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Solving the crisis in health care:

2007 looks to be best chance in years at real solution

In Washington, D.C., and in Salem, Ron Wyden and Ben Westlund gear up to push versions of universal health care

By DON MCINTOSH
Associate Editor

It's the number one issue for unions at contract bargaining time: Unceasing growth in the cost of health care insurance is eating up wage increases and forcing unions to fight hard just to keep the same level of employer-paid health coverage.

That reality has driven unions to look for a political solution, with the result that unions have become perhaps the best-organized lobby for the public at large in its desire for greater access to health care and a more tolerable cost.

The issue long ago passed crisis proportions: 43 million Americans were without insurance last year (600,000 in Oregon), and premiums for those who have health insurance have gone up 87 percent in the last six years, now averaging \$956 a month for family coverage — more than the entire income of a full-time worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 an

hour.

America's current health care system is famous for costliness, inefficiency and inequality. It's a crisis that calls out for national solution, but so far Congress has failed to effectively address it, above all because of the political power of the medical-industrial complex — the tangle of entrenched economic interests that benefit from the status quo: insurers, hospitals, drug companies, doctors, medical equipment manufacturers and on and on.

Those worst off under the current system, the uninsured, aren't organized into any effective lobby. So political support for a solution is most likely to come from stakeholders like business and labor.

Health care costs were an estimated \$2.2 trillion last year — about one-sixth the value of everything produced in the United States. In effect, one-sixth of the economy is holding the other five-sixths hostage by resisting reform, because the 61 percent of employers that provide coverage view health care as a business expense they can't control.

Nationally and locally, there's a sense that this could be the year major reform finally comes. The return of Democrats to the majority in Congress and the Oregon Legislature has raised the

hopes of health care reformers. Congress is expected to look at several far-reaching solutions, and the Oregon Legislature is likely to move ahead with major statewide reforms that could serve as an incubator for national reforms.

Incoming U.S. Senate Health Committee Chairman Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and House Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell (D-Mich.) will push a proposal to expand Medicare to everyone under 65 (Medicare currently makes health coverage available to everyone 65 and over.) Congress started Medicare in 1965 as a single direct payer program and later added a private insurance option that has proved more costly. The Kennedy-Dingell expansion would return to the original model. It would be funded by a 1.7 percent tax on workers' wages and a 7 percent payroll tax paid by employers.

Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.) also will push a Medicare-for-all plan, with the difference being that Conyers' bill would put private health insurers out of business. Conyers' proposal, endorsed by more than 200 labor organizations, would be paid for in part by a modest payroll tax, a small tax on stock and bond transactions, and increased personal income taxes on the

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Oregon labor unions have ambitious political agenda

Hopes are high among union lobbyists going into Oregon's 2007 legislative session, which begins Jan. 8. With Democrats in control of the governor's office and the Oregon House and Senate, the strategy has switched from defense to offense. Union-backed bills that couldn't pass in recent years have much better prospects this year. The labor movement, which helped elect many lawmakers, now will ask them to make good on pledges to support laws that benefit working people.

Whether they work independently or as part of several union groupings, there don't appear to be any major disagreements among unions about what to push for.

To get a preview of labor's legislative agenda for Oregon this year, the Northwest Labor Press talked with leaders and political directors of some of the state's most politically active labor organizations. Here are some of the proposals they'll be backing.

MAKING IT EASIER TO UNIONIZE

- **Let public employees unionize by "card check."** Oregon law allows public employees to unionize but leaves one important decision to management: Managers can recognize a union when a majority of workers have signed union authorization cards, or they can call for the question to be decided in a union certification election. Union organizers favor the former, known as "card check," because it makes unionizing easier and less chancy. Governor Ted Kulongoski ordered managers in state agencies to allow card check, but his order didn't apply to quasi-independent agencies like the Oregon Lottery or agencies like the Judiciary which are independent of the governor. This year, unions want to settle the question for school districts and local governments as well as state agencies.

- **Ban "captive audience" anti-union meetings.** Anti-union meetings are extremely common in company fights against union campaigns —

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Carpenters haul in toys for kids

Joe Baron, financial secretary of Carpenters Local 247, brings a bag of toys for the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters 8th annual toy drive. This year the Carpenters Council gathered 1,685 toys and \$2,531 in cash donations. Carpenters unions from around Oregon and Southwest Washington decide how to distribute the toys within their own communities. In the Portland-Vancouver area a majority of the donations go to the Portland Fire Bureau's Toy & Joymakers. "The Carpenters Union is one of our major contributors. They make a big difference and help tremendously in our efforts," said Dean Johnston of the Toy & Joymakers. Over the past eight years the Carpenters have donated more than 8,000 toys and \$23,000 in cash, said Carpenters Council President Bruce Dennis. "We would not be able to do this without the support of all the local unions, union contractors, contractor associations, community service groups and members."

Let me say this about that

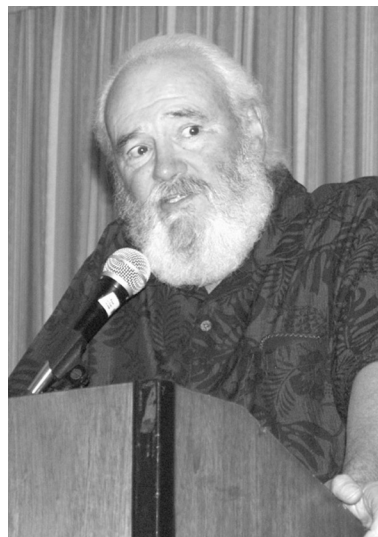
—By Gene Klare



Fame for Billy Mitchell

BILLY MITCHELL, a retired officer of Portland-based Iron Workers Local 29, takes center stage in this first issue of 2007 of the Northwest Labor Press as the newest honoree in the Labor Hall of Fame, which is sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council.

The Retirees Council is affiliated with the NW Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and meets monthly in the NOLC boardroom at 1125 SE Madison St., Portland.



BILLY MITCHELL

MITCHELL, 70, retired in 1993 from the presidency of Local 29; he also was the assistant to the union's business manager, Tom Worley. Earlier in his career, Mitchell had been the business manager.

Billy T. Mitchell was born on June 10, 1936 at the family home in McLennan County, Texas, near the town of Lorena, which is south of Waco. He graduated from high school at nearby Gatesville, and later served in the U.S. Navy. He was an engineman on the USS St. Paul, a cruiser which operated in the Pacific Ocean's Far East region, docking in Japan and Taiwan. The first time he saw the Pacific Northwest was when his ship was drydocked at Bremerton, Washington, for repairs at the U.S. Naval Shipyard there.

AFTER HIS NAVY SERVICE, Mitchell returned to Texas, working

construction in Dallas and Houston. In Houston, he worked on permit from the Iron Workers local union there. The contractor he worked for in Houston obtained a major project in Kalispell, Montana, where Mitchell became a member of the Iron Workers Union in 1964. From there he moved to Portland in 1966 and transferred his membership into Local 29. At that time Local 29 was still in the old Labor Temple, diagonally across the street from City Hall, and John O'Halloran was the business manager. (Local 29 and other tenants of the Labor Temple, including the Labor Press, moved into the new Labor Center at SW First and Arthur in mid-June of 1966.)

Mitchell told the Labor Press that he "worked all over the country" as a member of Local 29. Later, working in Portland, he became active in the union and was elected sergeant-at-arms, and next was elected as an Executive Board member and a delegate to the Pacific Northwest Iron Workers District Council. He was tapped by Local 29 Business Manager LeRoy Worley to be his assistant in 1978. When Worley was appointed a general organizer by the Iron Workers International in 1981, Mitchell succeeded him as business manager. (LeRoy Worley advanced in the International to a vice president and later was the union's general secretary in Washington, D.C. When he retired, he returned to the Pacific Northwest. LeRoy and Tom are brothers.)

MITCHELL REPRESENTED Local 29 as a delegate to various labor organizations including the Columbia-Pacific and Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Councils, the Oregon AFL-CIO and, of course, conventions of the International Association of Bridge, Structural and Ornamental Iron Workers. He served as a trustee of health & welfare and pension trust funds covering Local 29's members.

JOBS IN OREGON were scarce in the Reagan Recession after Republican Ronald Reagan, elected in 1980, had been in office a couple of years. Mitchell and Tom Worley decided to work together on projects in California. They re-

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...Labor's 2007 legislative agenda

(From Page 1)

managers bring in a speaker to talk about the perils of unionism, and require employees to attend. Oregon unions will be backing a local version of a bill that passed last year in New Jersey which prohibits employers from requiring attendance at any meeting to communicate an opinion about religious or political matters.

• **Ban the use of public funds to fight unionization.** Any employer that gets grants, contracts or subsidies from the state government would be prohibited from spending money to oppose union campaigns among its employees.

• **Extend union rights to farmworkers.** Farmworker advocates want Oregon to adopt a variant of a California law that gives farmworkers a process for unionizing. It includes union recognition on the basis of "card check," and binding arbitration to settle a first labor agreement.

• **Get full collective bargaining rights for state-subsidized child care providers.** The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and the Service Employees International Union will try to expand

the collective bargaining rights of a group of child care providers they represent under a pair of governor's executive orders. Right now the orders direct only that the state agency overseeing the low-income child care subsidy "meet and confer" with the unions as representatives of the providers, and honor the terms of informal agreements they reach.

PROMOTING JOB GROWTH OF DECENT PAYING JOBS

• **Invest in infrastructure.** Building trades unions will back Governor Kulongoski's proposals for new rounds of public investment, which will provide employment to thousands of construction workers. The proposals include up to \$600 million in bonds to finance repair and upgrade of college buildings; lottery-backed bonds to build a new light-rail line connecting Portland and Milwaukie; and \$100 million to upgrade port facilities, railroads, airports and transit systems. Unions will also support a plan backed by business interests to raise fuel tax and vehicle registration fees to deal with highway maintenance and congestion problems.

• **Stimulate growth in the alterna-**

tive energy industry. The Oregon AFL-CIO has been working with environmental groups in the Fair and Clean Energy Coalition, and contributed ideas to a governor's task force on the subject. Unions will be backing the governor's proposals, which include requiring utilities to generate 25 percent of their electricity from renewable resources by 2025; increasing the ethanol content of gasoline and the availability of biodiesel; raising the tax credit for investment in alternative energy projects; and developing the nation's first commercial-scale wave energy park. Unions will want to add one thing to the governor's package that's not in there now — some assurance that the jobs created will be family wage jobs and will be in Oregon.

• **Assure that mixed public-private construction projects pay the prevailing wage.** Building trades unions expect to go to Salem hand-in-hand with their longtime adversary, the Portland Development Commission (PDC), to pass a compromise law resolving a long-contested issue — whether projects that mix public and private money must pay state-mandated "prevailing wages" to construction workers. Both parties have agreed to back a bill that says any project with more than \$1 million of taxpayer money would have to pay prevailing wage, regardless of how much private money went into project.

GIVING GOVERNMENT THE RESOURCES TO GET THE JOB DONE

Right-wing Republicans want the poor, sick and elderly to turn to the private sector, not government, for aid, and they don't like government regulatory restraints on corporations. So they've worked over the years to deprive state and local governments of resources. Now, a return to Democratic control is raising hopes of "tax fairness" and greater stability of funding for schools, law enforcement and other priorities. Here are some ideas the governor is proposing, with union

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...Stern backs Wyden's health care reform bill

(From Page 1)

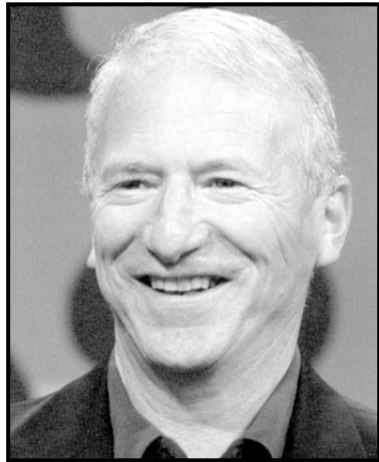
top five percent of income earners.

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) previewed his own detailed proposal Dec. 13, backed by an entourage that included Andy Stern, president of the 1.8 million member Service Employees International Union, and Steve Burd, CEO of Safeway.

Wyden's plan would leave insurers and the entire current system intact, but relieve employers of the burden of finding and managing health care benefits. Instead, employers would be required to "cash out" the value of existing health benefits over a two-year period, giving the money to all employees as a pay raise. After that, all employers would be required to contribute about 25 percent of the cost of their employees' premiums, with the remainder paid by individuals and the federal government through individual tax credits and direct subsidies.

It would be a health care benefit for all Americans equal to what members of Congress currently have, paid for on a sliding scale. Individuals earning less than the poverty level would pay nothing, while everyone earning up to four times the poverty level would get some subsidy. [The poverty level now stands at about \$10,000 for an individual, \$20,000 for a family of four.] Insurers would have to offer the same rate to everyone for the basic health benefit — no longer could they consider occupation, gender, genetic information, age, or pre-existing condition in price or eligibility.

To become law in the next two years, any of these proposals would have to be signed by President George



ANDY STERN



SEN. RON WYDEN

W. Bush, and they each differ significantly from the approach he favors — a shift to tax-free individual health savings accounts.

Meanwhile, the Oregon Legislature may pass reforms of its own, and will be looking at a grab bag of ideas, some major, some minor.

The highest-profile proposal to take concrete form thus far is the one developed by the Oregon Senate's special Commission on Health Care Access and Affordability, chaired by Senators Ben Westlund (D-Tumalo) and Dr. Alan Bates (D-Ashland). The commission, which included representatives from labor and business interests, met

throughout 2006 and released a draft in early December.

"Health care is crumbling around us," Westlund, a former Republican and independent-turned Democrat, told the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board on Dec. 14. "Our health care system cannot be sustained five to seven years out. It's collapsing in on itself."

The Bates-Westlund proposal would create an Oregon Health Care Trust Fund, which would bargain with insurers on behalf of all Oregonians. The Trust Fund would then offer a complete health care package to every Oregonian who is currently uninsured — including medical, dental, mental

health and vision coverage.

Businesses and individuals would choose health plans from the list, and would share the cost of the premiums, which would be paid to the Trust Fund. Residents earning less than 250 percent of the poverty level would have their premiums paid by Medicaid, the state and federal program of health insurance for the poor. Many details of how the program would function still have to be worked out.

The Bates-Westlund proposal may seek access to money spent now by Medicare in Oregon, borrowing an idea from former Oregon governor John Kitzhaber. Kitzhaber and his group the Archimedes Movement have argued that the United States could provide a basic health benefit to every American for the money that's already being spent by the federal government on health care, if the money in Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs and the employer tax deduction were combined and spent effectively. Kitzhaber has proposed that Oregon lead the way by seeking waivers to use that money differently.

Bates, a medical doctor, told the AFL-CIO that their bill would focus on preventable care and keeping people out of the hospital.

He said under the current system, "insurance won't pay for preventive care, it won't pay for medications ... but

if you need a stent or a new kidney, they'll pay for it."

The Oregon Legislature will also consider a grab-bag of partial reforms intended to widen access and restrain costs. They include:

- Expanding a state program of insurance for children in low-income families, and paying for the expansion with an increase in cigarette taxes. Cigarette taxes would go up 84 cents per pack, matching the level paid in neighboring Washington; that money would get federal matching funds. Families earning above a certain amount could also buy in. Gov. Ted Kulongoski supports the plan, which was developed by State Sen. Laurie Monnes Anderson (D-Gresham).

- Making insurance companies show cause before a rate review commission before they could raise premiums.

- Requiring hospitals to publicly disclose their prices.

- Strengthening the requirement that hospitals demonstrate a community need before costly expansions.

- Letting businesses join the state's prescription drug purchasing pool, which was made available to all individuals by a 2006 ballot measure.

- Creating a statewide health insurance pool for all K-12 school employees and some Community College employees.

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Union members in Oregon Legislature get key posts

SALEM — It will be a new Oregon Legislature when the Capitol opens for business Jan. 8. Democrats control the House, Senate and governor's office for the first time in over a decade. That means, for a handful of "labor legislators," all Democrats, that they'll chair committees for the first time in their legislative careers, and have a much better chance of passing legislation.

Up to now, there hasn't been a formal "labor caucus" in Oregon, just informal lists of union-friendly lawmakers.

State Rep. **Diane Rosenbaum** hopes that will change this year. Rosenbaum, a retired central office

technician for Qwest and a 30-year member of Communications Workers of America Local 7901, is president of the labor caucus of the National Conference of State Legislators. She wants to formalize a group of legislators who would sign a pledge and meet periodically to discuss bills and plan strategy. If it follows the national model, Rosenbaum said Oregon's labor caucus wouldn't be limited to union members, but would be open to any lawmaker who supports a "pro-working families agenda."

Rosenbaum will be speaker pro-tem of the House this legislative session, which means she'll control the

agenda of the House when Speaker Jeff Merkley is away. And she'll chair the House Elections, Ethics and Rules Committee. Rosenbaum expects the committee will look at reforms limiting gifts and paid travel legislators could accept; electoral reforms like limiting pay-per-voter "bounty" for registering new voters; and fusion voting, which is sought by the recently formed Working Families Party of Oregon.

Rosenbaum's other committee assignments include the House Revenue Committee, which deals with taxes, and the House Business and Labor Committee.

Chairing the Business and Labor Committee is Rep. **Mike Schaufler**, a former member of the Laborers Union. Schaufler will also serve on the Joint Committee on Emergency Preparedness and Ocean Policy, and will be vice chair of the House Veteran Affairs Committee.

State Rep. **Brad Witt**, who served 14 years as secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, will chair the House Workforce and Economic Development Committee. He will also be a member of the Revenue Committee. When not in session, Witt is a staff representative at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555.

State Rep. **Paul Holvey**, a community relations representative for the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters, will chair the House Consumer Protection Committee. He'll also serve on Workforce and Economic Development and will be vice chair of Business and Labor.

State Rep. **Jeff Barker**, a retired lieutenant of the Portland Police Bureau and former president of the Portland Police Association, will chair the Veterans Affairs Committee. He will also be vice chair of the House Judiciary Committee, and a member of the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Safety.

State Rep. **Larry Galizio**, a teacher

at Portland Community College and member of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon Local 2277, will chair the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, which will work on the education part of the state budget. He will also serve on Consumer Protection, Joint Ways and Means, and the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on General Government.

As a part-time professor at Portland State, State Rep. **Mitch Greenlick** is a member of American Federation of Teachers-Oregon. Greenlick, who last year sponsored an unsuccessful attempt to qualify a ballot measure declaring the right of every Oregonian to health care, will now chair the House Health Care Committee and its Subcommittee on Health Care Access. He will also serve on the House Education Committee and its Subcommittee on Higher Education.

The Oregon Senate has just one union member — **Laurie Monnes Anderson**, who belongs to the Oregon Nurses Association. She will continue to chair the Senate Health Policy & Public Affairs Committee, and will serve on the Senate's Special Committee on Health Care Reform, and the Business, Transportation & Workforce Development, Health & Human Services, and Rules Committees.

AFL-CIO legislative conference set Saturday, Jan. 27, in Portland

A legislative conference for union members will be held Saturday, Jan. 27, at Sheet Metal Workers Local 16's Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

The conference, held traditionally at the start of the legislative session, will give union members and leaders an opportunity to meet with state lawmakers and other elected officials to hear and share views on the state of Oregon.

Workshops will be geared toward affordable health care, energy policy, workforce and organizing.

Additionally, union members new to the legislative process will have an opportunity to learn lobbying skills and techniques.

The conference, sponsored by the Labor Education and Research Center of the University of Oregon, begins at

8:30 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m. Cost is \$25 for persons affiliated with the Oregon AFL-CIO, and \$35 for non-affiliates. Lunch will be provided.

For more information, call 503-725-3295, or from Eugene call 541-346-5054.

Seaside site of next AFL-CIO convention

The 50th convention of the Oregon AFL-CIO will be held Oct. 8-10 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center on the Oregon Coast.

The date and location was announced at the quarterly meeting of the state labor federation held Dec. 14.

More information and convention packets will be provided as the date nears.

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Labor commissioner lists goals for second term

SALEM — Dan Gardner was sworn in Jan. 2 to a second term as commissioner of the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries.

A former state legislator and a card-carrying member (third generation) of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, Gardner outlined his 2007 legislative agenda — an agenda he says “will help both Oregon’s workers and the state’s economy over the next four years.”

BOLI enforces wage and hour laws, civil rights laws, apprenticeship training and provides technical assistance for employers’ programs. BOLI has offices in Portland, Salem, Eugene, Bend, Medford and Pendleton, employs 106 people, and has a two-year budget of approximately \$20 million.

Gardner said he will continue to bolster efforts to provide top-notch technical assistance to state employers trying to comply with both state and federal workplace laws. “It is my firm belief that the vast majority of employers intend to follow the law at all times for the benefit of their workers and their companies,” he said.

Additionally, Gardner will work to link Oregon high school students with apprenticeship and training centers in order to help fill the gap left by the elimination of vocational education programs in state schools and to help meet the growing shortage of construction workers.

“We need to get to work immediately to train young Oregonians to help meet the critical shortage of construction workers we will soon face here and around the nation,” said Gardner. “Guidance counselors need to be reconnected to the state apprenticeship programs and all that they can offer.”

Gardner said that “robust economic development” depends primarily on the creation of high-paying, family-wage jobs. He defined a family-wage



DAN GARDNER

job as one with health care benefits for workers and their families, and retirement benefits.

Gardner said he also will push for legislation requiring overtime pay for workers after each eight-hour shift they work. The law was changed in the 1990s to pay overtime only after 40-hours a workweek.

Gardner said oftentimes retail employers schedule workers 12 to 16 hours a day. If that worker doesn’t put in more than 40 hours in that workweek, the hours are all paid at straight time.

“Oregon is an at-will state, so if an employee refuses to work a 16-hour shift, he or she can be fired,” he said.

Gardner said workers are more prone to injuries if they work longer than eight hours in a day. His bill would require time-and-a-half pay after eight hours on the job.

Gardner also will introduce legislation that will require employers to provide personal record requests in a reasonable amount of time and at a reasonable cost.

“Some employers think ‘reason-

able’ is six months after the request and \$5,000 (for their time),” he said.

Gardner will propose a limit of 45 days after a records request is made, and a yet-to-be-determined “reasonable cost.”

Gardner was first elected labor

commissioner in May 2002. He was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives from District 13 in 1969. Gardner served as assistant Democratic leader during the 1999 session and was unanimously elected House Democratic Leader in 2000.



Endicott elected chair of Boiler Board

John Endicott, business manager of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, was elected chair of the Oregon Board of Boiler Rules at the December meeting. Endicott has served under the appointment of Gov. Ted Kulongoski since 2003, beginning a four-year term. Prior to that, Gov. John Kitzhaber appointed Endicott to his original term on the Board. The Board of Boiler Rules formulates and adopts rules for the safe construction, installation, inspection, operation, maintenance and repair of boilers and pressure vessels, and refrigeration and high-pressure piping systems, and reviews staff enforcement actions. As a steamfitter, Endicott has first-hand knowledge of the trade and offers both practical and policy advice to the Board.

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Asbestos Workers 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 12. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland.

Boilermakers 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 13, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive Board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the ILWU Local 4 Hall, 1205 Ingalls St., Vancouver, Wash.

Columbia-Pacific Building Trades

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Jan. 9 and Jan. 16, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Electrical Workers 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, in the Meeting Hall.

Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, in the Executive Boardroom.

Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, in the Dispatch Lobby.

General Membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 24, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. pre-meeting buffet.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, in the Meeting Hall.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, at NIETC, 16021 NE Airport Way.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 17 and Feb. 7 in the Executive Boardroom.

Meetings are at 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland, unless otherwise noted.

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The following death assessments have been declared for Nov. and are payable at 50 cents each: No. 2127, Jerome F. Winczewski; No. 2128, Ronald L. Lawrence; No. 2129, Daniel L. Faddis; No. 2130, Cecil M. Thames; and No. 2131, Herbert A. Bohlmann.

Electrical Workers 280

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Eugene Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, at the LU 290 Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, at the Salem Heights Community Center, 3505 Liberty Rd. S.

Executive Board meets 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at the 32969 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland.

Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

Fire Fighters 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

Glass Workers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St., SE, Salem.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir. #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir. #300, Portland.

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 19, at Hometown Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

Laborers 483

Municipal Employees

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Executive Board meets 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, followed by a 7 p.m. General Meeting at SEIU Local 503, 1730 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

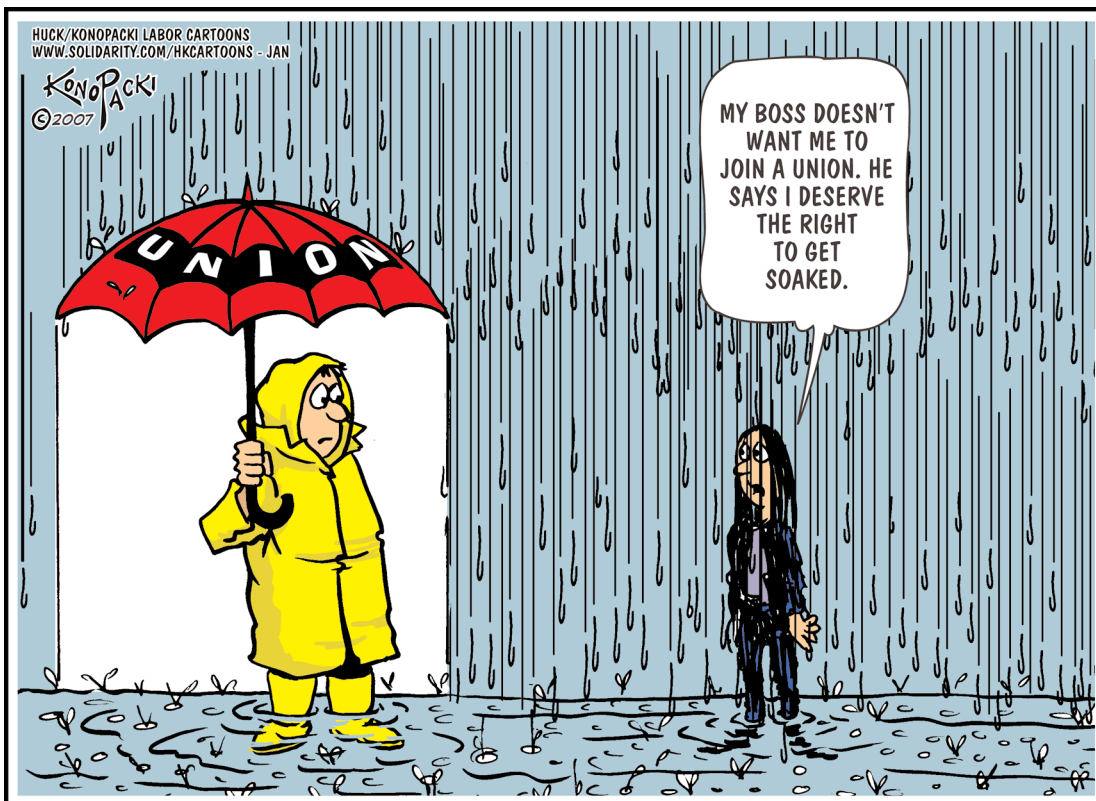
Metal Trades Council

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, Jan. 8, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.



Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 27, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

Multnomah County Employees 88

General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards' meeting.

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at the AFSCME union office.

Meetings are held at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Office and Professional Employees 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at OPEIU Local 11 Conference Room, 7931 NE Halsey St., Rm. 102, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE: NOMINATIONS** will be conducted for the following Local 11 offices: Vice President (2-yr. term); Recording Secretary (2-yr. term); Sgt.-at-Arms (2-yr. term); Executive Board—Utilities (2-yr. term); Executive Board—Public Sector (2-yr. term); Executive Board—At Large (2-yr. term); Executive Board—Transportation (2-yr. term) Trustee (3-yr. term).

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 26, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23. Meetings are at 6025 E Burnside, Portland.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 1. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland. (503) 232-4807

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the

Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** There will be a Special Order of Business at this meeting for nominations for Building Trades Business Representative Position 1 and possible other officers. Potential candidates need to refer to Local 16 Bylaws and SMWIA Constitution Article 12, Section 3, regarding qualifications. To be eligible, dues must be paid in full not later than Dec. 31, 2006.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Abby's Pizza, 7480 Crater Lake Hwy., White City. Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at UA 290 Hall, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, preceded by a 5 p.m. VOC meeting.

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 15, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend. **PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE.**

United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 30, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 517 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at 4816 S 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at 650A Industrial Cir., White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, Jan. 22, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 23, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

United Steel Workers 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 11, at NOLC, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 8, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet Tuesday, Jan. 9, and travel on a FREE 48-seat luxury bus to Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, WA. The bus will leave at

8:30 a.m. from Russellville Park Plaza, 20 NE 103rd Ave., Portland, and return at 4:30 p.m. Receive casino coupons, and enjoy a lunch for \$4.95 plus raffle gifts and snack for the drive home. Bring friends and let's fill the bus! For reservations, please call Vera Larson 503-252-2296.

ELEVATOR 23

Retirees meet 12 noon Tuesday, Jan. 9, at Kirkland Union Manor, 3530 SE 84th, Portland.

IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 10, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to

11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 8, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 16, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503-239-9858, ext. 124.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Salem Retirees meet at noon Wednesday, Jan. 10, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St. NE.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 18, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Local 516 charter member George Pavlich awarded 70-year card

The last surviving founding member of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 was honored at the union's monthly meeting Dec. 16 with a 70-year pin and gold watch.

George Pavlich, 93, joined the union on April 30, 1937, working for M. Reuter & Sons.

Following a stint in the Merchant Marine during World War II, Pavlich returned to Portland where he worked for Reuter & Sons until 1972. He also worked short stints at Steel Fab and Hederal before retiring in 1979.

He and his wife, Elenore, married in 1943. They have been together ever since. She couldn't attend the union presentation because she was home babysitting great grandchildren.

"I'm glad I joined the union," he told about 60 members who attended the meeting. "It's been good to me."



Bus operators to take strike vote in Corvallis

CORVALLIS — City transit and school bus drivers in Corvallis are expected to vote Jan. 16 to reject a contract offer and authorize a strike.

The City of Corvallis contracts management of its bus system to Laidlaw, and so does Corvallis School District. Laidlaw has a rocky history of relations with its unions, including Portland-based Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757.

In Corvallis, trouble began in 1996 with Local 757's original organizing campaign, when Laidlaw fought to have city and school bus drivers together in the same bargaining unit, hoping to defeat the union drive. There are about a dozen drivers for the 11-route Corvallis Transit System, and about 50 school bus operators. The union agreed to combine the two, and won a 1997 union election.

Faced with a brick-wall negotiating stance, the union fought for and passed a 1999 local ballot measure that set city bus drivers' wages at the average

for the region. Wages jumped about \$6 an hour to between \$12 and \$14 an hour. Since then, Laidlaw has said it won't pay any more than the ballot measure requires, says Ron Heintzman, the ATU international representative assigned to bargain for the group. But that's not what it means to bargain, Heintzman says.

"To be locked into third-party contract terms for over six years, with no opportunity to have any voice in changing those terms, was in our view not intended nor acceptable any longer," Heintzman wrote in an e-mail explaining the union's position to Corvallis city manager Jon Nelson.

Meanwhile, for the school bus drivers, Heintzman said it took six years for the company to agree to replace previous pay levels with a five-year, five-step wage schedule, and now the company is proposing to scrap that.

The union is recommending a "no" vote on the offer and a "yes" vote to authorize a strike.

Public pressure pushes Goodyear to settle pact with striking Steelworkers

PITTSBURGH (PAI) — Public pressure and protests from coast-to-coast — including leaflets, picket signs and marches — forced Goodyear Tire Co., back to the bargaining table in mid-December and produced a new three-year contract on Dec. 22, the United Steelworkers announced.

USW members ratified the pact by a more than 2-to-1 margin on Dec. 28, among more than 10,000 members voting. It won majorities at all 12 Goodyear locals.

The pact ended a strike that began in early October. But the pressure that pushed Goodyear back to bargaining came when the Steelworkers marshaled tens of thousands of unionists and their supporters for Dec. 16 demonstrations at 168 retail tire outlets nationwide (including Oregon and Washington), letting consumers know how the firm was trying to mistreat both its workers and retirees.

Goodyear's key demands were that the now-profitable tire firm close its Tyler, Texas, plant — putting 1,100 union members out of work — and shift production to China; and eliminate health insurance for retirees and their families. It backed down on both.

"We owe gratitude to the labor and activist communities, which rose with unprecedented solidarity to challenge Goodyear's assault," said Steelworkers President Leo Gerard.

Gerard said Goodyear's initial de-

mands "were at the heart of what's wrong with America today: Global corporations running away" from the U.S. and from their commitments to workers and the middle class.

Union members were particularly miffed because several years ago they helped Goodyear get through some financial hardships by agreeing to wage and benefit freezes.

Goodyear returned to profitability soon after that, but they "walked away from their promises" when that contract expired, the Steelworkers said.

National AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the national solidarity let Goodyear — and other companies — know that for U.S. workers "enough is enough" in terms of "exporting good-paying jobs to countries whose lack of labor law enforcement is more disgraceful than our own."

According to the Steelworkers, the new contract:

- Sets up a company-financed trust of more than \$1 billion that will go to secure medical and prescription drug benefits for current and future retirees.

- Commits Goodyear to tripling capital invested in union-represented plants to at least \$550 million, to "meet the challenges of global competition."

- Puts off the closure of the Tyler plant until the end of 2007. Instead, there will be a one-year transition period to give Tyler's workers the chance to take "sizable retirement buyouts,"

the union said.

And even though the plant will eventually close, tires now made there will have to be produced at Steelworker-represented plants in the U.S., Conway said. "The company simply won't be able to outsource that work or service this market segment with imports from China or anywhere other than a Steelworker facility."

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...Election results have Oregon labor thinking big in '07

(From Page 2)
backing.
• **Raise the corporate minimum**

tax. Two-thirds of corporations doing business in Oregon pay just \$10 a year in income tax because they are able to

show no profit on the books. Kulongoski proposes to increase that minimum to a sliding scale of \$250 to sev-

eral thousand, depending on the size of the company.

• **End the corporate kicker.** Oregon has a unique law whereby if income tax revenue exceeds what the state economist predicts, the difference is refunded to taxpayers, including many out-of-state corporations. Kulongoski is proposing to keep the corporate income tax "kicker" and use it to create a rainy day fund for when revenues are lower than predicted.

• **Raise the cigarette tax.** Kulongoski proposes to raise the cigarette tax to the level paid in neighboring Washington, dedicating the proceeds to fund health care for Oregon children.

• **Roll back wasteful tax loopholes.** SEIU wants lawmakers to re-examine tax breaks passed by past legislatures. If the breaks didn't accomplish the purposes their backers claimed, like creating new jobs, then the breaks would be eliminated, returning millions of dollars to public coffers.

• **Offer amnesty to corporate tax cheats, and increase penalties on those who don't come forward.** For companies that have used off-shore tax havens and other legally murky loopholes, SEIU wants Oregon to offer them a chance to come clean and pay up, or else face stiffer penalties if found in violation of the law.

FIXING HEALTH CARE

• **Tighten the screws on insurers.** A labor-backed proposal would make health insurers justify premium increases before a public commission.

• **Bulk up bulk buying.** Kulongoski is proposing to open the state's prescription drug purchasing pool to small businesses.

• **Rein in hospital overbuilding.** To avoid costly and duplicative overbuilding, labor wants to see a strengthened requirement that hospitals demonstrate

a community need before building new facilities.

• **Shine a light on hospital pricing.** Unions will be looking to support some method for patients to compare prices and outcomes between hospitals.

OTHER IDEAS

• **Roll back privatization.** Are Oregon taxpayers getting ripped off by local versions of Halliburton? SEIU wants the Joint Ways and Means Committee to scrutinize contracts to make sure the work couldn't be done cheaper and better in-house.

• **Open up the political system to third parties.** To eliminate the "spoiler" dilemma, the union-backed Working Families Party of Oregon will be pushing for a "fusion" bill, which would allow third parties to use their ballot line to endorse major party candidates.

• **OLCC bill.** United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 will lobby for an Oregon Liquor Control Commission bill that would decriminalize the unintentional sale of alcohol to minors by grocery clerks.

• **Expand the scope of public employee union contracts.** To do something about the problem of mandatory overtime, SEIU wants to add safety and staffing levels to the list of "mandatory subjects of bargaining."

• **Prohibit transit workers from striking.** Amalgamated Transit Union will be pushing to get transit workers added to the list of public workers prohibited from striking. At first glance, that seems odd: Why would a union seek to give up the right to strike? The answer: For public workers who can't strike, the law requires binding arbitration to settle contract disagreements between labor and management. In theory, arbitrators impose the most reasonable of the two positions.

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Custodial Board rejects PPS' proposed hiring plan

At its Dec. 15 meeting, the Custodial Civil Service Board (CCSB) rejected a Portland Public Schools (PPS) proposal to give special treatment to Portland Habilitation Center (PHC) janitors who are applying for permanent positions with the school district.

PPS is returning to an in-house custodial staff because of an Oregon Supreme Court ruling that the district's 2002 decision to contract out custodial work to PHC to was illegal under the Custodial Civil Service Law.

That law requires that PPS hire from a pool of applicants created by the CCSB, which is supposed to administer a competitive examination open to all. PPS wanted to allow an ungraded cleaning class offered by PHC management to substitute for the graded examination for applicants from PHC. The PHC class was not open to the public at large, unlike the exam, which tests basic math and English reading ability.

The district's proposal was opposed by returning custodians, who belong to Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503, and by others who took the test when it was last given. Several hundred applicants took the test in August 2006, but the hiring process stopped while the CCSB considered the district's proposal for several months.

PHC, and SEIU Local 49, the union that represents its employees, argued that using only the test would discriminate against applicants on the basis of national origin, since some PHC applicants have limited ability to speak English, and the test was in English.

Others at the Custodial Civil Service Board meeting argued that it was perfectly valid to test English ability, as English is needed on the job. Wayne

Curtin, a returned custodian, said he'd seen how language difficulties with some PHC immigrant workers have prevented them from understanding and carrying out instructions.

And one PHC employee told the Custodial Civil Service Board not to let the class substitute for the test.

"I took the PHC training course, and I didn't think very highly of it," said Robert Baker, a former Freightliner machinist.

After several hours of testimony, the three-member Custodial Civil Service Board unanimously rejected the PPS proposal because of the 11th-hour revelation that PHC offered the class only to its disabled employees. PHC is a non-profit that gets preference for government contracts under a law meant to employ individuals with disabilities who need a sheltered work environment. Custodial Civil Service Board members felt that since some of the limited-English janitors might not have taken the class, the class wouldn't remedy the concern expressed by the district about discrimination.

Custodial Civil Service Board did however agree to another PPS request — to reduce the weight of the exam in the hiring process. The exam was to have counted for 60 percent and now will count for 20 percent. Work experience, employer reviews and answers to interview questions will count for the other 80 percent.

"That's not fair," said applicant Bruce Koslowski, who complained that the district reduced the weight of the exam after he took it.

Oral interviews began in late December. The district hasn't said when it will complete the transition to in-house staff, except that it plans to be finished by September 2007.

Think Again • By Tim Nesbitt



Final Column

My 'think again list' for 2007

I am excited about joining Governor Ted Kulongoski's staff, but I am sad to have to give up this column. Still, I can't be a member of the governor's leadership team and an independent commentator on Oregon politics at the same time.

So it's time to move on. But, before I do, I want to share my current thoughts on what I had hoped to explore in future columns.

Call this my "think again list" for 2007.

Whither our union movement?

When I began this column almost three years ago, we were fighting to unseat the most anti-union president of our lifetimes, working to re-energize our organizing efforts and trying to revitalize our union movement at the same time. Now, just as we have helped to deliver a stunning repudiation of that president and are watching him lose his grip on power, we are still searching for new ways to reach the growing numbers of workers without unions and to survive as a united movement.

Those of us who have worked in unions for the past several decades can't say we've been part of a growing movement. But we know we've made a tremendous difference in the lives of our members and in the contest of political power for working families. This country would be in far worse shape today if we hadn't fought the good fights during those decades.

But will we be able to move from defense to offense before we leave the playing field? Can we in our lifetimes reorganize the resources of our movement to grow again and regain the kind of broad-based political power that labor commanded a half century ago?

The chicken-and-egg debate that preceded the split in the AFL-CIO in 2005 continues. Must we build political power to change our labor laws and enable us to organize more workers? Or, should we concentrate on organizing more workers, using new strategies to do so, before we try to reach critical mass in the political arena?

Obviously, we need to do both. But I also think we need a third leg if we hope to move forward. We need to focus on the role of government,

not just as referee on the economic playing field, but as a player in its own right with the power to make life better for working people that will always be far greater than that of our union movement.

For an excellent analysis of our movement's sometimes schizophrenic view of government, I recommend Nelson Lichtenstein's "State of the Union, A Century of American Labor" (2002, Princeton University Press). Despite all the angst about a global economy that is rapidly escaping the reach of national governments, Lichtenstein's analysis reminds us that our fate as working people is inexorably linked to our power as citizens and the purpose of our public institutions.

Shared responsibility as a new model for progressive government. I learned a lot from working with the Higher Ed board on a new model for college aid.

Research shows that students who work part-time during the school year do better in college than those who don't work at all. And voters in focus groups tell us that they would be far more willing to help students who work or at least pay something for their education than those who don't. These insights gave birth to the new shared responsibility model we're promoting as a way to make college affordable for all Oregonians.

The shared responsibility approach offers something to those who contribute something themselves. It's based on the concept of matching effort, rather than subsidizing need.

If government would match the efforts of more middle class families, whether for college or health care, social programs would be seen in a different light than those of the proverbial welfare state.

In Oregon, publicly-funded college aid and health care for the able-bodied reach only the poorest of the poor. But the financing needed to expand such programs and provide at least modest amounts of help for middle class families is not beyond our reach. For example, long-overdue adjustments in the state's corporate minimum and tobacco taxes could pay for a truly affordable higher education system and health

care for all children in families with incomes up to \$60,000 or even \$80,000 a year.

When government uses its resources to support more working families, working families will become more supportive of their government.

What will be the jobs of the future? I continue to tell my daughter that she made the right choice when she decided to pursue a nursing degree. There will be great demand for nursing jobs in the years ahead, both because of the aging of the baby boomers and their exodus from the healthcare workforce.

But I can't assure her that these jobs which we're handing off to the next generation will continue to be good-paying jobs, if we don't have a union movement and a progressive government to defend them.

The debates today about the jobs of the future range from the faith-based (that education is the ticket to all better jobs) to the cynical (that we're doomed to lose more good jobs than we'll gain as corporations scour the globe for cheaper labor). Neither view is persuasive to me.

I continue to think that the formal model of higher education is a social good that we should continue to make more accessible to everyone with the interest and ability to pursue it. But, I sense that its utility in the job market has been greatly exaggerated. Also, I think that the turnover of jobs from the baby boom generation and the dynamism of technological innovation will prove the cynics wrong about opportunities in the workforce of the future.

My conclusion: The future can be much brighter for our children if we make the right choices. As working people and trade unionists, we need to reorganize our movement to defend the jobs of the future. As citizens, we need to undertake a massive public investment in alternative energy development and demand a reorganization of government to better support the efforts of working families.

And I'd like us to have a little more confidence — that we can think and rethink our way through these changing times and both figure things out and straighten them out before we leave the playing field.



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Happy New Year!

Congress passes anti-worker trade law

WASHINGTON, D.C. — As one of its last acts before adjourning, the Republican-controlled 109th Congress passed a detailed trade law in its lame-duck post-election session — one day after it was introduced.

The 213-page bill, sponsored by Rep. Bill Thomas (R-Calif.), covers trade and tariff policy with dozens of nations. It was approved Dec. 8 by the House in a 212-184 vote, then added as an amendment to an even larger tax and health care bill that had passed the Senate by unanimous consent Dec. 7.

The AFL-CIO opposed the bill because of several provisions, including one which granted “permanent normal trade relations” to Vietnam. With little time to spare, AFL-CIO legislative director Bill Samuel sent a letter to members of Congress urging a “no” vote.

“Our trade relations with Vietnam should remain governed by existing agreements until Vietnam takes meaningful steps to bring practice and law regarding workers’ rights into compliance with international standards,” Samuel wrote.

The bill exempts Vietnam from a 1974 requirement that communist countries undergo an annual human rights review before trade with the United States can be approved.

It also eliminates import tariffs on over 500 products, including industrial metals and chemicals, aircraft parts, electric pencil sharpeners, coffee makers and juicers, camera lenses, footwear ... the list goes on for 100 pages.

The bill changes U.S. trade policy with Haiti, allowing companies to import into the United States tariff-free clothing assembled in Haiti that is made with fabric from third countries. Previously, tariff-free imports from Haiti had to be made with U.S.-manufactured fabric.

And it extends low tariffs to imports

from four South American countries — Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia — if trade agreements with those countries are ratified within six months. Ecuador and Bolivia aren’t currently negotiating any such trade agreement, while deals reached in 2006 with Peru and Colombia are strongly opposed by U.S. unions. All four countries are considered to have poor records of protecting workers’ rights.

Both political parties split over the bill, with a slight majority of Democrats voting no, and three-fifths of Republicans voting yes.

Southwest Washington Congressman Brian Baird (D) voted for the bill, as did Oregon’s Darlene Hooley (D) and

Greg Walden (R). Voting against it were Oregon Congressmen David Wu (D) and Peter DeFazio (D); Earl Blumenthal (D) didn’t cast a vote.

Many of the issues addressed by the bill are important to U.S. workers and domestic producers, said Thea Lee, chief international economist at the national AFL-CIO, but the bill was passed without debate or serious consideration.

“It was a typical Bill Thomas maneuver to try to cram a whole bunch of things into a bill and try to rush it through without giving members of Congress time to look at it,” Lee said.

Thomas, who headed the Ways and Means Committee, did not seek re-election in 2006.

Oregon AFL-CIO joins Manufacturing 21 group

The Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board on Dec. 14 approved joining the Manufacturing 21 Coalition, a business-based organization trying to recruit more workers to the industrial sector. The group, which includes union shops such as Boeing Co., Freightliner and Cascade General, says a looming worker shortage will leave their businesses unable to fill jobs with skilled workers.

“We have a lot of common interests,” said Barbara Byrd, secretary-treasurer of the state labor federation. “It’s good that we will be at the table to discuss those interests.”

The Manufacturing 21 Coalition was formed several years ago because of a growing difficulty finding skilled workers. A spokesman said over the next 10 years Oregon is expected to lose 50,000 to 60,000 skilled workers to retirement — the vast majority of them from the Portland metropolitan area.

The state’s manufacturing industry supplies about 208,000 jobs to the economy — the fourth-highest number of jobs in the state behind trade, government and education.

Byrd wants to see a push to recruit more high school graduates into manufacturing and other skilled blue-collar jobs.

One of the Manufacturing 21 Coalition’s objectives is to educate school counselors on the opportunities for training and family-wage jobs in manufacturing. Its primary goal, however, is to create a Center for Manufacturing and Infrastructure Engineering. The \$25 million center would be a shared facility to educate and train workers for careers in industrial manufacturing. Funds for the building would come from the coalition’s private-sector members, government, and private grants and economic development money.

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Let me say this about that

...Retirement travels

(From Page 4)

turned to Portland and ran for office in Local 29 in 1986. Worley was elected business manager, Mitchell was elected president and served as Worley's assistant. As was noted earlier, Mitchell retired in 1993.

MITCHELL AND his wife, Barbara Lee, were married in 1957 in a ceremony held in his mother's living room in Gatesville, Texas. They have long made their home in Parkdale, situated near Mount Hood. Mitchell traveled from home to Portland and back by Harley-Davidson motorcycle, but sometimes they lived in an apartment in the Rose City so that he would be closer to Local 29's office. Mitchell told the NW Labor Press that he has "a garage full of motorcycles" in Parkdale. He enjoys restoring old motorcycles and his current project is a 1946 model with the Indian logo.

The Mitchells spend a lot of time on the road and departed in mid-December for Arizona, Texas and elsewhere. They travel in their motorhome pulling an enclosed trailer containing his favorite Harley. He said they've been "in every state of the Lower 48." Every year they go to Florida where he rides in Daytona's annual Bike Week.

BILLY AND BARBARA have a daughter, two sons and four grandsons from 3 to 26. Daughter Jessica Martin of Portland is a television program producer for Oregon Public Broadcasting's Channel 10. Son John Mitchell of The Dalles is a software specialist whose job takes him around the country installing systems at utility companies. Son Beau Mitchell is a physician in New York City's Manhattan district who runs a pediatric hematology research laboratory and is accredited to practice at Mount Sinai Hospital.

★★★

Herb Bohlmann of IBEW dies

HERBERT ARTHUR BOHLMANN, a longtime member of Portland-headquartered International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, died on Dec. 10, 2006 at the age of 88.

He was born in Portland on Aug. 11, 1918. He graduated from Benson Technical High School. He married Irya Holmes on April 20, 1940.

HE JOINED Local 48 in 1938 and was a member for 68 years. He was active in the union, serving on the Apprenticeship Committee and in other posts.

His family said that he "loved to work in his yard of beautiful flowers and enjoyed woodworking and painting at his home."

SURVIVORS INCLUDE his wife of 66 years, Irya; two daughters, Susan Brush of Desert Hot Springs, Calif. and Sally Bohlmann-Nichols of Westport, Wash.; a son, Stephen, of Milwaukie; a brother, Walter; a sister, Elaine Quimby; three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Funeral arrangements were handled by Finley--Sunset Hills.

★★★

Bernie Coolon of IAM dies

BERNARD FRANCIS COOLON, a Grand Lodge auditor for the International Association of Machinists, died on Dec. 2 at age 84. He had lived in Portland for 33 years.

He was born on Nov. 18, 1922, in the Canadian city of Montreal. He married Rosalie Jakes in 1959.

AS AN AUDITOR for the IAM, he inspected the financial books of Machinist organizations in Portland and elsewhere.

Survivors include his wife, Rosalie; two daughters, Lorraine Schultz and Linda Archerd; and three grandchildren.

HIS FUNERAL was held Dec. 8 in Gateway Little Chapel of the Chimes. Memorial contributions can be made to the Oregon Humane Society.

★★★

ANNE FEENEY, a singer from the Midwest known for her labor songs, will sing in Portland on Saturday night, Jan. 20, 2007, at the St. Andrew's Community Center at NE Alberta Street and 9th Avenue in a two-hour fundraising program that starts at 7 p.m.

A contribution of from \$10 to \$20 is the admission fee, with proceeds going to the Portland chapter of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. The Portland chapter of WILPF, which is more than 90 years old, has members with union backgrounds.

FEENEY HAS APPEARED before in Portland, singing at union picketlines with the local labor musical group "General Strike." Mary Rose, a member of WILPF and General Strike, said the Feeny show will be "an evening of songs drawn from her life on the frontlines of labor."

The Community Center is part of the St. Andrew's Catholic Church complex.

Ill Plasterers Local 82 member thanks various unions for help

To The Editor:

I've read in your paper from time to time about union members helping one another when the chips are down, so I thought I would tell you my story.

I found out in October 2004 that I have cancer that is not treatable. I have had two surgeries since then, and I'm going in for another one here shortly. But this story isn't about me. It's about the staff and members of Plasterers Local 82, the Carpenters Union, the Laborers Union and Warehousemen in Portland who work for Fred Shearer & Sons, where I was

employed before I got sick.

They took a collection to help me out and, if that wasn't enough, they did it a second time.

If you ever get a chance to meet any of these people, you've been truly blessed. I don't know how to thank them enough for helping me and my family through these hard times. They are truly very generous and thoughtful, and I am proud to know them and be a member of Local 82.

Mark Veiver
Plasterers Local 82
Aurora

Retired unionist infuriated by Chavez's attacks on U.S., Bush

To The Editor:

First, I have been a registered Democrat all my life, and I am a 40-plus year member of the union.

I read with interest your article "Hope in Venezuela, fear in Columbia," (Dec. 1 NW Labor Press). It's good that unions can organize there.

I don't think it takes someone with a lot of brains to know what that two-bit dictator Hugo Chavez is up to. First, he makes fun of our president when he went to the summit in South America; and then he comes up here to the U.S. and calls him names and makes more fun of him. That's a little too much.

I've never heard or seen one of our union leaders say one word about that. I know that the union leaders dislike

the president. But he's still the president of our country.

The unions are always saying how our country comes first, and the last time I checked the president and his administration are part of this country.

I love this country very much, and as far as I'm concerned, it is the best country in the world. So when some two-bit dictator starts running it down, it infuriates me.

I know that there are some who will say it's the president they can't stand, not the country. But as far as I'm concerned they go together.

John Schell
Bricklayers Local 1
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Unionist urges joint labor effort on worker issues

To The Editor:

It was very encouraging to see all of labor — Change to Win locals, as well as independent and AFL-CIO locals in our area — working together during this election. My local registered or re-registered 950 members to vote. Our members canvassed for several targeted candidates and some of the canvasses were joint efforts with the AFL-CIO. Our members voting late were called and encouraged to get their ballots in. I hear we even made targeted mailings to our members in areas with close races to get the vote out for pro-labor candidates.

The Oregon AFL-CIO, under Tom Chamberlain's leadership, also did a terrific job for the election, continuing the impressive program developed when Tim Nesbitt was president.

I used some of the AFL-CIO's and Our Oregon's excellent materials to educate fellow members at my work-site about ballot measures. I was glad to have additional opportunities to help by calling union members during the AFL-CIO phone bank program and getting out the vote on an AFL-CIO-sponsored canvass.

Now it's time to roll up our sleeves a little further and work together for real progress on issues so important to us, issues such as health care and workers' rights. Thanks to everyone's hard work, we have the momentum!

Stuart Fishman
UFCW Local 555
Portland

What's in that union-made bread?

Offspring of members of Bakers Local 114 have won four pageant crowns

There must be something in the union-made bread produced by members of Portland-based Bakers Local 114. Over the past two decades, the offspring of four Local 114 members have been crowned Miss America, Miss Oregon and Miss Teen Oregon.

The most famous is Katie Harmon, Miss America 2002. She is the granddaughter of union member Adolph DiMarco.

The latest is Miss Oregon Donilee McGinnis. She will represent the state at the Miss America Pageant to be held Jan. 29 in Las Vegas. She is the daughter of Ron McGinnis, a 13-year member of the union who works at Oroweat Bakery in Beaverton.

In 1984, Renee Bagley, the daughter of member Clyde Bagley, was crowned Miss Oregon;



and in 1996, Kristen Cook, the stepdaughter of Local 114 Business Representative Gene Beaudoin, was selected Miss Teen Oregon.

Donilee McGinnis, 24, of Scappoose, is a communications major at Portland State University.

She first competed for the Miss Oregon title in 2004 after being recruited by Katie Harmon's mother, a customer at a Gresham dress shop where McGinnis worked. McGinnis placed in



the Top 10 that year, finished fourth in 2005, and captured the title in 2006.

Her talent is tap dancing, and her platform issue for the Miss America contest, which will air on CMT on Monday, Jan. 29, is "Autism: Advocacy and Awareness." She selected that topic

because her brother, David, 18, is autistic. Donilee volunteers for the Autism Society of Oregon, as well as the Autism Research & Resources of Oregon. Last year she led an in-house autism awareness training project for the Portland Police Bureau.

Miss Oregon Donilee McGinnis (center) is the daughter of Bakers Local 114 member Ron McGinnis (in baker's whites) at Oroweat Bakery in Beaverton. Also pictured are McGinnis' mother Donilu, brother David, Local 114 Business Manager Terry Lansing (left) and Local 114 Business Representative Gene Beaudoin.

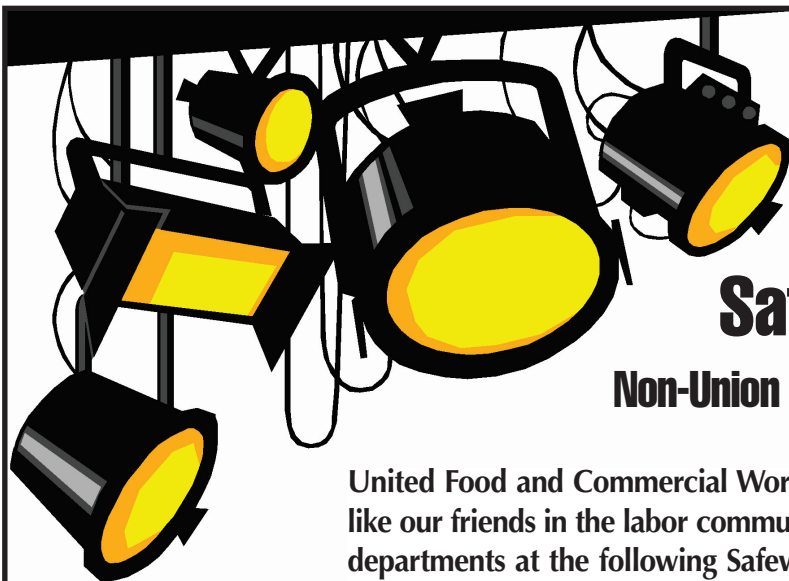
Minimum wage increases in Oregon and Washington

On Jan. 1, 2007, Oregon's minimum wage increased from \$7.50 to \$7.80 an hour — the second highest in the nation.

In Washington, the state minimum wage increased from \$7.63 to \$7.93 an hour — the highest in the nation.

Both states peg annual increases in the minimum wage to the Consumer Price Index to keep pace with inflation.

The federal minimum wage is \$5.15 an hour (effective in Idaho). That wage rate hasn't increased in 10 years.



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- 5270 SW PHILOMATH BLVD., PHILOMATH
- 1140 N SPRINGBROOK RD., NEWBERG

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