the American Library Association, the University of Wisconsin School of Library and Information Studies, the Progressive Librarians Guild and the Wisconsin Library Association.


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American Library Association President Roberta Stevens on proposed collective bargaining legislation. February 24, 2011.

CHICAGO - As thousands protest proposed collective bargaining legislation in Wisconsin, Michigan and Indiana, American Library Association (ALA) President Roberta Stevens released the following statement in support of those standing up for workers’ rights.

“While governments are facing financial challenges, addressing deficits should not serve as an opportunity to strip away the hard-won right of workers to collectively bargain,” said Stevens.

“As library visits continue to soar, with job seekers and families turning to our libraries to gain new skills and free access to education resources, the value of library service and staff should be recognized and protected.

“The ALA supports library employees in seeking equitable compensation and recognizes the principle of collective bargaining as an important element of successful labor-management relations. We affirm the right of employees to organize and bargain collectively with their employers, without fear of reprisal. These are basic workers’ rights that we defend for thousands of academic, public and school library professionals.

Letter of support from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Library and Information Studies. Feb. 25, 2011.

…We stand in solidarity with our sister universities throughout the state, and with the teachers, teaching assistants, office workers and many others who clear our roads, guard our prisons, keep us safe, and educate our children. We want a Wisconsin that looks forward, toward a bright future in a 21st century economy. And we also want a civil Wisconsin, where critical decisions concerning hundreds of thousands of citizens aren’t made overnight by fiat.

The Progressive Librarians Guild: Statement in Solidarity with Public Employees. February 27, 2011

The Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) stands in solidarity with public employees in Wisconsin and in all other states across the nation where workers’ rights to collective bargaining are under attack by governors and legislatures determined to use budgetary exigencies as a pretext to try to decisively break the back of the public-sector unions as a key part of an ideological agenda which
seeks to fundamentally remake America, taking the country back to a pre-New Deal, pre-Progressive era regime of unfettered, rapacious corporate rule.

The attack on the public employees unions is only part of a broader assault on all aspects of democratic society aimed to turn the clock back on issues like women’s rights, civil rights, education and culture, environmental protection, social welfare and insurance, and the very existence of a public sector. Preventing this overturning of all the gains made through struggle and sacrifice in the previous century will require above all, the mobilization of a broad people’s movement of a kind heralded by the sustained demonstration in Madison and spreading across the country as people begin to awaken to what is at stake.

§ The Wisconsin Library Association opposes the proposed Budget Repair Bill and affirms the collective bargaining rights of public employees. February 28, 2011.

…the Budget Repair Bill is certainly frugal, but it is also certainly unfair. The bill has been promoted as a means of making the compensation of public employees fair when compared with the private sector. Librarians will be glad to direct legislators to the many studies which prove that public employee compensation including pensions and health insurance is below compensation for comparable private sector jobs, both nationally and in Wisconsin. Inaccurately portraying public employees as being overpaid is unfair. It is also unfair to include sweeping policy changes in the areas of collective bargaining rights, Medicaid eligibility, and the sale of public assets in an emergency bill designed to strictly limit debate on these important issues.

The Wisconsin Library Association supports the Wisconsin traditions of frugality and fairness. We are proud to stand with those who oppose this unfair legislation.

Ron McCabe, President-elect, WLA

March 2011

§ Audrey Barbakoff, librarian at the Milwaukee Public Library wrote an editorial for American Libraries: “I’m Not Your Scapegoat. A Unionized Librarian Refuses to Play the Dues-paying Villain” stating: “The poisonous idea that librarians and libraries steal from their communities—and the consequently heighten need to shout our worth from the rooftops—is not confined to the states in which union-busting laws have been introduced. Ideas do not respect legislative borders. Bad budgets and bad legislation will hurt us for a time. Silent acquiescence to the idea we are valueless to our communities will hurt us forever.” Barbakoff drew many comments (March 7, 2011).
§ On March 8, the Librarians Guild of Los Angeles Public Library, Local 2626 were cheered by the success of the Save Our Library Campaign. Director Martin Gómez also credited the Friends groups, the Librarians Guild, and other unions, who came together to advocate for passage of the charter amendment that will secure Los Angeles Public Library’s funding for years to come (Kelley; Librarians Guild).

§ The Association for Library and Information Science Education (ALISE) commended the action taken by the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Library and Information Studies, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Senate, and others who have shown public support of those standing up for workers’ rights. We applaud the support shown for our colleagues in Wisconsin as they seek to protect the right to collective bargaining. March 10, 2011. (ALISE Board of Directors.)


§ The Russell Library of Middletown, Connecticut was the 2011 recipient of the John Sessions Memorial Award [see below] for their successful Business & Career Programs. The Russell Library provides 10 to 12 workshops annually that aim to help individuals find jobs or change their careers. Programs include job searching, interview coaching, computer classes and stress reduction during job searching, among other topics. With this programming, the library has done significant outreach to union and community members by providing services of special interest to the labor community, as well as connecting with local organizations to publicize their services to job seekers. The award committee selected the library as this year’s recipient for these notable efforts that are vital in today’s economic climate and for the value the programs hold for the local labor community. (Russell Library selected, 2011)

§ 2011 marked the 30th anniversary of the John Sessions Memorial Award, an honor presented by the Reference and User Services Association (RUSA) of the American Library Association and named for John Sessions, former American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) co-chair of the AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups. The Sessions Award recognizes a library or library system that has made a significant effort to work with the labor community and by so doing has brought recognition to the community through the library of the history and contribution of the labor movement to the development of this country.
In recognition of the 30th Anniversary we note the annual winners from 1981-2011 (John Sessions Memorial Award website).

2011 Russell Library, Middletown, CT, Business & Career Programs
2010 Murray-Green Library at Roosevelt University, Chicago
2009 Wirtz Labor Library
2008 Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Union Affairs, Wayne State University
2007 James B. Carey Library
2006 Joan Cassidy - New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) headquarters librarian for creating the Albert Shanker “Where We Stand” database.
2005 Bridgeport (CT) Public Library’s Historical Collection
2004 Ruth A. Haas Library, Western Connecticut State University
2003 Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library
2002 The Web Design Group for the Allegheny County Labor Council
2001 Duane G. Meyer Library, Southwest Missouri State University
2000 Lodi Memorial Library of Lodi, New Jersey
1999 Libraries for the Future
1998 The Institute of Industrial Relations Library
1997 Englewood (NJ) Public Library
1996 Metropolitan Detroit Professionals Library, UAW Local 2200
1995 Special Collections and University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries and Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives, Labor History Collection, Butte, Montana
1994 Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University
1993 Texas Labor Archives, University of Texas at Arlington
1991 Department of Archives and Special Collections, Ohio University Libraries, Athens, Ohio
1990 Hennepin County Library, Minnetonka, Minnesota
1989 Citizens Library (Peter G. Sullivan, Director), Washington, PA
1988 Southern Labor Archives, Georgia State University
1987 Lorain (Ohio) Public Library
1986 Martin P. Catherwood Library, Cornell University, New York
1985 Birmingham (Alabama) Public Library
1984 Jackson-George Regional Library System, Pascagoula, Mississippi
1983 State Historical Society of Wisconsin Library
1982 Wagner Labor Archives, Bobst Library, New York University
1981 Muncie (Indiana) Public Library

§ The Holt Labor Library (San Francisco) re-opened in March. The Holt Labor Library was established in 1992 to provide a working library for labor and progressive studies accessible to the general public.
April 2011

§ Thousands seeking to repeal Ohio’s new collective bargaining law rallied April 9th at the Statehouse, vowing to get a referendum on the next ballot and promising to remember the political fight over the measure when they choose which candidates to support in future elections. The crowd was the largest since the debate over Senate Bill 5 began in February. Many also signed up to help collect the 231,000 signatures needed to get a referendum on the November ballot. Melissa Cropper, a librarian for Georgetown schools in southwestern Ohio, said killing the law “is about saving the middle class and protecting the rights of workers. Corporations are getting all the breaks, and they’re trying to balance the budget on the backs of the workers.”(Opponents of new union law rally in Ohio’s capital).

May 2011

§ Union officials with the Wichita teachers union say a plan to replace high school librarians with unlicensed clerks will shortchange students. (Tobias).

June 2011

§ Opponents of Ohio Governor John Kasich’s push to strip public employees of collective bargaining rights needed to collect 231,000 valid signatures to force a referendum that would override anti-labor legislation enacted by Kasich and his allies…. But the labor and community groups that have come together to defend public employees, teachers, schools and services have exceeded it — by more than one million signatures — representing one of the most remarkable examples of petitioning for the redress of grievances — and of popular democracy — in American history. (Nichols).

§ The Florida Education Association filed a lawsuit in June 2011 in Circuit Court in Tallahassee seeking to stop the 3 percent pay cut on teachers, school employees and other workers imposed by the Florida Legislature and signed by Gov. Rick Scott. “This pay cut was used by legislative leadership to make up a budget shortfall on the backs of teachers, law-enforcement officers, firefighters and other state workers,” said FEA President Andy Ford.

§ Public Librarian Association of Youngstown, affiliated with Service Employees International Union District 1199. The board of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County has ratified an agreement with its librarians that includes a pay freeze and reductions in vacation and sick time. (New Library Pact, June 11)

§ Over 250,000 New York City Residents Voiced Support for their Public Libraries! June 16, 2011, Queens Library, New York Public Library and Brooklyn Public Library gave officials over a 1/4 million petitions and
postcards signed by the residents of New York City. Local 1321 members held rallies throughout Queens to highlight the drastic impact these cuts would have on public libraries and library users responded in a big way. (Queens Library Guild)

§ The American Library Association Conference in June 2011 featured several programs reflecting aspects of labor and unionism.

Library History Roundtable (LHRT) Research Forum

Ellen Pozzi, Rutgers University, “The History of the Business Branch of the Newark Free Public Library.”


David M. Hovde and John W. Fitch, “Reading for Those Who ‘Labor with Their Hands and Earn Their Living by the Sweat of Their Brows.’”

LIBRARIES FIGHT BACK! Organized by: AFL-CIO/ALA Joint Committee on Library Service to Labor Groups. Program examined inventive ways that library workers combat the erroneous belief that their work is “nonessential” or “extra” and provided tools for those who wish to fight back for their library community. A special focus was the relationship between union advocacy and library advocacy. Speakers: Elissa C. Cadillic President of AFSCME Council 93 Local 1526 Boston Public Library; Amy Fry, Bowling Green State University (BGSU which recently voted to unionize), and Jason Neely of the Career and Business Resources Librarian at the Russell Library in Middletown, Connecticut.

July 2011

§ Toronto Public Library’s union launched a campaign called Project Rescue on July 13 to fight the threat of outsourcing. “The cuts would be devastating to the library system,” says union president Maureen O’Reilly, who’s running Project Rescue. She says the library’s budget has already been cut 10 percent since amalgamation. (Toronto Public Library Workers Union).

§ Utah teachers held a rally to Save Our Schools. A crowd of about 50 people gathered at the Salt Lake City Main Library July 29 to rally around
elected leaders and activists who talked about taking back schools from politicians and corporate interests. The group then marched to the nearby State Office of Education. (Schencker).

August 2011

§ Philip Levine, best known for his “big-hearted, Whitmanesque poems about working-class Detroit,” is the new poet laureate. He was selected from a long list of nominees by James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, who said, “He’s the laureate, if you like, of the industrial heartland.” (McGrath). Levine is author of many books of poetry including *What Work Is: Poems* (1991). In 2010 Levine’s poem “Library Days” appeared in M.L. Liebler’s anthology, *Working Words: punching the Clock and Kicking out the Jams* (Coffee House Press).

§ Unionized librarians and archivists at the University of Western Ontario, London, Canada, set a strike deadline for September 8 — the first day of classes at UWO — as bargaining continues with university administration over staffing and compensation. UWO librarians and archivists, represented by the UWOF (University of Western Ontario Faculty Association) bargaining unit, have been without a contract since June 30, and have been in ongoing negotiations with UWO administration since April. (Rapp)

September 2011

§ The University of Western Ontario (UWO) Board of Governors and the UWO Faculty Association Librarians and Archivists (UWOFA-LA) bargaining unit announced that they have ratified a new collective agreement, in which the 51 librarians and archivists represented by UWOFAL-A will receive a 1.5 percent base salary increase each year for four years. The agreement ends a strike by the librarians and archivists that began on September 8, the first day of classes at UWO. (Rapp, September 23).

§ Sixty workers at the New York Public Library were awarded a total of $200,000 in retroactive Sunday overtime pay under an arbitration ruling. The arbitrator ordered the library to reinstate its longtime practice of premium pay for voluntary overtime work on Sundays and give the affected members back pay from Aug. 1, 2010, when the union filed the grievance, to July 19, the date of the decision. AFSCME. DC 37. Local 1930 (Arbiter)

§ On September 25th, delegates from Vermont’s AFL-CIO State Labor Council elected Ben Johnson as President. Ben is a librarian at Vermont Technical College, a member of the Vermont State Colleges Faculty Federation, AFT local 3180, and head of United Professionals AFT Vermont. In a time of unprecedented attacks on the middle class, working people, and unions, new Vermont AFL-CIO President Ben Johnson called on members
of all unions to keep organizing. “The only way for us to move forward is organize a mass grassroots movement to change what’s politically possible.” (AFL-CIO state labor council).

October 2011

§ PLG Statement on Occupy Wall Street. 10/06/11. The Progressive Librarians Guild issued a statement supporting the Occupy Wall Street protest and the movement it has sparked. “PLG applauds the commitment and creativity being shown in providing a place for the articulation of opposition to the whole apparatus of the one-sided class war against workers, unions, the poor, immigrants, minorities, people of color, women, students and other sectors…We note that the Occupy Wall Street community has seen the need to create a ‘library’ as part of its essential infrastructure... We call upon members of the Progressive Librarians Guild and all librarians of conscience to assist the movement with resources and technical aid.”

§ The University of New Hampshire and its faculty reached an impasse in salary negotiations for the second time in a year, as the school struggles to cope with a steep cut in state funding. The university and a union representing its 630 tenured and tenure-track professors will now go to mediation in an effort to agree on a new four-year contract, Deanna Wood, a reference librarian and president of the faculty union, said many faculty members may opt not to accept the contract that has been offered. (McClure)

§ Chicago librarians, clerks, and pages filed petitions to Mayor Rahm Emanuel in opposition to cuts outlined in his proposed 2012 city budget. Dubbed “Story Time at City Hall,” library employees read Halloween books to children outside the mayor’s office in City Hall. They presented thousands of signatures against reducing library staff by more than 550 positions and against cutting hours that would close branches for two half-days per week. “They are trying to cut $10 million from the libraries, but a prior appropriation already put $11 million in library building and renovations,” said Anders Lindall, a representative of AFSCME. “They’re going to have nicer libraries with less services and less stuff.” (Balde and Kaplan, 10/31/2011).

§ Carl Sorrell, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) local union representing city librarians, argued that “without the Chicago Public Library, the city of Chicago won’t be as great as it is.” On Halloween morning, several dozen pre-school and early elementary-age children, many in their costumes, sat on the floor outside Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel’s fifth floor City Hall office. There they listened excitedly to a group of librarians read children’s books, such as Where the Wild Things Are and Go Away, Big Green Monster. The “green monster” in their real lives — aka Mayor Emanuel — recently proposed a budget that would cut a third of the full-time equivalent library staff. (Moberg).
November 2011

§ The Detroit Public Library Commission voted on November 15 to close four branches effective December 22. The decision will leave the city’s library system with 20 locations. “In closing libraries, it is always with despair,” said Jo Anne Mondowney, the library’s director. “In many areas, the library is an iconic place for the community, and we recognize that. So, to close any library is a painful thing,” she said... “I’m heartened to hear that our director states that there will be no more layoffs as a result of the commission’s decision,” said Laurie Townsend, who has worked at the library for 34 years and is president of UAW Local Union (LU) 2200, which represents 106 employees, including librarians. The library has five bargaining units represented by three unions: LU 2200, AFSCME 1259, and AFSCME 1231. (Kelley, Detroit).

§ New! Hashtag for Union Librarians news #unionlibrarians (twitter).

§ Workers win in Ohio. In the end, more Ohioans cast votes against Governor Kasich’s top initiative than they did for Governor Kasich a year earlier. It was a blow away election, with workers winning 61.3% of the vote, including the majority of the vote in 82 out of 88 counties. Participation was higher in this off-year general election than in any other in the history of Ohio. (Ryan).

December 2011

§ Facing a $150,000 shortfall for 2012, the City of Plattsburgh (NY) Library Board of Directors has opted to cut four employees. The move is not sitting well with the union. “We don’t agree with their numbers, and we have asked them to sit down with us before they do anything, and they haven’t,” said Denise Nephew, president of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees union. (LoTempio, 2011). Several weeks later, however, AFSCME accepted an agreement proposed by Councilor Tim Carpenter (D-Ward 1), unanimously approving a four-year contract. AFSCME President Denise Nephew said. The new contract, OK’d by the Library Board and pending approval by the Common Council, will prevent layoffs of four library employees.(Clermont, 2011).

§ Fresno County, CA. The Board of Supervisors imposed a nine percent pay cut on more than four-thousand workers on 12/6/2011. The county has imposed a nine percent pay cut on more than four thousand county workers in the Service Employees International Union (S.E.I.U.). The union represents most county non-management workers, janitors, clerks, librarians, and social workers. Their pay ranges from $20,000 to $60,000 per year. (Haagenson)
Barbakoff, Audrey. “I’m Not Your Scapegoat.” A unionized librarian refuses to play the dues-paying villain. American Libraries 03/07/2011 http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/columns/my-
mind/i-m-not-your-scapegoat
Chalson, Gary. “Union Membership Attrition.” Monthly Labor Review (January 2010): 74-76. Research summary examines the validity of common assumptions about membership attrition by measuring union membership changes in expanding and declining industries as well as the number of new members needed by the unions each year for either no change or an increase in union density of 1 percentage point. Union density, a widely used measure of union organization and influence, is calculated as the annual percentage of employed wage and salary workers who are union members.
“Collective Bargaining Under Siege: Several States Seek to Follow Wisconsin’s Move to Limit Public Employee Unions.” American City and County 126, no. 4: 12-13.
Early, Steve. Dial 1-800-Unionism Is Not the Answer. MRZine. September
Early, Steve. Ggode to the ‘Middle-Class’? A Lesson for Labor From Occupy Wall Street. *In These Times* (November 15, 2011). http://www.inthesetimes.com/working/entry/12299/good-bye_to_the_middle-class_a_lesson_for_labor_from_occupy_wall_street/


Holt Labor Library Re-Opens. Website: http://www.holtlaborlibrary.org/
Horn, Gregory. I am lodging a formal complaint to ALA’s leadership about its choice to use the Manchester Grand Hyatt in San Diego for Midwinter. It is a hotel that organized labor is asking people to boycott due to labor practices. *American Libraries* 42, no. 3/4 (March/April 2011): 6-7.

Johnson Sessions Memorial Award. Website. http://www.ala.org/rusa/awards/sessions

John, Ben.


McQueen, Sharon. “Wisconsin’s Mayor Joins Librarians’ Labor-Rights Rally” March 8, 2011. American Libraries

McQueen, Sharon. “Wisconsin Librarians’ March Merges with Tractorcade” Library Journal March 14, 2011.


Project Rescue. Toronto Public Library. OurPublicLibrary.to is a network of people dedicated to preserving the integrity of one of the world’s greatest public library systems, the Toronto Public Library. Toronto Public Library Workers Union. http://ourpubliclibrary.to/


Sessions (John) Memorial Award. Website. http://www.ala.org/rusa/awards/sessions
Twitter. Got news about unions and librarians. For twitter use #unionlibrarians.
Wisconsin Library Association. ALA Statement in Support of Workers’ Rights to Collectively Bargain. Note: On 2/28/11, the WLA Board voted unanimously to endorse ALA’s Statement in Support of Worker’s Rights to Collectively Bargain.


Annual mean wage of librarians, by state, May 2011

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