



Look for the union label

*Look for the union label
When you are buying that coat, dress or blouse.
Remember somewhere our union's sewing,
Our wages going to feed the kids and run the house.
We work hard but who's complaining?*

*Thanks to the ILG we're paying our way!
So always look for the union label,
It says we're able to make it in the USA!*

Those of you who are in my “age cohort” may remember this jingle that the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union created in 1975 to encourage the public to buy union, in part to support friends and neighbors. All union members should continue to spread the same message—buying union supports a middle class, and without a strong middle class, the country cannot pull itself out of the recession and restart the economic engine that has been the envy of the world.

Union-made products and services are not just USA-made, supporting our friends and our neighbors, our cities and towns. Union-made products and service are *quality made*, reflecting the training, expertise and experience of *unionized* workers.

The National Football League’s recent debacle replacing unionized referees with untrained, inexperienced and unqualified “scab” referees made it clear to even the most casual football fan that quality matters. In effect, NFL owners were willing to put on the field an inferior product just to save a few bucks (comparatively speaking) and throw their weight around. But the public yelled, and even those politicians fostering rabid anti-union animus to promote their political careers called for the NFL to end the charade and put the *unionized* refs back on the field, whether they recognized their hypocrisy or not. Yes, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, I’m talking to you.

But now I want to talk to NALC members because in addition to serving as NALC national secretary-treasurer, I am a vice president of the AFL-CIO’s Union Label Service Trades Department (ULSTD). So I have a special interest in encouraging letter carriers to purchase union-made products and services when the opportunity presents itself this holiday season.

Information on “buying union” is available directly or via links on the ULSTD website at unionlabel.org. The home page has a search function that enables you to find the names and locations as well as websites of unions and companies that produce or sell union-made products and services. The categories pertinent to holiday shopping include: books/art/music, business/office supplies, clothing/accessories, sporting goods, house/home,

hardware/tools, food/beverage—including candy—and, of course, toys/games/gifts!

It’s not just union-made products that should be a part of our holiday plans. If you are traveling during the holidays, look for a union hotel by checking unionlabel.org. You’ll also find a listing of hotels that should be boycotted because of their anti-union behavior.

And if you’re looking for a unionized destination, try Disney’s two major parks in Anaheim and Orlando, where 36,000 union members from 18 unions are employed. A large number of union members also work at Sea World parks. Many municipal workers at city and state parks and zoos are union members, as are those who staff federal parks and monuments. The individuals who build exhibits, conduct research and maintain the world-renowned Smithsonian Museums in Washington, DC are also union members.

Not every union product or service is listed on the ULSTD website, so it’s helpful to check out the sites of particular unions when looking for union-made products and services. For example, if you’re sending holiday cards, you can find a union printer represented by the Communications Workers of America at cwaprintshops.org, where you also can obtain competitive quotes. Or try gciu.org to locate a GCIU print shop represented by the Graphics Communications International Union/International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

When shopping for food items, remember that the United Food and Commercial Workers represents many large grocery chains in major cities. In addition, many food and beverage products on the shelves of your local supermarket, even a non-union supermarket, are there through the efforts of union workers. For instance—and only as an example, not to encourage you—Good Humor, Breakstone, Breyers, Labelle, Laura Secord, Carvel, Kraft, Land-o-Sun Dairies and Perry’s all employ union workers to make their, ah yes, *ice cream*.

So this holiday season, check the website of Union Label and Service Trades Department and buy union while getting into the spirit of the holiday season!

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This Veterans Day marks the 94th anniversary of the first Armistice Day, when the guns of World War I fell silent across Europe. As in years past, let us give thanks to the men and women of the armed forces and the National Guard, as well as their families, for the great sacrifices they have made. To all those serving abroad, including a number of letter carriers, we wish you a safe return. ☒