The Industrial Relations Section is pleased to announce that this year’s winner of the Richard A. Lester Award is Nancy MacLean for *Freedom is not enough: the opening of the American workplace.*


During the Great Depression, Frances E. Townsend, an elderly California doctor, spurred a social movement that eventually claimed over 2 million elderly members and pushed for a government-provided monthly pension of $200 for all Americans over sixty. Townsend felt his plan would alleviate poverty for older Americans, create jobs by encouraging retirement, and help the economy through the pensioners’ spending. Based upon extensive archival research, Amenta provides an arresting historical account of this movement. Using the Townsend plan as a case study, Amenta also provides an important analysis of when and under what circumstances such movements have an impact on social policy. While the Townsend plan did not succeed in its stated policy goals, it still had great influence upon the Social Security Act and its amendments, as well as upon state-level policy toward the elderly.

Berri, David J., Martin B. Schmidt, and Stacey L. Brook. *The wages of wins: taking measure of the many myths in modern sport.* Chicago, IL 60628. Stanford University Press (c/o Chicago Distribution Center, 11030 South Langley Ave.). 2006. 282 pp. $29.95, cloth; $19.95, paper.

In *Wages of wins* Berri, Schmidt, and Brook take the tools of systematic economic inquiry and apply them to the real life observations of sports fans. Using available data and focusing mainly on baseball, basketball, and football, the authors set out to explode several common sports myths, such as teams that pay the most, win the most; labor disputes threaten the future of professional sports; NBA teams need stars to attract fans; the best players in basketball score the most; and quarterbacks drive wins and losses in the NFL. In an effort to make the text more accessible to the non-ecnomist, the authors relegate their mathematical proofs to the endnotes and provide tables no more complicated than a typical box score.


These essays examine how and why young, less-educated black men fared so poorly compared to other groups during the economic boom of the 1990s. They explore the roles such factors as changing blue-collar employment
trends, criminal justice policy, the willingness of employers to hire ex-offenders, workforce training programs, and child support enforcement play in the lives of these men, and the effects their lack of education, training, and employment prospects have on their families, marriage rates, child poverty rates, and life prospects. The authors make specific public policy recommendations to increase this group's income and employment prospects, positively change the nature of child support enforcement, increase their likelihood of marriage, and decrease child poverty rates in their families. In a related volume—Reconnecting disadvantaged young men by Peter Edelman, Harry J. Holzer, and Paul Offner (Urban Institute Press, 2006, 156 pp., $26.50, paper)—some of the authors from Black males left behind focus on policies to benefit disaffected young males generally. The book includes chapters on education and training policies, building community youth systems, improving financial incentives for low-wage work, and reconnecting non-custodial parents and ex-offenders.


For the past thirty years, workers in the rich nations of the industrialized world have seen increased wages, increased use of job skills, safer and more pleasant working conditions, and fewer work hours. At the same time, they have worked much more intensely, experiencing greater on-the-job stress, and facing diminished control over their daily work. Despite the greater number of high-skilled jobs and higher wages since the 1970s, workers in affluent countries report an overall lower quality of work life. British economist, Francis Green, delves into this paradox using national-level social surveys and administrative data and drawing on the tools of labor economics (as well as sociology and psychology) in an attempt to answer the question whether people are using their first world affluence to buy themselves a more decent work experience.


This work documents the long history and expansion of occupational licensing and its effects in today’s economy. Although commonly associated with doctors and lawyers, occupational licensing encompasses over 20 percent of the current American work force. Kleiner seeks to assess the benefits and costs resulting from the explosion of licensed occupations in the latter half of the 20th century. To that end, he explores why licensing has become more common, whether it causes earnings or prices to rise, and whether it ensures quality of service to consumers. He analyzes data across states and EU nations to compare the impact of more or less regulation among jurisdictions. Kleiner concludes that licensing generally drives up wages and prices and generally drives down employment growth. He also discusses the policy implications of his findings, focusing on more effective policy alternatives to occupational licensing.


The essays in this book address the problem of unemployment and under-
employment in Asia, which persists in spite of the high growth rate of GDP. Solidly researched theoretical studies of various aspects of labor markets in Asia are followed by detailed case studies of India, Indonesia, the Philippines, China, and Vietnam. In a concluding essay, the editors argue against the prevailing view that labor market rigidity is largely responsible for unemployment and underemployment. Stressing the importance of increasing benefits and protections for workers, they advocate addressing problematic aspects of labor market policies rather than across the board reforms.

MacLean, Nancy. Freedom is not enough: the opening of the American workplace. Cumberland, RI 02864. Russell Sage Foundation; Harvard University Press (Trilliteral, 100 Maple Ridge Dr.). 2006. 454 pp. $35.00, cloth.

MacLean seeks to restore credit for removing workplace discrimination to the grassroots civil rights movement that from the mid-1950s tried to win economic inclusion for African Americans and other groups that had been systematically excluded. Her account of the demonstrations, lawsuits, formal complaints, organizing, and lobbying led by longstanding African American organizations, and eventually joined by women, Mexican American and other minority groups, interspersed with personal stories of individual workers, reflects the author’s prodigious research. The activists’ efforts brought about changes that benefited all workers including more rational personnel procedures, grievance systems, and protection from discrimination and sexual harassment. While the goal of equal economic opportunity for all Americans is far from achieved, the author emphasizes the positive change in political culture that the struggle brought about, the national understanding that full citizenship, including economic security, is the birthright of all Americans.


L.A. Story provides a carefully documented history of workers and labor organization in Los Angeles, especially from 1930 to the present. Los Angeles has twice been the unlikely location of extraordinary success in unionizing the local labor force. Milkman argues that the success of unions in the 1990s depended upon three features of the California labor situation: a) the “longstanding predominance of AFL affiliates generally, and the SEIU in particular,” which provided effective leadership for new labor organizing; b) the “process of labor market restructuring and workforce casualization,” which moved quickly in California but also left in its wake a strong desire for re-unionization; and c) a large influx of immigrants from Mexico and Central America, who both desired economic advancement and “proved ready and able to mobilize effectively.” She also argues that these features have now become characteristic of the national labor situation as well, and concludes with the hope that the California achievement demonstrates that the contemporary union reform movement can succeed in reorganizing American labor.

Newman, Katherine S. Chutes and ladders: navigating the low-wage labor market. Cumberland, RI 02864. Russell Sage Foundation; Harvard University Press (Trilliteral, 100 Maple Ridge Dr.). 2006. 405 pp. $35.00, cloth.

This sociological analysis of minority workers from poor ethnic neighborhoods in New York City uses the results of longitudinal interviews conducted from 1993 to 2002 to probe employment histories and family dynamics. The detailed descriptions of the subjects’ work experiences and reflections about
their economic conditions are supplemented by the authors' commentary. The powerful human portraits help the reader understand why some low-income workers improve their positions over time and others do not. Four appendixes cover study design, sample definitions, occupational prestige scores, and SIPP analysis of wage and status change from the U.S. Census Bureau.


Focusing on the personalities and foibles of the creators of famous cartoon characters, Sito brings to life the union struggles of the screen cartoonists—the strikes and walk-outs, the effects of Hollywood blacklisting, and the battles at the bargaining tables. The author, himself an animator and former president of the Hollywood Animation Guild, reveals how for decades animators received no credit for their creations despite toiling long hours in uncomfortable working conditions. Sito draws on oral histories, archival information, and firsthand knowledge of the animation process for this labor history. He concludes with a look at the changing nature of animation and the way in which current giants Disney and Dreamworks are again reshaping the relationship between studios and animators.


Uchitelle, a *New York Times* economics writer, uses corporate and individual case studies to examine the impact of layoffs on American life during the past quarter century. Based on interviews with a wide range of workers who have lost their jobs, the book documents the shift in the national consciousness from jobs-as-security to layoffs-as-necessity. The author analyzes the personal costs, psychological as well as economic, of being laid off and describes the motives of the companies involved. One chapter is devoted to what he views as the weak attempts by the federal government to address the situation during the Clinton administration. The solutions Uchitelle suggests include full, accurate reporting of the number and reasons for layoffs, a higher minimum wage, and public investment in infrastructures and technology.


*Working and poor* examines American public policy trends over the last quarter century and how they have affected low-wage workers and their families. The authors consider the economic well-being of less-skilled workers from every angle, employment and earning opportunities to consumer behavior and social assistance policies. Blank and Schierholz document the differences in work and wages among less-skilled women and men between 1979 and 2003, revealing an increase in labor participation and wages (more modest) for women but a decrease in both for men. Card and DiNardo examine how technological changes have affected less-skilled workers, and conclude that the impact is actually less dramatic than others have claimed. Levine looks at the effectiveness of the Unemployment Insurance program during recessions and concludes that it must be adjusted to help the neediest group of workers. Conversely, Therese J. McGuire and David F. Merriman show the prevalence of government support for the working poor during the 2001 recession; even when state budgets were stretched thin, legislatures resisted political pressure to cut spending for the poor.