



In Wisconsin, hope from an unlikely source

RANDI WEINGARTEN, AFT President

ONE OF THE MOST interesting conversations I had while visiting Wisconsin came from an unlikely source: a man who voted for Gov. Scott Walker. We were at a television station in Milwaukee about to do a live interview, and the gentleman was juggling a variety of duties, from makeup to camera work.

The subject of the interview, of course, was Walker's assault on working people, demonstrated by his assault on collective bargaining

on the line helped organize rallies attracting hundreds of thousands of people.

It wasn't hard to find inspiration in Wisconsin. You could see it in the faces of the brave protesters who camped out in the Capitol for days and nights. You could see it in the actions of the courageous Democratic senators who delayed the process long enough to allow the world to see what Walker and his cronies were really up to. And you could hear it in the words of average

in an unprecedented manner to combat these threats—and to offer real solutions in their place. We are meeting these fights head-on; we will not give up or hunker down. But we can't win without the involvement of members like you.

The AFT is helping our state federations develop comprehensive plans to defend vital public services—and the professionals who deliver them—from these no-holds-barred attacks. Our potential to turn this situation around flows from political action, effective communication, promoting ideas for constructive change, building community partnerships and mobilizing public employees who know the realities of their work.

The goals we are fighting for across the country—support for excellent public schools for all children, rights and respect for public employees, and retirement security—are also good for the public. That means that you, and members like you, have a crucial role to play. It means we must make working with neighbors and community partners a permanent way of operating.

We will never give up, and we will not sit on the sidelines. I have no doubt of the righteousness of our principles and our fight. Unfortunately, many politicians facing tough issues would rather stoke fear than hope, by blaming those still in the middle class, and by creating a race to the bottom rather than creating jobs and rebuilding the middle class. We need you, more than ever, to work in your communities, with our allies, and through your union to help turn back these dangerous attacks and help move our country in the right direction.

Our potential to turn this situation around flows from **political action**, effective **communication**, promoting ideas for **constructive change**, and **mobilizing** public employees who know the realities of their work.

rights of public employees. The man said that although he had voted for Walker, he knew now he had made a mistake. He thanked me for what the AFT was doing on behalf of Wisconsin workers.

"Keep doing what you're doing," he said to me.

My friend at that studio is not alone. Multiple polls show that the majority of Wisconsinites strongly oppose Walker's union-busting tactics. Polls also show that the governor's approval ratings have plummeted. This is proof that the fight is just beginning, and that this moment can become a movement.

During the height of the crisis, we held nightly conference calls with our leaders and sent nightly e-mail blasts. And the union town hall meetings with thousands of members

Wisconsin residents who were outraged about what was happening to their state.

But make no mistake: The economic and political landscape for public sector workers is as dangerous as I have ever seen, and not just in Wisconsin. In the guise of budget "reform," "efficiency," "shared sacrifice" and "belt tightening," efforts are under way in a number of states to gut collective bargaining, weaken public employees' pensions, and offload services to the private sector. Worse, these tactics aim to silence the voice public employees have in the workplace by any means necessary, and in the process corrode and undermine the democratic practices and services we and all Americans hold so dear.

The AFT and our members and allies are working at the national, state and local levels

WE ONE ARE

NOW OUR CHALLENGE is to take this moment and turn it into a movement. Join the AFT and other groups that are standing together, by participating in the "We Are One" Week of Action starting April 4. Sign the pledge to make a difference together: www.aft.org/pledge.



A Union of Professionals

AFT Public Employees

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Maryland state employees ratify contracts—no furloughs!

MEMBERS OF THE MARYLAND Professional Employees Council and AFT Healthcare-Maryland overwhelmingly ratified their respective three-year contracts with the state in early February.

“The new contracts reflect the unions’ goals of protecting the rights and hard-won progress of workers, and of advancing their ability to earn and enjoy wages and working conditions that promote their health and well-being,” says AFT Maryland president Marietta English, who is an AFT vice president.

The contracts include a promise of no more furloughs, and will restore salaries to pre-furlough levels, says bargaining team member Maria Mathias, an MPEC vice president who works as an assessor/auditor for the state Department of Assessments and Taxation. (Most state employees were required to take one to five furlough days, depending on salary, in fiscal years 2009, 2010 and 2011.)

Mathias also says the state’s agreement to treat service reduction days in 2012-2014 as paid holidays is a significant development. Unpaid service reduction days were instituted

in fiscal years 2010 and 2011. On those days, certain state facilities are closed.

Under the agreements, bargaining unit members will receive a \$750 bonus in fiscal

The contracts include a promise of no more furloughs, and will restore salaries to pre-furlough levels.

—MARIA MATHIAS,
Maryland Professional Employees Council

year 2012, a 2 percent general cost-of-living raise effective Jan. 1, 2013, and a 3 percent general cost-of-living raise effective Jan. 1, 2014. Within-grade step increases, which were halted due to budget constraints, will be reinstated April 1, 2014.

The agreements maintain the state’s current health insurance premium subsidy for fiscal year 2012, with the parties agreeing to revisit health benefits in fiscal year 2013. Prescription copays range from \$10 for a 45-day supply of a generic drug, to \$80 for a 90-day supply of a nonpreferred brand name drug.

The contracts also strengthen the processes and procedures for addressing worker health and safety issues, including workplace violence.

“People have approached me about joining the union as a result of the contract,” says Mathias, who believes that the agreements reflect acknowledgement on the part of Gov. Martin O’Malley’s administration that state employees have shared in the budget sacrifice of the past two and a half years.

MPEC represents 5,300 state employees in more than 450 job classifications, ranging from accountants and architects to entomologists and meteorologists to bank examiners and forensic scientists.

AFT Healthcare-Maryland represents 1,500 state employees in more than 100 job classifications, including community health nurses, dentists and nutritionists.

The vote count was conducted by the independent American Arbitration Association. Now that the agreements have been approved by the unions’ membership, they go to the Legislature for approval.

What could derail economic recovery?

Economist answers AFT members’ questions

WHEN WILL THE DOWNTURN be over? What’s the unemployment rate going to be in June 2011? How serious a problem is it that the Chinese are financing U.S. debt? What could derail economic recovery?

These are just some of the questions AFT activists asked Moody’s Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi when he took the podium at the AFT’s winter legislative meeting.

“The overarching message that I’d like to impart is that I think there are reasons to be optimistic about the economy,” said Zandi, who has advised both Democrats and Republicans on economic policy. “After three very lean years, two years of very severe recession and a little over a year of very weak economic recovery, I think 2011 is shaping up to be pretty good. And the next couple to three years, I think, will be something we are going to feel pretty good about.”

Zandi pointed to several developments as reasons for optimism, including the decline in U.S. household debt and the fact that economic activity is extraordinarily low relative to demographic measures. For example, Zandi said that production of cars, homes

and other consumer products are at levels that “are well below what we will need based on demographics.”

But the No. 1 reason Zandi gave for optimism is the fact that U.S. businesses, particularly big and midsize companies, are doing very well. “Profit margins are about as wide as they’ve ever been,” Zandi said, later adding that “it’s really no longer a question of whether businesses can go out and invest and hire. It’s really a question of if they’re willing.”

Zandi’s optimistic outlook, however, was tempered by discussion of the reasons for continued concern, including the state and local government budget crisis. Zandi’s opinion: The cutbacks in state and local governments will be a drag on the economy in 2011 and probably 2012. Prediction: States with the biggest budgetary problems and graduated income tax schedules, like California, New Jersey and New York, will be in better fiscal situations this time next year.

The ongoing foreclosure crisis also could negatively affect economic recovery, he said. “Nothing works all that really well in our economy if house prices are falling. The

home is still the most important asset that most people have on their balance sheet.”

As for the question about China’s U.S. Treasury bond portfolio, Zandi said: “The more closely tied the U.S. economy is with the Chinese economy, the better off we are all going to be, because if our economic fortunes are intertwined, our interests are going to be more closely aligned, and they are not going to do things that are counterproductive for the U.S. economy.”

WORKSAFE

Workers Memorial Day
April 28, 2011
Check out health and safety fact sheets at go.aft.org/safety

Standing up for our rights



BRENT NICASTRO



BRENT NICASTRO



TOM STRATTMAN

Faced with attacks on collective bargaining and quality public services, AFT members and our allies are fighting back.

THERE ARE FEW historic events in U.S. history that leave an imprint on the American psyche for generations to come. Will this year's assault on public employees be one of those events? Will working people—unionized and nonunionized, working class and middle class—and the poor and the elderly who rely on government's safety net of programs and services, remember the 2011 attacks a year from now? Two years from now? Ten years from now? Twenty?

Newly seated governors in a number of states went straight for the jugular of working men and women, seeking to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights—fundamentally, their ability to advocate on behalf of the services they provide and speak out against workplace conditions without fear of repercussion.

The governors said elimination of workers' rights was a budgetary necessity. The public, rightfully, hasn't bought that justification. But that hasn't stopped these governors from pursuing their end game.

Take Wisconsin. On March 9, the Republican Senate majority moved swiftly and without a quorum to pass Gov. Scott Walker's collective bargaining reform proposal.

"The first thing that came to mind was, how dirty," says Hurley Price Jr., a member of the Wisconsin Professional Employees Council who works for the Department of Revenue in Madison. "I didn't want anyone to talk to me."

The attacks on collective bargaining were based on ideology and not fiscal responsibility. Union leaders in Wisconsin plainly stated that their members were willing to make financial concessions.

The same ideology is behind efforts to strip workers' rights in other states, including Indiana, Michigan and Ohio. It's tied to big money and corporate interests.

"This is a power grab at the expense of hard-working Americans," says AFT president Randi Weingarten.

Organized labor is fighting back. And it is with something that no corporate PAC can match: the authentic voices of millions of members—and the tens of thousands of taxpayers, clergy, students, small business owners, community activists and others who have rallied to the support of workers and middle-class Americans.

Wisconsin: Recall elections

In Wisconsin, opponents of Walker's agenda continue to descend on the Capitol—more than 100,000 showed up the Saturday following passage of the collective bargaining bill.

But the true battlefield has shifted to communities across the state—where outraged citizens have mounted aggressive efforts to recall eight Republican senators who moved in lockstep with the governor.

"The public understands that when you take away a contract, you are taking away people's rights," says AFT vice president Candice Owley, president of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals. "Support of union workers is higher than I've seen in my 30-year history."

The recall elections could be held as early as late June, says Scott Spector, AFT-Wisconsin's government relations director. An effort to recall Walker will follow, but can't get under way until he has been in office one year.

Indiana: War on the middle class

Bills that would undercut organized labor have led to an uprising among Hoosiers. While Gov. Mitch Daniels has said he opposes a right-to-work measure, many are skeptical. One of Daniels' first orders of business upon taking office in 2005 was the elimination of collective bargaining rights for state employees.

Crowds estimated at more than 10,000 have regularly gathered at the Statehouse in Indianapolis to protest.

Forty Democratic representatives left the

Take a stand!

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, workers are fighting to preserve public services and collective bargaining rights. To get state-by-state updates and find out how you can help, visit the AFT's Making a Difference website, www.aft.org/difference.

Top photo: Hurley Price Jr., front right, and other union members march to Capitol Square in Madison, Wis., for a rally. Middle photo: "I've never been in a union. I've never been a teacher. I've never been a public employee. But I'm a taxpayer, and I'm really mad," Grandma Nancy Rathke of Madison told photographer Brent Nicastro. Bottom photo: AFT president Randi Weingarten cheers on activists in Indiana.

state in an effort to stop Daniels and the GOP majority from bulldozing the bills into law.

The same interests that have instigated attacks across the country on the public sector and labor are linked to the Indiana agenda.

These special interests and their political allies “have called a war on the middle class,” Nancy J. Guyott, president of the Indiana State AFL-CIO, told activists assembled in the capital. “This is a battle that we must win.”

Montana: Deficit envy

Montana has the revenue it needs to maintain public services, but that fact seems to be lost on the Republican-led Legislature, which has cut more than \$1 billion from Democratic Gov. Brian Schweitzer’s proposed budget.

“I think some of these legislators have deficit envy,” MEA-MFT member Kristin Intemann, a professor at Montana State University-Bozeman, told a crowd of more than 500 concerned citizens at a late-February rally at the Statehouse in Helena. “Montana is one of two states in the nation without a budget deficit, and some legislators can’t stand being left out of the action.”

Intemann said the legislators have not created one job, “but their cuts will destroy hundreds of existing jobs.”

Montana has enough money to fund state services and education at current levels—and still have \$360 million in the bank.

Michigan: A time for solidarity

Elected officials in Michigan are seeking to cut pensions, privatize services and restrict unions’ ability to raise political funds.

A bill passed by the Republican-controlled Legislature that Gov. Rick Snyder is expected to sign would expand the powers of emergency financial managers to remove locally elected officials, terminate collective bargaining, and force consolidation of schools, townships, cities and counties—all without seeking authority or approval from any elected body or from the people.

In addition, the governor’s budget proposal would make deep cuts in funding for K-12 schools and higher education, privatize many public services, and tax retiree pensions while, at the same time, cutting corporate taxes.

Michigan unions, joined by senior citizen groups, civil rights organizations and others, have been aggressively lobbying against the governor’s budget proposal.

“This is just more of the same old politics.

Strong unions must exist to protect workers who are critical to our communities—teachers, nurses, firefighters and others,” says AFT Michigan president and AFT vice president David Hecker.

New Hampshire: Work for less

If state lawmakers have their way, the Granite State would be the first in the Northeast to enact “right-to-work” legislation.

The 400-member House of Representatives has passed the measure, and it is now in the hands of the 24-member state Senate. Democratic Gov. John Lynch has said he will veto the legislation if it reaches his desk.

AFT-New Hampshire’s priority is to work with its allies to defeat the bill in the Senate and get enough support in the House to sustain the governor’s veto.

“We have a real chance to defeat this bill if every member reaches out to his or her House and Senate members,” says AFT-New Hampshire president Laura Hainey.

New York: Massive reductions

Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s budget proposal includes massive reductions in spending and staff, and the restructuring of state agencies and services.

Continued on page 6

FIRST PERSON

‘We acted with valor on behalf of our families, friends and neighbors’

One member’s account from the frontline in Wisconsin

MARCH 7—So much of our struggle reminds me of the struggle for Middle Earth in *Lord of the Rings* that I find many of the quotes from the movies inspiring at this critical time.

When fearful in the face of what is at risk, I am reminded of this exchange:

Éowyn: ... I fear neither death nor pain.

Aragorn: What do you fear my lady?

Éowyn: A cage. To stay behind bars until use and old age accept them. And all chance of valor has gone beyond recall or desire.

We are at the epicenter of the largest workers’ rights battle in many generations. We are fighting the imminent loss of workers’ dignity and rights—hard fought for, and won, four generations ago. We cannot let fear tie our hands and feet, or we will soon be caged by moneyed tyrants just as our forebears once were.

To honor the struggle and, in many cases, the blood of those generations before us, we are duty-bound to seize the day and muster the courage to stand and shout, to write, to sing and to march united until we are victorious. This is the time that really matters.

Fourteen patriotic Democratic state senators are holding out in hiding, out of state, to give us time to win over one more courageous Republican state senator who will vote to defeat this bill. We cannot and will not fail these patriots! We must give it our all so that someday we can hold our

heads high, knowing that in this dark hour, when all hope seemed lost, we acted with valor on behalf of our families, friends and neighbors. And when the time comes for us to pass on, we can say, “I go to my [forebears], in whose mighty company I shall not now feel ashamed.”

Even if we lose in Wisconsin now, we are putting up a fight that should inspire and

embolden more Wisconsinites to join the struggle and those in other states to fight as well. As I say to my fellow protesters while slapping them high-fives as we pass, “Together we will win!”

The most inspiring moment of my weeks of demonstrating at the Capitol came on the first

day, when more than 800 students who had walked out of classes and marched a mile from East High School arrived at the Capitol Square. They were full of energy and loudly chanting as we handed them signs and buttons AFT-Wisconsin members had made. When the beginning of the line was disappearing around the Capitol, and we were running out of signs and buttons, more students were still cresting the hill. Tears filled my eyes as I realized I was witnessing the birth of the next generation of activists.

Jeffrey Richter is president of the Professional Employees in Research, Statistics & Analysis. He has worked for Wisconsin’s Public Service Commission for 27 years.



BRENT NICASTRO

Work That Matters campaign introduces lawmakers to public employees

THANKS TO A NEW AFT Connecticut initiative, state lawmakers are getting the chance to meet a range of public employees—and learn about the work they do on behalf of the state's residents.

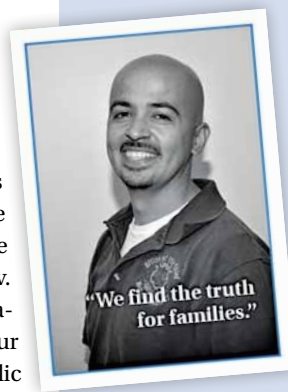
The introductions are coming in the form of postcards, videos and ads that show elected officials the wide variety of public sector jobs around the state.

AFT Connecticut started mailing postcards to state legislators Jan. 10. Through May 23, the legislators will receive a new postcard each week.

The postcards, as well as videos, are post-

ed on the Work That Matters section of the state federation's website (ct.aft.org).

"In these tough economic times, Connecticut has some important decisions to make," says Eric Bailey, AFT Connecticut's communications director. "Will we continue to cut the public services on which the people of Connecticut depend? Or will Gov. Dannel Malloy and the state Legislature make the changes necessary to our state's revenue system to protect public services?"



AFT CONNECTICUT

Meet Alfredo Camargo, a medicolegal death investigator. Camargo is one of 15 investigators in the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, which looks into more than 10,000 deaths every year.

Standing up for our rights



BRENT NICASTRO



CHAD TRETTIN

Continued from page 5

"Government budgets have been referred to as moral documents that represent the values of the citizenry," says New York State Public Employees Federation president Kenneth Brynien, who also is an AFT vice president.

The governor's budget proposal, Brynien says, "proposes historic levels of cuts to all areas of state spending, with disproportionate cuts to agency budgets and the state workforce."

The budget was presented in broad strokes with little detail. Specifics, such as which facilities would be closed and how many jobs would be lost at specific agencies and work-sites, will be revealed as the process plays out.

"I do not believe this budget represents the values of any New Yorker, except, perhaps, the wealthiest and those who are the most greedy and anti-public sector and anti-union," says Brynien.

While PEF has been lobbying lawmakers, it also has been reaching out to the public. PEF launched a Web and TV ad campaign to put a face on state employees, featuring real workers and the services they provide.

Ohio: Middle class takes a stand

Coming together under the banner "Stand up for Ohio," a broad coalition of labor and civic groups has risen to the challenge presented by Republican Gov. John Kasich, who wants to gut the bargaining rights of public employees, increase taxes on the middle class, and cut taxes for his corporate supporters.

More than 10,000 Ohioans turned out on March 15 at 13-plus locations across the state to Stand Up for

Good Jobs and Strong Communities. AFT executive vice president Lorretta Johnson spoke at the Cincinnati rally, where she condemned legislation that would take away the collective bargaining rights of the state's public employees.

Toledo Federation of Teachers president and AFT vice president Francine Lawrence joined the Rev. Cedric Brock, leader of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, at a news conference March 14 in Toledo. Collective bargaining rights "are not just labor issues—they are civil rights issues. It's important that we as pastors let the government know that we can't let laborers be treated in this kind of way," Brock said.

Moving forward one vote at a time

Legislative initiatives seeking to gut workers' rights, and budgets that derail public services, aren't happenstance.

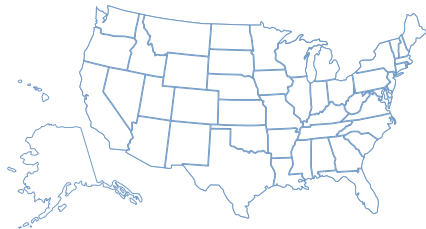
What's happening in states across the country is not about creating jobs and dealing with budget challenges, says AFT president Weingarten. It is about eviscerating the labor movement "because we are the only institution that is able to fight for the middle class at the bargaining table and the ballot box."

Public employees across the country make a difference every day in the lives of Americans. How is your work making a difference?

IT'S YOUR VOICE

We want to hear from you on issues throughout the year. Visit www.aft.org/voices today, where you can respond to this and other questions.





AL AFT Alabama members were in Mobile in January to give an “extreme classroom makeover” to the library/media center at St. Mary’s Home. For more than 130 years, the home has educated children who have been abused, abandoned or neglected by their families.

Volunteers spruced up the space with a fresh coat of paint, new computers, desks and chairs, carpeting, artwork and new textbooks. AFT Alabama spearheaded the renovation with the help of contributions from many individuals and organizations, including Barnes & Noble and the Southwest Alabama Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

The makeover “is our way of trying to help this school as it has helped so many children in the Gulf region,” says Vi Parramore, president of the Jefferson County AFT.

Birmingham American Federation of Teachers president Richard Franklin says the project was the community’s way of giving back. “This is our way of saying thank you for all that the staff has done to improve the lives of so many young people.”

CA Paraprofessionals represented by United Educators of San Francisco voted overwhelmingly in favor of a plan to participate in Social Security, ending the school district’s 20-year relationship with the Public Agency Retirement System, a less costly alternative to Social Security.

Since December 1992, paraprofessionals working for the San Francisco Unified School District have been enrolled in PARS. The problem: The district failed to make its minimum contributions to the system for most paraprofessionals’ individual accounts, according to the union.

The AFT affiliate for years had been asking to switch plans, largely because PARS pays an inadequate benefit compared with Social Security. “A typical profes-

sional earns approximately \$26,000 per year in the SFUSD, with an ending account balance in PARS of \$50,000,” according to the union. “If a para were to work the minimum 40 quarters in Social Security at \$26,000 per year, [he or she] would earn a monthly benefit of approximately \$636. Paying out the equivalent amount as Social Security, the \$50,000 PARS benefit would last only 6.5 years.”

MI Detroit Public Schools retirees Curtis Stout and Mary Ellen Bell, both social workers, have teamed up to start Detroit’s Clothes Rack, a place where social workers can request school uniforms for students.

Throughout Stout’s career, he saw students who could use new, clean school uniforms. “The images of students in need always stayed with me,” he says. “We see the clothing they wear, but they don’t make a lot of noise about it.”



Arezell Brown, director of the district’s Office of School Social Work Service, says what Stout and Bell are doing addresses a significant need. “One of the challenges of school uniform policies is that it can put a hardship on our families,” says Brown. “The need is tremendous, but we have limited resources in this office.”

What we are doing is just a continuation of what we have done for decades as social workers, says Bell. “We still have a purpose, and that is to lend a hand where there is need.”

WI Faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Stout voted overwhelmingly in favor of union representation

through AFT-Wisconsin on March 9—the same day the state Senate voted to strip public employees, including university system faculty and staff, of their collective bargaining rights. The vote was 196 in favor, 31 against, in a unit of 283.

Gov. Scott Walker’s proposal to strip public employees of their collective bargaining rights, among other things, galvanized faculty eager to raise their voices in protest, says Barb Flom, an associate professor of education. “When it became clear that the governor’s extremist legislation had nothing to do with balancing the budget and everything to do with denying workers’ rights, UW-Stout faculty realized the urgency in this vote,” she says.

UW faculty and academic staff were extended the right to collectively bargain in 2009. Since then, faculty at three campuses—UW-Eau Claire, UW-Superior and UW-La Crosse—have voted in favor of union representation by the AFT.

WV When elementary school student Chancellor Coger had a bully problem, school bus driver Lester Lemasters came to the rescue. Coger felt so strongly about the AFT member who helped him that he wrote an essay and won Lemasters the title “Children’s Choice School Bus Driver of the Year.”

In Coger’s own words: “My bus driver saved my life. A large kid punched me in the stomach every day when we would get off at the bus stop.

My mom and the school tried to stop it but nothing worked. Then came Lester. He thought of a brilliant plan. When he would drive the bus to the end of the street to turn around, he would let me off there and then pull on down to the regular stop and let off the kid. The whole problem was solved, and I think he is heroic.”

Lemasters and Coger were recognized at the National Association of Pupil Transportation’s annual meeting in October in Portland, Ore.

“Lester took bullying by the horns and saved a child from a lifetime of feeling ridiculed,” says Karen Guminey, president of the Monongalia County chapter of the West Virginia School Service Personnel Association. “How proud I am.”

Everyday **HEROES**

WHEN THE AFT ANNOUNCED it was taking nominations for its 2011 Everyday Heroes—members who have accomplished extraordinary community service, have succeeded against great odds or have gone the extra mile—a member in Alaska thought co-worker **Jim Pomplun** fit the bill.

Pomplun, who works for the Ketchikan (Alaska) Gateway Borough planning department, “takes a tough stand for integrity” in the workplace, the nominator wrote.

Pomplun, a cartographer and member of the Alaska Public Employees Association’s Ketchikan Gateway Borough local, is more modest about his workplace disposition. “I make an effort to understand an issue from all sides,” he says, pointing out that there are challenges in every workplace. “I’m not afraid to speak my mind. I just always try to be civil.”

Pomplun has a civic-minded approach to life. He’s on the board of directors of the local public radio station, and he serves on the Alaska State Parks Advisory Board. He also is a member of the Ketchikan Volunteer Rescue Squad, a nonprofit organization that conducts search and rescue operations. (Ketchikan is located in the Tongass National Forest.) “I enjoy helping my community because, in the end, the community does more to shape me than I could ever have imagined.”

In November, the AFT solicited nominations for Everyday Heroes in all divisions. The result: More than 300 members were nominated by colleagues and others who appreciate the work they do for the greater good. In online voting in February, more than 5,100 people cast votes among the 30 finalists.

This year’s finalists, including Pomplun, who won the AFT Public Employees division recognition, will be honored at their division’s conferences this spring and summer.

Healthcare

Joanne Dudsak

Registered nurse
Meadowlands Hospital
Secaucus, N.J.
Health Professionals and Allied Employees

Higher Education

Travis Parker

Professor of physical education/athletics
Cosumnes River College
Sacramento, Calif.
Los Rios College Federation of Teachers

Paraprofessionals and School-Related Personnel

Charles Johnson

Paraprofessional safety worker
North Dallas High School
Dallas
Alliance-AFT

Teachers

Karen King

Fifth-grade teacher
Reed Intermediate School
Newtown, Conn.
Newtown Federation of Teachers

Retirees

Christina Sharp

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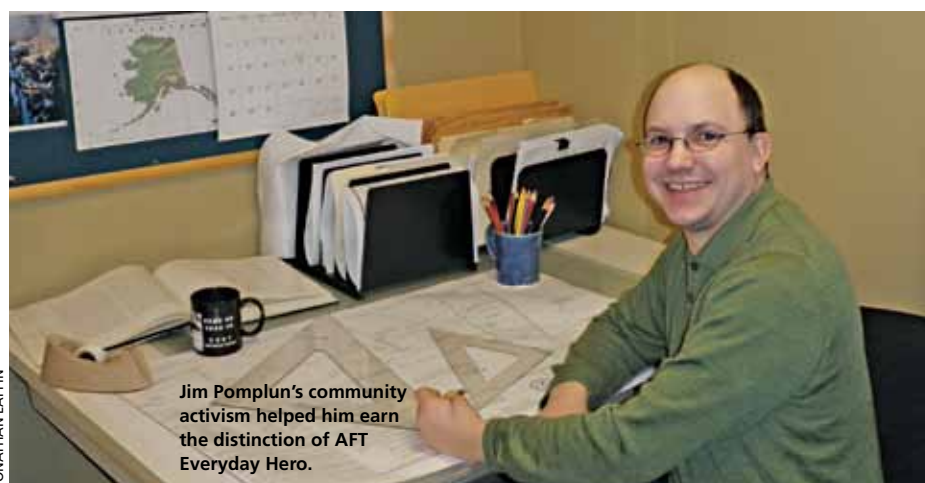
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Jim Pomplun’s community activism helped him earn the distinction of AFT Everyday Hero.

JONATHAN LAPPIN