



Flash

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Washington Update A Few Major Things in Congress Judy Johnson (WA)

Our long-time friend and Congressional watchdog, Lee Foley, shared his news and perspectives on the national legislative scene. But first he thanked us for caring for the country's workers, job seekers and employers.

Lee suggested that we've seen the end of the "post war era" growth. There are a lot of reasons: global trade, surging immigration, population explosions, an "assertive" China and an "adventurous" Russia, refugees by land and sea and now Great Britain leaving the European Union (and maybe Scotland leaving England?). There's been good job growth. The unemployment rate is approximating the contemporary definition of "full employment". Most major statistical areas (MSAs) are at or below that rate. When the 100 largest MSAs have 75% of all jobs and they are all at full employment, what do you get? Labor Shortages! And maybe there is not much to be done about it. There could be more discouraged workers who will return to the labor market and some things we could do to help our youth. But the interest rates are okay right now. Lee did mention something about the war in Iraq... Yet Congress continues to be inactive. The atmosphere is toxic. But in spite of Congress's current state, where nothing gets done or can get done, just a few major things have happened there lately. Senator Murray and Congressman Ryan passed two comprehensive budget deals over three years, without disruptions of previous deals and no downgrade of our country's credit rating.

One major event was the passage of a bill reauthorizing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). After 14 years trying to overhaul WIA, it finally happened and is being implemented right now as the Workforce Investment & Opportunity Act (WIOA). Some other overdue overhauls occurred for childcare programs and a transportation package and a Medicare fix of payments to doctors and children's health programs.

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The overhaul of WIOA holds great opportunities. For one, the new law focuses on youth at risk who are not in school. It allows a single Workforce Development Plan for most, because a “combined plan” is now possible. Lee spoke about six Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) related issues that were passed by Congress. He said states could include TANF programs in the One-Stop Plan. And, finally, a voucher is not always mandatory. It sounds like using sector strategies, incumbent worker training to provide up scaled skills, or a transitional job strategy all allow states to group grant rather than doing vouchers for every person.

WIOA totally switches the youth focus from serving at-risk youth in schools to serving out-of-school youth. Even the ages of eligibility change. And states can switch up to 100% of their Dislocated Worker funding over to serve Adult training needs and vice versa. Another innovation: states have new authority to use pay-for-performance options. Up to 10% of any grant can be for bonuses. States investing in pay-for-performance say it seems to make a difference. Finally – evaluation! WIOA gives us common measures that are important, different, and challenging. Measures will be used across the board in all programs and there will be employer measures too.

Lee also wanted to talk about that popular topic: ELECTIONS.

Some work needs to get done in Congress in spite of the elections. There are always problems with appropriations and this year is no exception. Congress is supposed to fund government by September 30. No appropriations have passed and our funding for Labor/Health & Human Services/Health/Pensions is way at the back of the queue. There will be lots of work to the end. Lee pointed out that when Obama was up for reelection he was four points behind in the polls but won by the largest electoral vote ever. Right now, Trump is 12 points down. In all, Lee said we’re experiencing an amazing turn of events in American politics. And those political outcomes are very important to us and to our work.

What does he predict for next year? Career and Technical Schools Act must be reauthorized. The Higher Education Act is also up for reauthorization. This is an important source of funds for our services: \$50 billion out of \$150 billion. So Lee says, “don’t sleep while this topic is active.”

Lee concluded by reminding us “What Can We Do?”

- Be a member of IAWP which watches out for and champions our causes.
- Go home and lead/run/deliver the best workforce system in the world so our congresspersons can be proud and eager to invest in our system.





Retiree Brunch

With 60 retirees at the conference, you might say we are truly “shuffling in Buffalo.” Most of that number gathered for brunch and a good visit. Retiree Chair Audrey Baker (CA) greeted all and introduced our Road Scholar speaker who told us about the travel program with tours for seniors sponsored by AARP. It seems they go most everywhere with activity levels for all. Mary Ann Baykal (NJ) suggested that in the interest of lowering conference expenses, that we do away with mementos for the Retiree Brunch. The motion passed unanimously. Based on current Handbook rules, the group nominated Jenny Yarien-ScalPELLI (IN) and Kathy Bilanko (WA) for 2018 retiree chair. They also decided to recommend handbook changes to allow the incoming president for the year to select the Retiree Chair, with no requirement for the retirees to make nominations. Then we enjoyed the pure chaos of taking the annual retiree group photo.



New York Department of Labor Deputy Commissioner Mary Batch Steve Corwin (OR)

Ms. Batch described New York Unemployment Insurance's hard charging rush to develop lean systems. This rush is to meet the challenge that New York, like all states, faces with constant federal funding dollars, the dynamic changes in the economy and the demand for UI services. As we all know, rising costs of doing business eat away at those federal dollars.

New York has managed to decrease call volume down to 24% of transactions while raising online claim system activity to 76%. Despite challenges like Hurricane Sandy, which kept call center staff on duty until midnight for many days, New York has managed to get lean to stay within the limitations on staffing that budgets dictate. By focusing on seasonal trends in the workload, they have been able to shift staff to other units/programs.

Other efforts have focused on making communications with the public meet an 8th grade reading level. Decreasing the length and complexity of sentences allows the public to more easily understand UI documents. This was accomplished with help from the Claimant Advocate Office (the state's ombudsman) and claimants to make sure documents were easy to comprehend. Adopting bulleted lists of steps for processes instead of complex sentences and paragraph styles had cut call volumes significantly.

The department also uses automated call systems and online claim systems to answer basic questions, so that agents can focus on non standard questions which require specific, customized responses. All of this can be built with minimal disturbance of the 40 year old mainframe coding. By implementing secure email claimants can submit documents quickly. They have also posted more videos online to show and tell how to file claims and how the hearings process works. Web chats with claim agents have been greatly reduced.

Imaging resources have been reduced by all of these efforts. Even without having been through the lean process directly, lean processes in other units had dramatically decreased imaging workload by 42%. The lean process was applied to the Additional Claims unit and a 42,000 case backlog is now operating at 770 current weekly AC transactions.

Adding dual monitors to work stations has impacted productivity greatly. The claim agents were found in the lean process to be using 5 screens at once in some transactions. Having dual monitors allows them to see and interpret more data at one time, which cuts down on processing time and greatly reduces eye strain caused by bouncing back and forth between screens.

With these improvements in productivity, New York hopes to meet the next downturn with a lean, mean, claims processing machine. To live within funding and staffing limitations, yet meet the needs of desperate claimants in a timely way.

International Panel Judy Johnson (WA)

Our international delegates from Taiwan shared their new and working workforce trends in Taiwan. Ia-Uen (Jennifer) Chen, National Development Council, Taiwan, told us that in the 80 years that Taiwan has had their independence a lot has changed and will continue to change. The numbers of working-age population and youth are falling while the elderly population is rising. By 2060 those aged 65+ will account for 41% of total population! People marry older and have fewer children. The low birth rates and aging society bring challenges. Luckily the unemployment situation has improved since the Great Recession and the rate last year was only 3.78%.

Taiwan has a strategic plan to deal with their challenges. They will replenish their manpower and attract talent. Replenishing manpower means raising fertility rates with a healthy child-rearing environment at work and boosting labor participation of middle-aged and elderly workers by making a friendly workplace, a family friendly environment, and friendly services for workers. The strategy also calls for strengthening youth employment diversity by helping career development, shortening the gap between school and work, and integrating services. Taiwan also plans to attract global talent and build a friendly environment so they will stay.

Che-Shang (Jason) Huang, Taiwan's Labor Attaché in Washington, D.C., spoke about the new face of the Ministry of Labor in Taiwan with its challenges and initiatives. The Ministry was created using three pillars of support: Autonomy (increasing strength of labor relations), Equality (creating a fair and just work environment), and Progressiveness (improving employability). Jason shared the six divisions and five other programs run by the Ministry.

Jason talked about the same challenges as Jennifer: Low birth rates and elderly dependencies, global competition, the influx of Uber and others, and trying to keep their retirement fund stable. They have many initiatives effecting employment services and vocational training to enhance services to the jobseeker, whether jobseekers are employed, vulnerable or unemployed. They're using online TaiwanJobs, Job Expos, 350 service centers, 22 job reconstructing sites, 360 moveable service personnel, and 1,500 training centers. They're also working with employers utilizing employment ads, job reconstructing subsidies, and job training allowances for workers and enterprises. There are subsidies to colleges to provide training.

Apprenticeship programs help pass skills from the old to the young. They are finding that youth want service sector jobs, rather than manufacturing or construction work. There's a corporate internship program where the Ministry urges corporations to provide chances to escalate working skills of young workers. Government and employer associations work together to develop vocational training programs. A Phoenix Micro-business Start-up Program assists people to start a business, offering low interest loans and business guidance to applicants. A relocation program offers youth subsidies to move. Another initiative assists foreign workers. Then there is a "Maker Networking Program" to help innovators in 3D printing open software and digital tool making industries.

Of course Taiwan continues to offer One-stop services with over 300 service centers and 10 large training workplaces offering employment advice, job matching, unemployment allowances, training placement, skill assessment and business start-up assistance. Jason concluded by saying that Taiwan is building a better infrastructure for their labor force. It is built on three pillars: Education and training, Assessment and Utilization. Through all they improve the employability of workers.

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Arlene Bautista, California Employment Development Department, discussed trends in the U.S. workforce. She shared the unemployment rate, the rate of long-term unemployed, and the unemployment duration rates for youth, African-Americans, and Hispanic workers. She talked about how the number of job losers has declined. Also, how there are more employed part-time for economic reasons now than ever. They are also called involuntary part-time, which means they would prefer to be working full-time. The number of workers who are marginally attached to the job market or who are discouraged from seeking work has remained the same nationally. Arlene also shared data about California which has been following most of the national trends. In terms of job trends, education and health careers are up in the U.S. and California, while mining and logging are in decline. Information industry is up in California but declining nationally due to the Verizon strike, according to Arlene.

At the end of the presentation, Jason and Jennifer made a presentation about their earthquake. Last year President James Thomas extended IAWP hospitality and condolences to Taiwan for their losses. The Taiwan Ministry of Labor delivered their thanks to James, President Elect Teri Pasternik, Executive Director Steve Bent, Office Manager Paige Stodghill and to Chris Crawford, International Development Chair, saying they were thankful that IAWP treated them like family.

Chapter Night at Niagara Falls Steve Corwin (OR)

What a wonderful night! Great food, good company, gracious hosts, and spectacular scenery. IAWP delegates were treated to a sumptuous dinner at Top of the Falls restaurant, which was closed for the public. It was just us and the food was delicious. We had the place all to ourselves even though it is a state park, because they closed just for us.

Mayor Dyster spoke of the history of the magnificent falls. Tesla and other world renowned scientists flocked to Niagara due to the hydroelectric power facilities. Together they lit up the city of Buffalo to make it the "City of Light" for visitors to the 1901 Pan American Exposition. All that electricity came from Niagara due to the water rushing by as it plunges headlong over the precipice into the Niagara Gorge.

The Mayor talked about all the improvements underway at the park, which was evident by the fenced off areas and construction equipment. If the completed areas are any clue, the new renovations will be superb. There were many beautiful walkways, which at night have lights shining out over the rapids. The walks crowd right up to the edge of the falls and one can see the water race off the lip of the cliffs and plunge a hundred feet into the defile below.

We enjoyed watching the boats, the guests from many nations ogling at the many views. Many of us rode the trolley down to the rainbow bridge and walked across it to Canada. Getting across the border and back was a snap with your passport in hand. As the dark of evening settled over the landscape the birds settled noisily into the trees, the lights on the Canadian side of the gorge glimmered in front of us and shone brightly on the falls. It was a treat for the eyes, and though many parks empty out when it gets dark, Niagara remained full of people enjoying the sheer grandeur of this natural wonder.

Google Tools Crystal Caison (IL) and Phillip Arazny (IL)

Alex Fernandez, who has worked for numerous private companies and governmental agencies training staff and developing systems, was the presenter. His presentation was given to a room packed with enthusiastic IAWP members eager to learn more about FREE Google tools. Alex demonstrated cutting edge technology that is being utilized in the Buffalo school system and organizations. The IAWP attendees also learned how these tools can be used in workforce development. Alex emphasized the importance of adding Art to “STEM” creating STEAM. Art is the nexus for aligning science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

One of the FREE Google tools that the audience was eager to adopt is “Typing Club”. Typing Club is a fun way to assist users in developing typing skills for all ages through games. Sketchup is another FREE tool that is a creative lab for 3D Mosaic Project and Rapid Prototyping. And PIXLR EDITOR is a FREE tool that is almost the same as Photo Shop.

Lanae Vetsch (MT) showed us her skills with utilizing a hand motion tool that detects hand gestures.

Alex's motto is:

- There is always more than one way to perform a task!
- There is almost always a FREE way to do the same thing you are paying for!
- Working in the CLOUD allows you to collaborate and share ubiquitous resources.
- Mobile users who want to become proficient need to embrace the Cloud and transparency during the creative process.

In conclusion, overall this session was a hit. Additional info can be found at www.pftclub.org.



Congressman Brian Higgins Verna Wade (NC)

Our speaker states that in a time of globalization and new technology, these are challenging times in the United States; he shared with us some insights on where the economy is and where it needs to be because this would be important to us as workforce development professionals.

Since the great recession of 2008, the American economy has added 14 million new jobs. The unemployment rate was over 10% has been reduced to 5% and the federal deficit reduced by two thirds. The auto industry had its best year last year and all of these are traditional indicators of economic growth. Then why the anxiety, the American peoples are frustrated and the rise of presidential candidates like Bernie Sanders and Donald Trump. Since World War II we have had 9 recessions and 9 recoveries. Debt and duration has varied, we have come out of it with economic expansion the lead indicator being the amount of job growth. The problem with the economy is not cyclical it is systemic.

Insight as to why he believes it is occurring is that from 1945-1980 the American economy experienced productivity gains of 97%, real income in wages during this same period grew by 95%. Thus economist would call this shared prosperity or virtuous cycle of growth, everyone benefited. Something happened, from 1980 to present, economy grown by 89% and wages and income only 10%. Also in 1980, 84% of American workers that worked for companies with 100 employees or more had benefits fully paid pensions and health insurance. Today its only 25% and 11% respectively, companies aren't doing it any more. There is underlying anxiety, when you are confident about your economic future you buy which creates a demand and you spend, if you are not you don't and this effects the economy. Today that idea has been lost.

He gave examples of great corporate leaders in the 50s, -70s such as Charlie Wilson of General Motors, Reg Jones of General Electric, believed that it was the corporations sole responsibility to balance the economic interest of all the stakeholders, which include owners, managers and workers. Stakeholders capitalism, this is when everybody benefits. In 1961 Milton Freeman wrote a book, freedom in capitalism that was distributed among American business schools that introduced the concept of share holder capitalism to maximize shareholder returns. CEO compensation packages then began to include stock option. This has not done well and there are several reasons for it.

As a member of congress, one of the things that is troubling is that all the politicians in Washington weighs in on the issue of the day but it loses its newness, there are on to the next issue and not stay focused and do the hard work necessary to make the vision real. When they are on the house floor, members may complain and point out the situations such as how main land China conducts business or how they mistreat their people but one thing are doing right like the United States use to is invest in growth of their own economy, education, scientific research, and infrastructure building the roads and bridges.

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He introduced a bill in United States Congress for a trillion dollars to build infrastructure bridges, roads and sewer system in the US but was told we have a huge deficit but we spent money on a war and to be bridges in other countries such as Iraq. The United States is the greatest public partnership in the history of the world. Al Gore didn't invent the internet, but it was the department of defense it pushed out the innovation until it could be commercialized by the private sector. The I-phone all that innovation came from the investment of our government. Why is that Germany manufacturing industry continued to thrive? They don't do workforce development as an afterthought; they do it as forethought. They make sure that the worker is properly trained and made the required investment to make this happen. Ask what are we doing to help?

The great American dream, we all sacrifice to help the next generation do better than we did. His hope is that as workforce professionals we will continue to be inspired by the work we do. He hopes that on his side with the United States Congress that he can provide us with the resources, dignity and vision to fulfill our mission with both hands and not one hand tied behind our backs.

Federal Perspective from Speakers Lee Foley, Congressman Higgins and Mary Batch from Department of Labor Suzanne Nichols (WA)

Attendees of the 103rd IAWP International conference had the opportunity to hear the federal perspective on the workforce. Congressman Brian Higgins of the 26th congressional district spoke briefly about the impacts the economy has had on the nation. Mary Batch of the New York Department of Labor spoke about how New York State has implemented Lean initiatives to reduce waste. They have a lean leader and lean empires teaching others about continuous improvement. Lean has been heavily supported by Governor Cuomo. She answered questions from the audience. Stephanie Workman from North Carolina asked how much is the NY State maximum weekly benefit amount for unemployment benefits. We found out that the max is \$425.00 and the lowest is \$100.00.

Lee Foley closed out the session talking about the financial impacts globally with the changes in the European markets. He spoke about how states, such as Tennessee, redesigned the TANF program because they were in jeopardy of being unable to fund them. He indicated their move to pay for success strategy increased the success from 18% to 75%.



Helping LGBT Customers Conduct a Job Search

Presenter: Steve Jagord
Berti Longworth (CA)

An historic event for civil rights occurred in 2015 when the Supreme Court passed a ruling declaring same sex marriage legal and forcing all 50 states to recognize and uphold the rights of marriage of same sex couples. The ruling was passed with much fanfare and was a significant achievement in the progression of acceptance of the rights of all Americans to be accepted and recognized as equals. But did you know that only 21 states extend employment nondiscrimination protection to LGBT persons. So nearly 23% of the population can now get married, yet if they were to post celebration pics of their union onto Facebook to share with friends and family, they risk losing housing, employment and even participating in commerce.

Fortunately, our presenter for this session, Steve Jagord, helped us navigate ways we can help LGBT persons with their job search and stay gainfully employed. Steve started by first defining terms associated with LGBT issues. Steve pointed out the difference between sex and gender emphasizing that a person's sex is permanent, something that can't be changed while gender is more fluid and can encompass identity, expression, and societal roles. Steve also highlighted that it is important not to lump all LGBT persons into a single group. LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, bisexual, and Transgender and within each group there exists diversity with regard to race, ethnicity, age, socioeconomic status, and geographic location.

The first step in offering job search aid to LGBT persons is to empathize using a working knowledge of the terms and ideas above. Beyond that, you can direct LGBT persons to research potential employers. Have them view the company policies, check websites, read online reviews, review company benefits package, and if possible, tour the workplace to get a glimpse of the daily interactions. These steps allow an LGBT person to gain a pulse of company culture and will help to determine if a person will be accepted and if not steer away from that employer. With these kinds of hurdles, the job search can be exceptionally draining. Further support can be offered through acting as an ally, get to know laws in your state so you can let LGBT persons recognize and know when they have real recourse against the discriminations they may have faced. Additionally, be able to educate on support resources. Steve walked us through his own organization, the LGBTQ cultural Competency Pride Center of Western New York which offers awesome programs and services to empower people and communities. The organization offers advocacy, mental health support, services for seniors, social events, networking opportunities and wellness education.

Steve's organization is limited in its geographic scope but similar associations exist throughout the country. Find out what is available in your area so that you can be a better ally for LGBT job seekers. To learn more about the efforts to expand work-place protections to LGBT through federal bills such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, visit the human rights campaign website at www.hrc.org.

Junk in my Trunk Stephanie H. Workman (NC)

Teena Fitzroy, disability advocate and motivational speaker, proved that having a disability is not the end of your life. You embrace it, make it yours, and do not define yourself by your weaknesses but elaborate positively on what you can do.

She grew up with a lot of negativity because in those years when you were different you were labeled mentally retarded or called a retard. No one ever gave a thought that you might have talents, dreams aspirations and a willingness to achieve. Because you were not normal like the rest of the world, you were institutionalized and put through torment like we who call ourselves “normal” will never experience.

I am so honored to be chosen to write about this workshop and provide my observations. I am pleased to state that it was most uplifting and inspiring workshop I have attended in many years. From the beginning she made you laugh about her life and her disability. It takes a big person to laugh at oneself and to make others laugh with you. She met her challenges head on and became the accomplished person she is today for herself and her family.

She shared a very intimate and in depth look in to the life of someone who has cerebral palsy. From the very beginning of her life, she never let her disability determine who she was but met the challenges head on and defeated them. Her biggest motivator was her mother. She fought for her daughter to have a normal life and she won. Teena got acceptance and has accomplished much in her life. She is truly an inspiring individual who uses humor to defeat her barriers.

We have to know what we are good at to know who we are. We consider ourselves “normal”. People who have disabilities are “normal” in their own way. Think about this when we meet someone who is blind, we talk very loudly and structured to them. They are blind not deaf. We see this all too often because at points in our life, we don't know how to treat a person with a disability. Having a disability doesn't mean you can't think. They are no different than we are. They experience emotions, setbacks, rejections, and other negatives we all face. We have to remember they are not different than the “normal” person; they just have a disability.

Throughout the entire presentation, Teena kept us on the edge of our seats with laughter about her life experiences. The one common denominator she had which all of us can agree was that she had an awesome mother. She fought the system to allow her daughter to be normal and to be able to accomplish at her pace. Think about it. If we all didn't have a caring mother, where would we be today? I know personally without mine I would have had a void that could not be filled by anyone else... she was Teena's cheerleader. She was Teena's **Hero** all of her life until she passed away. Now Teena is carrying the torch her mother passed on to her for her children.

In conclusion, I salute you, Teena Fitzroy, for making us think about how we treat others who are different and that anyone can accomplish their goals in life even though they have a disability. The greatest tribute was given to her a standing ovation.

Speed Session: And the Winner is- Writing Awards Nominations Suzanne Nichols (WA)

Gerri Jimenez opened the training by stressing the importance of checking your dates. She empathized that when states are submitting awards packages they need to double check that it is for the previous year, for example we will be honoring award winners from 2015 at this conference. The submissions were for the period of January of 2015 through December of 2015. She shared that this year they received awards submissions that were beautifully written; however, either due to a typo the award read that the work was done with the dates of 2016. This little mistake disqualified the package from being judged. President James Thomas and President Elect Terri Pasternik chimed in with their experiences as being former judges. James indicated that another issue was that sometimes they received packages that had too many pages and they were not properly tabbed to identify where, when, and how the work was done. He suggested drawing your attention to the important information you should highlight it. If you are sending it electronically that you highlight, circle, or have an arrow pointing to the content you want the judges to see. He also mentioned think of the submission as a story by telling the story you are giving the judges an opportunity to be drawn in.

Sharon Mike and Gerri then took questions from the audience. One member shared that she feels overwhelmed with trying to get nominations and shared that there is equal frustration on writing the awards. Another member asked if there could be an awards template developed. Both Sharon and Gerri added that they will take that information back to the international board and Executive Steve Bent for consideration. A representative from Washington State suggested that they partner with other states that have been previous award winners for guidance. Sharon indicated getting the retirees involved to help write is a great way to learn and they are a valuable resource of information. Terri suggested that you get a second pair of eyes on the awards before submission. Gerri made the suggestion that you contact the International Recognition chair for guidance. In closing they shared that the International board is in the process of revamping the awards. They have started a committee and asked for people to email either Sharon, the incoming International Recognition Chair, or Steve Bent with ideas, suggestions or even questions about the awards and there submissions. One last bit of information they shared was that there were 92 awards submissions this year, so congratulations to all the chapters for all their hard work.



Helping Workforce Professionals Recognize and Prevent Human Trafficking

Amy Fleischauer, International Institute Buffalo
Steve Corwin (OR)

The first thing to know about human trafficking is that it can be found in any industry. Modern day slaves can be found in agriculture, lodging, hospitality, restaurants, nail salons, gas stations, and even an ice cream shop. The second thing to know is that people need help to escape human trafficking, not to be “rescued,” but more on that later. The most important thing to know about people who are trapped in human trafficking or escaping from it is they are not criminals, they are victims.

Traffickers offer hope for a better future to both men and women who fall victim to their ploys. For youth, the traffickers pretend to offer love and caring. What they really get is physical, emotional, and sexual abuse to entrap them in modern day slavery and to earn their captors money. The perpetrators offer high-paying jobs, exciting educational or travel opportunities. This happens both in foreign countries and in the United States. In the USA, the captors hang out near youth shelters and homeless services sites and pass out directions to a place that will fulfill their dreams or offer something they are desperate for. What they get instead is entrapment and horrendous working conditions. The person is often moved from one place where they might know persons who can help them to a place they do not know.

They have learned that physical violence leaves marks that law enforcement can use as evidence against them, so the traffickers have learned to use more insidious ways to control their victims. Victims are controlled now by means of social obligations or fear of harm to loved ones. One woman from Argentina was kept in place by showing her daily pictures of her mother as she went about her life in Argentina, while the daughter was entrapped in the United States. The traffickers hired someone on the ground in her hometown to take the daily pictures to control and intimidate their victim. It is often the case that the traffickers are a person who is known and seemingly trustworthy in the victim’s own community.

Unlike the US, where debt is common for many reasons, in most other countries having a debt is something that clouds a person’s honor and often the honor of their entire family. A family will work for generations to pay back a debt. This is why traffickers use this ploy with most victims, telling them that they owe thousands of dollars for their being transported to the proposed work site to which they have been lured. Then the person is told what they must do to pay off the debt. Male victims are controlled with drugs and alcohol, for which they are charged enormous sums and which create “debt bondage” for them. Of course, this is illegal, but the victims do not know that.

Persons trapped in human trafficking are not criminals, they are victims. Think of the youth who are trapped in sex trafficking and moved from state to state to work as prostitutes in motels in your city and mine. They are below the Federal age of 18 for being able to consent to having sex, despite whatever your state law may be. Prosecutors cannot charge them with prostitution but should remand them to family court to address whatever legal issues that may apply to them.

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They were lured with the promise of good work in a hotel cleaning rooms, but the hotel's construction is behind schedule and they must pay for their transport, food and lodging in the meantime. So now they must have sex to earn money, work at menial jobs under hard conditions and for very long hours. They are made to live where they work and are not allowed to go anywhere else. The fear and coercion work well to keep their victims right where they want them. Captors use psychological coercion to convince victims that just like in their country, the authorities are on the take and no one will help them to escape or will believe them that they are being kept in forced labor against their will. A couple in a typical American city kept a domestic servant that way for 19 years. She escaped two times, and each time no one would help her. Most people in the US are monolingual, so they cannot understand what an hysterical person speaking in a language other than English is trying to say. Fortunately, the third time she escaped this woman found someone who would help her.

Some victims are recruited especially because of their disabilities. It helps the traffickers control them. This was the case with the deaf Mexicans whose case was tried in 1998. Their plight led to the first Federal legislation against human trafficking. Simply smuggling people is a crime against the state and those convicted of this are deported. Trafficking is a crime against an individual and it results in prison sentences. Many victims have travelled under false promises on valid visas but then the traffickers confiscate their passport and tell them they must work off their debt before they can get it back. In a climate of hatred and fear of immigrants, often politicians and the media portray these victims as criminals. Neighbors turn out at the site of a suburban trafficking bust, not to excoriate the traffickers, but to blame the victims and hurl verbal abuse at them. Media covers the sensational story but depicts the people who were trafficked and smuggled into the US as illegal immigrants rather than as the unwitting victims they are. States have started to pass laws to protect these victims and to help them testify against their captors.

T Visas are now issued to persons who have escaped so that they may get help and support while they wait to testify. Others will need convictions that accumulated while they were controlled by their captors vacated. Convictions for prostitution, drug possession, etc. must be expunged so that they can resume a normal life and secure work in the above ground economy. Finally, victims of trafficking are sometimes treated like they have been "rescued" from slavery rather than having escaped it. The problems with the term rescued is, that it re-victimizes the person. It passes moral judgment upon the work they were forced to do and the victims themselves. Regardless, victims don't need the moral baggage rescued comes with. They need to be empowered to get on with their lives. For more information, see Freedom Network USA, www.nyatn.org and IIT Buffalo.



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Shuffle off to Buffalo People Scene 3

Some of the Past International Presidents in attendance are Maryann Baykal and Suzanne Guibert (NJ), Freddy Jacobs (AR), Mikell Fryer (GA), David Slimp (OK), George Barthalow, FL), Linda Barnes (KY), and Ray Cabrera (CA). New York retirees who are in attendance include Richita Anderson, Jeanne Benson, Edward Gaska, Maxine Johnson, Patricia O'Reilly, Susan Riley, William Roth, and Richard Vitkay. Other New Yorkers being busy are Buffalo Local Officer Manager Carolyn Bright, Nancy Crosby, Mary Alkns, Christopher Burman, Mike and Debbie Puglisi, F. Roper III, Tajuana Smith, Judson Wallis, Rick Holden, and, of course, Linda Chapman. California has a squad of retirees at the convention: Mary Archer, Audrey Baker, Mel and Nanette Bowman, Sher Longworth, Val Moeller, Tom Sims, Ben Ta'keshta, Pat Thornton, and Michael Waller. Those still working in California who are attending include Phil Dwyer, Irma Kong, Berti Longworth, Mary Navarro-Aldana, Yvette Quevedo, Fred Ruibal, Betty Sims and President James Thomas. The Illinois chapter is also well represented with Phillip Arazny, Judith Bailey, Craystal Caison, Linda Demore, Angelia Johnson, Sabrina Venegar, Rhonda Mahone, Samuel Wilson, Jerrene Meier, retirees Frank DeMore, and incoming Retiree Chair Susie Geltner. All of these as well as incoming International President Terri Pasternik. Niagara Falls bus ride and dinner were great fun. Enjoyed meeting and chatting with Antwan Williams (NY), a first-timer who is enjoying the conference and hopes to become more active in the NY Chapter. But we got corrected by Vicki and Bill Zimmerlee regarding the spelling of their name. Apologies! George Strait also complained to management and threatened to quit Flashing over the misspelling of his name, Thanks for that correction also.