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Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain (center) and Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner (right) applaud Brad Witt as he holds up a plaque in recognition of his 14 years of service as secretary-treasurer of the state labor federation. Witt was declared ineligible to continue in the elected post because his union, UFCW Local 555, doesn't plan to sign a Solidarity Charter. A successor won't be named until the federation's next Executive Board meeting in March.

Witt ineligible to serve

Brad Witt, secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO for the past 14 years, was declared ineligible to retain the position because his union, United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, doesn't plan to sign a Solidarity Charter with the state labor federation.

The seat was declared vacant by the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board at its quarterly meeting Dec. 16. A successor to fill the unexpired term will be named when the board meets again in March. In the meantime, AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain will serve double-duty as secretary-treasurer.

UFCW was one of four unions to leave the national AFL-CIO last July to form the new Change to Win federation. But because the disaffiliations had such a huge financial impact on state and local labor groups, national leaders worked out a plan — called Solidarity Charters — allowing the Change to Win unions to maintain their affiliations with state AFL-CIO bodies and central labor councils, with full voting rights and eligibility to run for office.

Both Witt and former Oregon AFL-CIO President Tim Nesbitt (of the Service Employees International Union) were members of Change to Win unions. No one knew if Solidarity Charters would ever come to fruition, so in the interim, Nesbitt took up membership with the

National Writers Union of the United Auto Workers and Witt joined a Machinists-Woodworkers local union.

Negotiations dragged on for months. With the outcome still uncertain, Nesbitt resigned as president of the Oregon AFL-CIO at the federation's convention in October. He was succeeded by Chamberlain, a member of Fire Fighters Local 43. Also at that convention, delegates unanimously voted a constitutional change making the secretary-treasurer a part-time, unpaid position.

Witt had agreed to the resolution. Prior to the vote, he announced that he was returning to UFCW Local 555 as a full-time union representative. He planned to work for Local 555, fulfill his duties as the part-time secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, and run for re-election as a state representative in the Oregon Legislature. Witt had taken a leave of absence from his AFL-CIO job last year to serve as a District 31 representative.

In November, the national AFL-CIO and Change to Win finalized the Solidarity Charter, which led to the reaffiliation at the state level of Service Employees Locals 503 and 49, UNITE HERE Local 9 and UFCW Local 1439, a small unit based in Spokane, Wash., but with members in Umatilla County, Oregon.

Reaffiliation discussions between Chamberlain and
(Turn to Page 3)

It's official! South Waterfront apprenticeship deal gets signatures

Signatures are finally on the dotted line on a "project apprenticeship agreement" for the multi-billion-dollar South Waterfront Central District development project.

"This agreement is significant for all of the partners of the South Waterfront Central District and will serve as a model for future private/public partnerships," said Portland Development Commission Executive Director Bruce Warner before signing the agreement at a special ceremony Dec. 14 that included project developers, union officials and commissioners and staff of PDC.

Partners in the agreement are Oregon Health & Science University, River Campus Investors, North Macadam Inc., PDC, most of the affiliates of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council, and the Carpenters Union.

"The partners have agreed to be accountable for developing a program to recruit, train and employ minorities and women in the construction trades, which is significant not only to the South Waterfront, but to the city as a whole," Warner said.

"Homer (partner Homer Williams)

and I are pleased to be working with the unions," said Dike Dames of Williams & Dames Development Co. "I'm a doer. We're going to try to make something happen here."

A Workforce Diversity Strategy was initially established by PDC and the City of Portland and agreed to by the trade unions in June 2004. But some language in that strategy was not supported by developers or OHSU, so the parties returned to the bargaining table. Last October, a final draft came before PDC commissioners that was agreeable to all parties. The commission unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing execution of the project apprenticeship agreement.

The goal is to have 35 percent women and minorities — 20 percent ethnic minority and 15 percent women — employed on a project-by-project basis in South Waterfront by the year 2014. Initially, the ratio is set at 4 percent women and 12 percent minorities, with incremental increases each year.

The project apprenticeship agreement will apply to all construction work performed by general contractors under contracts in excess of \$200,000 and by

subcontractors under contracts in excess of \$100,000. Contractors will be required to have apprenticeship training

programs in order to bid on the work.

"This agreement shows a true partnership between the PDC, owners and

unions in working towards a common goal of diversifying the workforce and ensuring that graduates will have marketable skills that will benefit their families and communities," said Nelda Wilson, assistant business manager of Operating Engineers Local 701.

PDC is coordinating the \$1.9 billion South Waterfront project, a 31-acre parcel of vacant industrial land on the Willamette River waterfront south of downtown that is being developed with public and private money into a neighborhood with a mix of jobs, housing, retail and recreation.

An oversight committee consisting of union officials, developers, OHSU and PDC will meet regularly to review progress of the project apprenticeship agreement.

Tentatively, union officials on the oversight committee are Local 701's Wilson; John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council; Randy Knopp of the District Council of Laborers; Scott Axness of Electrical Workers Local 48, and Jerry Auvil or Pete Savage representing the Regional Council of Carpenters.



PDC Executive Director Bruce Warner signs pact negotiated with Portland area building trades unions to use more women and minority apprentices on the multi-billion-dollar South Waterfront development. Also signing the deal were Mark Williams (center) of Oregon Health & Science University; and developer Dike Dames (right), a partner with developer Homer Williams.

Let me say this about that

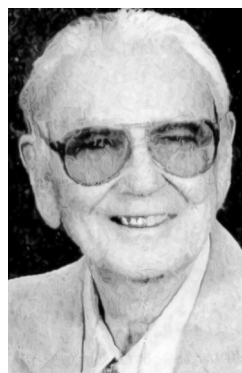
—By Gene Klare



Dean Wear dies, 78

DEAN WEAR, a former business manager of Operating Engineers Local 701, died on Dec. 2, 2005 in Portland, his family reported. He was 78 years old.

Darrol Dean Wear was born on April 6, 1927 in Frontier County, Nebraska. The family moved to Oregon, living first in Eugene before settling in Portland, where Dean attended high school. Dean's mother died in a fire when he was 16, and he went to Kansas to live with his maternal grandparents on a wheat farm. After graduating from high school there, he attended a nearby college where he met and married Ann. They moved to Oregon, and Dean worked as a heavy equipment operator, as did his father, Ethmer (Olie) Wear.



DEAN WEAR

THE FAMILY SAID that Dean and Ann had two children, Dee and Karrol, and lived in every county in Oregon except Lake. The couple later divorced.

Dean married Jerie Greer in about 1965, the family said, and he adopted her two children, Larry and Mary. The family moved to Wolf Creek, where Dean and Jerie owned and operated the local restaurant. Later, they moved to Boardman, then to Vancouver, Wash., in 1967, and next to Paxson, Alaska, southeast of Fairbanks. Dean and son Larry ran the service station in Paxson and Jerie cooked at the adjoining lodge. Better jobs were found in Anchorage before they returned to Vancouver in 1970, the family said. After that, Dean went back to operating heavy equipment and later was elected business manager of Local 701. The family said he held the union office for about eight years, and later retired.

Back then, Operating Engineers Local 701 was headquartered in its own building at SW 12th Avenue and Market Street near Portland State University. Now, the union has its own building in suburban Gladstone in Clackamas County.

WHILE IN OFFICE in Local 701, Wear served on boards and trusteeships, including membership on Governor Vic Atiyeh's Labor Advisory Committee in the 1980s. He was a delegate from Local 701 to various other labor organizations.

After he retired, Dean and Jerie moved to Dayton in Yamhill County and he became active in a private security agency. She died in 1990.

LATER, WEAR MARRIED Elenor Orvis Parham and they lived in Tigard, McMinnville and Newberg. The family said they made many trips around the country in their motor home.

Dean belonged to the Sheridan Baptist Church and also attended the Tigard Christian Church with his wife Elenor. Dean, a large man, was an avid hunter and fisherman, a member of the National Rifle Association, a lifelong Democrat and a community volunteer in Yamhill County.

SURVIVORS INCLUDE his wife, Elenor, of Newberg; three children, Karrol Britton of Maui, Hawaii; Larry, of Vancouver; Mary Sauter, also of Vancouver; four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Dean Wear's funeral was on Dec. 10 at Tigard Christian Church with burial at Rose City Cemetery in Portland. Sheridan Funeral Home handled arrangements.

★★★

(Turn to Page 11)

Northwest congressional assembly gets mixed results on AFL-CIO report cards

'Who's on Our Side' campaign launched to hold U.S. senators, reps accountable.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The national AFL-CIO released an interim report card scoring the performance of U.S. senators and representatives as Congress completed the first half of its term in December.

Democratic lawmakers from Oregon and Washington scored quite well in the five areas — jobs and wages, retirement security, health care, tax fairness and education — deemed by the national labor federation as important to workers and their families.

Republican officeholders were a different story.

U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio of Springfield scored 100 percent, while Earl Blumenauer of Portland and Darlene Hooley of West Linn both scored 93 percent. David Wu of Beaverton and Brian Baird of Vancouver, Wash., both scored 87.5 percent.

Oregon Republican Greg Walden of Hood River voted with labor on only one issue — an amendment to delete language in a Transportation appropriations bill that restored funding for Amtrak.

In the U.S. Senate, Democrats Ron Wyden of Oregon and Patty Murray of

Washington both scored 89 percent. Both voted against labor by favoring the Central American Free Trade Agreement and by confirming John Roberts as chief justice to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Washington Democrat Maria Cantwell joined her Pacific Northwest colleagues in supporting CAFTA. She also was on the wrong side of labor on a bill limiting federal class-action lawsuits against companies that violate state wage and hour laws, and a tax reconciliation bill that cut taxes — mostly for the wealthy — while adding \$60 billion to the federal deficit.

Oregon Republican Senator Gordon Smith voted opposite the AFL-CIO on all but three positions. Two of his "right" votes were procedural motions involving amendments to an immigration bill that would have impacted the H-2A agricultural guest worker program. Another was an amendment that he co-sponsored rejecting a proposal by the Bush Administration to cut Medicaid by \$14 billion over five years.

In scoring the lawmakers, the AFL-CIO examined votes on trade, the minimum wage, job creation and community wage standards, child labor standards, protection for overtime pay, the freedom to form unions, pension and Social Security protections, Medicaid, health care, consumer protections, tax cuts for the wealthy, student loans and funding for public education. [For a

complete description of the legislation as votes, go to www.aflcio.org and click on "Hot Features" and "Who's On Our Side?"]

The report cards were issued as Congress completed the first half of its term in December. It is not the official AFL-CIO 2005 voting record, but it will be used as part of a union movement-wide drive to hold lawmakers accountable.

This year the AFL-CIO plans to conduct workers' roundtables, grass-roots mobilizations and other actions to put elected leaders on notice that they need to support issues that matter to workers.

"Working families, with the facts in hand, have the power to take back the country and make sure we are represented by leaders who are fighting for our best interests — not special interests — every day," said AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka.

Poll Gives Congress and President Failing Grades

According to a Peter D. Hart Research Associates Inc. poll conducted for the AFL-CIO, only 30 percent of U.S. voters approve of the job Congress is doing, while 56 percent disapprove — a sharp drop from the 41 percent approval rating cited in an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll last January.

In the same poll, nearly three in five voters surveyed in the West (58 per-

(Turn to Page 12)

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...Oregon AFL-CIO makes changes on E-Board, staff

(From Page 1)

UFCW Local 555 were not successful, Chamberlain reported to the Executive Board on Dec. 16. Part of those negotiations included a UFCW proposal to have Witt return as the full-time paid secretary-treasurer.

"We will continue to reach out and have discussions with UFCW," Chamberlain said.

However, under AFL-CIO rules, Witt was deemed ineligible to continue as the labor federation's secretary-treasurer because Local 555 wasn't an affiliated union.

"Brad has been very valuable to the union movement in Oregon, and I predict he will continue to do so at the Legislature and with Local 555," Chamberlain told the Northwest Labor Press.

Witt has lived in Clatskanie since

1989. He has served on numerous state boards, including the Board of Forestry and the Management-Labor Advisory Committee for the Oregon workers' compensation system.

In addition to his duties as chief financial officer and officer manager of the Oregon AFL-CIO, Witt handled workers' compensation, health and safety, workforce and economic development, and natural resource issues for the labor federation.

He was a gubernatorial appointee to the Oregon Workforce Investment Board and also served on the executive board of the Oregon Forest Resource Institute, as that organization's employee representative; on the State Boards of Forestry and Watershed Enhancement; and as chair of the bi-state Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership.

Witt worked in sawmills before joining the staffs of the national AFL-CIO, and later the Western Council of Industrial Workers, a division of the Carpenters Union (now a Change to Win affiliate), and UFCW Local 555, where his duties included public relations, labor economist and union representative.

Witt was elected secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO in September 1991.

Also at the Dec. 16 Executive Board meeting, Leslie Frane, executive director of SEIU Local 503, the state's largest public-sector union, was reappointed to her seat as first vice president, and Alice Dale, president of SEIU Local 49 and an international union vice president, was reappointed to her at-large position on the board. The seats had been declared vacant following the national disaffilia-

tion, but replacements were never sought because of the Solidarity Charter discussions.

Two positions previously held by representatives of UFCW Local 555 — a vice president and at-large seat — were filled.

Al Zullo, president and business representative of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, was appointed vice president. Zullo held an at-large seat on the board, so that post was declared open.

Appointed to the two open at-large Executive Board seats were L.C. Hansen, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, and Leal Sundet, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8.

The Oregon AFL-CIO also an-

nounced several staff changes.

Steve Lanning, the longtime political director, has accepted a newly created post as field coordinator, where he will work on strategic planning and coordination with affiliates and central labor councils.

Andy Lehn was hired as political organizer; Duke Shepard was hired as the political/campaign director, and Jennifer Sargent was hired as the public relations/research director. All are full-time positions

Lehn previously worked as the director of the Oregon chapter of Working America, a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO. Shepard was the economic development and small business policy manager of the Portland Business Alliance. Before joining the Business Alliance, Shepard served as campaign manager to re-elect U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio. Sargent was the political organizer for the Oregon AFL-CIO during the 2001 legislative session, where she coordinated publications, action alerts and media relations.

Sargent started working last month. Both Lehn and Shepard will start their new jobs in mid-January.

Additionally, the Oregon AFL-CIO will contract with Tim Nesbitt to analyze and evaluate several health care and revenue initiatives for the 2006 general election.

"We're back to full staff, with a lot of good experience," Chamberlain said. "I'm very excited about the coming year. I don't expect to miss a beat."

Early political endorsements announced by AFL-CIO

The Oregon AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education issued several early endorsements for the 2006 campaign cycle.

Among them was unanimous support for the re-election of Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner and Superintendent of Public Instruction Susan Castillo. Both are Democrats elected to non-partisan statewide posts.

Gardner is a member and former officer of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48. Along with the endorsement of Gardner came a \$1,000 campaign contribution.

Gardner was a guest speaker during a holiday luncheon of the Oregon AFL-CIO held Dec. 16 at the NECA-IBEW Training Center in Northeast Portland. Also making brief remarks were Governor Ted Kulongoski and Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard.

Other politicians receiving early endorsements were more than a dozen incumbent state lawmakers who scored 100 percent voting records in the 2005 legislative session. The voting scorecard was compiled by the Oregon AFL-CIO and was based on legislation that im-

pacts working Oregonians.

On the list were Senators Bill Morrisette of Eugene, Charlie Ringo and Frank Shields of Portland, and State Reps. Phil Barnhart of Eugene, Terry Beyer of Springfield, Peter Buckley of Ashland, Jackie Dingfelder of Portland; Paul Holvey of Eugene, Mary Nolan, Diane Rosenbaum and Chip Shields of Portland, Carolyn Tomei of Milwaukie, and Brad Witt of Clatskanie.

Arnie Roblan of Coos Bay also re-

ceived an early endorsement. He scored a 94 percent on the COPE voting record but is in a targeted race for labor.

The only other early endorsement went to Mary Botkin, a lobbyist for Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, who is running for an open seat in Portland's District 46.

The COPE Board also heard about eight initiative petitions that are currently being circulated in Oregon for

signatures. At least five of the petitions are being pushed by right-wing, anti-labor groups.

The AFL-CIO is asking workers not to sign two initiatives — I-6 or I-42, and I-14. The first two are so-called "Taxpayer Bill of Rights" (TABOR) initiatives that would amend the State Constitution and impose arbitrary spending caps on all public services. I-14 is a complicated tax measure involving federal and state tax deductions.

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WHAT'S HAPPENING

Freightliner lays off 130 just before Christmas break

Four days before Christmas, Portland truck maker Freightliner told 130 workers they would be out of a job — effective at the end of their shift on Dec. 22.

"We had heard some rumors (about a layoff), but we didn't expect it until sometime in January," said Joe Kear, a business representative of Machinists Lodge 1005, which will lose 109 jobs.

Also affected were seven members of Sign Painters and Paint Makers Local 1094, six Teamsters, four janitors, members of Service Employees Local 49, and four non-union office workers.

"We didn't have any time to plan for this," said Kear. "The workers were called in on Wednesday and told that their last day was Thursday."

The Swan Island plant was shut down for the holidays, so the laid-off workers did receive paychecks through Jan. 2.

Labor's Community Service Agency, AFL-CIO, met with workers on Dec. 22 to provide them information about retraining and other services available to them.

Freightliner said reduced demand for its Western Star Trucks forced it to cut production in half — to 22 trucks a day. The Portland plant at Swan Island is the only location where the company produces that brand. Workers will continue cranking out 74 trucks a day, increasing output of Freightliner-brand trucks that include the Class 8, heavy duty Coronado, and military vehicles.

Freightliner-brand trucks require less manpower to build, Kear said.

Kear said Freightliner predicts the demand for Western Star Trucks will pick up late in 2006 and that workers could be recalled then.

Freightliner LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of DaimlerChrysler, employs 1,700 workers at the truck plant and another 1,800 at its corporate headquarters in Portland.

Iron Workers #516 faces shut down at Universal Structural

VANCOUVER, Wash. — Universal Structural, Inc., a Vancouver steel bridge fabricator, laid off 50 workers in December, and has plans to lay off the remaining 110 and shutter its doors in May.

That's the understanding of the union, anyway. Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516 Business Manager

Mike Lappier spent 17 years working at USI and learned of the layoffs in a meeting with management last month.

USI is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Portland-based Harder Mechanical, which is also a signatory contractor with six construction trades unions.

USI general manager Dick Kerkering didn't return calls by the NW Labor Press, but Steve Harder of Harder Mechanical did. Harder wouldn't confirm or deny the report of layoff and closure plans, saying only that the company is still considering its options.

Universal Structural constructs and pre-assembles the girders that go into bridges. The company's work can be seen in a number of well-known bridges, including the Hoffstadt Bridge over the Toutle River on the scenic Spirit Lake Memorial Highway to Mt. St. Helens.

The company may have run into difficulties in its bid on a renovation of the San Francisco Bay Bridge. The project is enormous and complicated, and has faced political delays and cost-overruns. USI was part of a consortium of companies that bid on work.

"These guys have been busting their ass on this job, working seven days a week," Lappier said, "and then it's gone."

Terry Lansing elected to lead Bakers Local 114

Terry Lansing has been elected financial secretary-treasurer of Portland-based Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 114. He was appointed to the post in November 2004 following the



Bakers recognize longtime activist

Earl Cox (holding plaque) was recognized for 38 years of membership and participation in Bakers Union Local 114 of Portland during a recent meeting of the union's executive board. Cox, who retired Oct. 1 from the Safeway Clackamas bread plant, served the union as a shop steward, executive board member and, most recently, as vice president of the local. Shown from left to right are Local 114 President Georgene Barragan, Secretary-Treasurer Terry Lansing, Cox and Business Agent Gene Beaudoin.

retirement of Laurel Koch. His elected term is for three years.

Georgene Barragan was re-elected president and Gene Beaudoin was re-elected as business agent of the 1,000-member union that represents primarily wholesale and retail bakery workers in Oregon.

Also elected to Local 114 posts were: Vice President Mike Connelly, Recording Secretary Shad Clark, Executive Board members Charlotte Freeland, Joel Kundert, Marilyn Michael, Nancy Milner, Claudine

Pruitt and Jeff Wesson; Trustees Sharon Rainey, Sharon Graham and Brenda Kenderdine; and delegate Terry McCleery and alternate Shad Clark.

Mail ballots were counted Dec. 13. All terms are for three years.

Lansing has been a member of Local 114 since 1976, where he worked as a packer at Williams Bakery. He was a shop steward at the plant and served on the union's Executive Board, as recording secretary, and as a trustee.

Retired Secretary-Treasurer Noel Johnson hired Lansing as an assistant business agent in 1990. Lansing was elected business agent representing retail bakery workers from 1992 to 2004. The local's Executive Board tapped him to fill the unexpired term of Financial Secretary-Treasurer Laurel Koch, who retired Nov. 10, 2004.

Beaudoin, a Portland native, is starting his fifth term as an elected business agent. He joined the Bakers Union in 1976 at Franz Bakery, where he was a shop steward. He held various positions on the union's executive board, culminating with his election as president in 1990.

Beaudoin was appointed business representative in 1992. He has been re-elected to the post ever since.

LERC schedules arbitration class Jan. 8-12 in Portland

The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) of the University of Oregon will present a labor education program Jan. 8-12 in Portland to help union officers and reps prepare for arbitrations.

"Arbitration: Preparation and Presentation" is an intensive four-day seminar that will assist participants in all aspects of the grievance arbitration process, including principles of contract interpretation and discipline and discharge. Participants will prepare and present a simulated grievance case to a practicing arbitrator. The session will be videotaped and critiqued.

For more information, call Barbara Byrd at 503-725-3296 or Marcus Widenor at 541-346-2785.

10th annual Labor Law Conference scheduled Jan. 20

The 10th annual Oregon Labor Law Conference will be held Friday, Jan. 20, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Electrical Workers Local 48, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

The conference is sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, Local 48 and the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council and is designed for business managers, business agents, organizers and union officers to get the latest information to avoid legal liability and to better serve members, said organizer Norman Malbin, general counsel for Local 48.

Speakers will include Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner and Richard Ahearn, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board in Seattle.

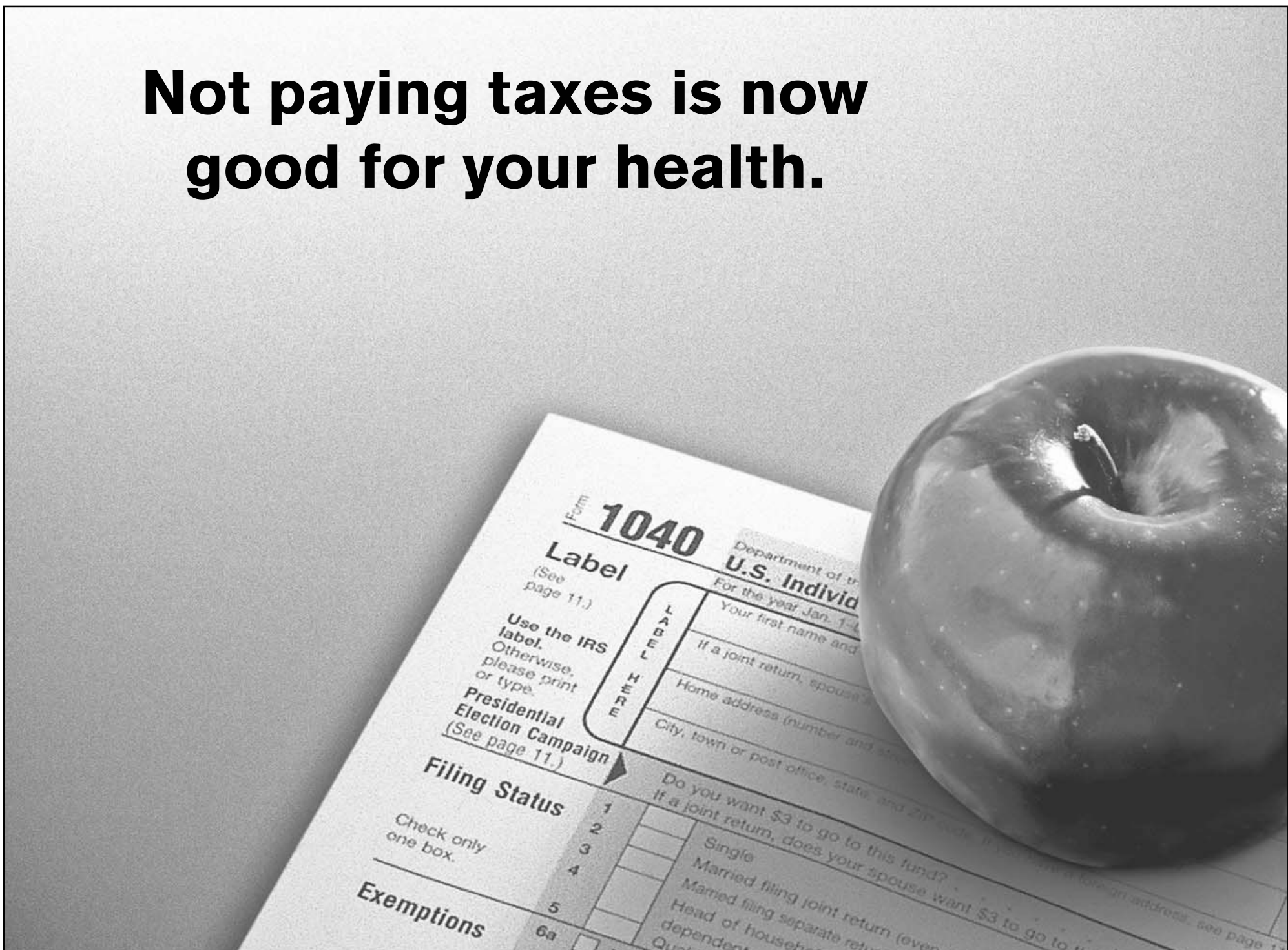
Registration is \$60 and includes lunch and materials. For more information, call Donna Marshall at 503-889-3660.



Holiday spirit at Machinists Hall

As they have done every year for at least the past four decades, members, staffers and retirees of Machinists District Lodge 24 in Southeast Portland spent the morning of Dec. 20 packing food boxes for distribution later in the week to out-of-work members. The food boxes included all the necessities for a grand holiday meal, including a turkey, potatoes, vegetables and rolls. The food boxes also contained two whole chickens, 10 pounds of hamburger, canned goods and boxed food items. "We estimate that each food box was worth \$100," said Dan Sass, secretary-treasurer of District Lodge 24. This year the union prepared and distributed 35 food boxes.

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Asbestos Workers 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Jan. 13. 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. 24, at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 204, Portland. Ballots were counted Dec. 13 and the election results for BCTGM Local 114 are as follows: President: Georgene Barragan; Vice President: Mike Connelly; Recording Secretary: Shad Clark; Financial Secretary-Treasurer: Terry Lansing; Business Agent: Gene Beaudoin; Trustees: Sharon Rainey, Sharon Graham and Brenda Kenderdine; Executive Board: Charlotte Freeland, Joel Kundert, Marilyn Michael, Nancy Milner, Claudine Pruitt and Jeff Wesson; Delegate & Alternate: Terry McCleery - Delegate, and Shad Clark - Alternate.

Boilermakers 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 14, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, 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. 19, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, 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. 10 and Jan. 17, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Electrical Workers 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23. Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24. General membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. pre-meeting buffet. Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles. Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria. EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication meet 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, at NIETC, 16021 NE Airport Way.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18.

Bylaws Committee meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, 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 Jan. and are payable at 50 cents each: No. 2090, William J. Horton; No. 2091, John L. Murr; and No. 2092, Hermann Sorger.

Electrical Workers 280

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Eugene Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, at LU 290 Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, at the Salem Heights Community Center, Salem.

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

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

Glass Workers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9, at Holiday Inn Express, 3480 Hutton St., Springfield. Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at Candalaria Terrace, 2659 Commercial SE, Salem.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Jan. 20, at Hometown Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

Laborers 483

Municipal Employees

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. stewards' meeting, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 9, 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

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

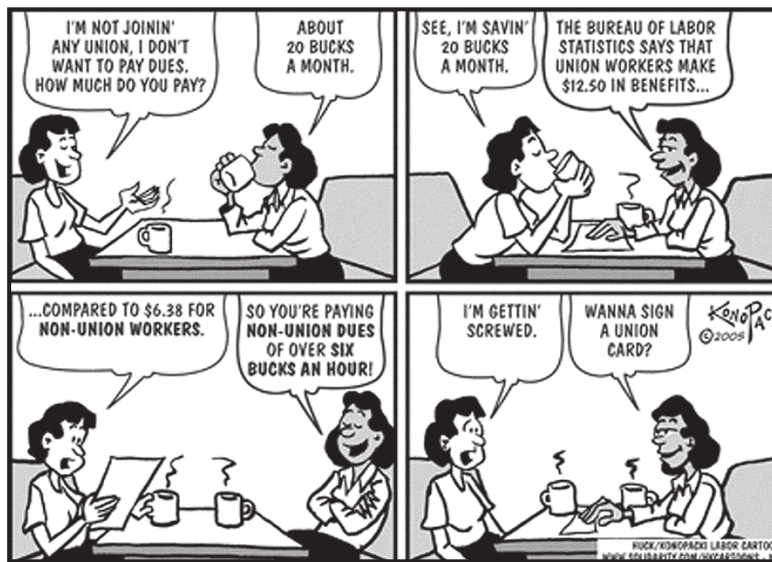
Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, 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. 9, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.



Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 28, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Multnomah County Employees 88

General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards' meeting, at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

Executive Board members meet 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Office & Professional Employees 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at OPEIU Local 11 conference room, 7931 NE Halsey, Portland. NOTICE OF NOMINATIONS: OPEIU Local 11 shall hold nominations for certain

offices (listed below) at the regular General Membership Meeting in January 2006.

Elections, if necessary, will be held in April 2006 on a date to be set by the Executive Board.

Any eligible member who is nominated but not present at this meeting to accept the nomination must submit their acceptance, in writing, to the Union Office within two days. Nominees, if unopposed, who have accepted the nomination, shall be declared elected.

The positions open for nomination in Jan. 2006 will be: President (3-year term) and Executive Board positions (each are 2-year terms): Utilities, Public Employees, Labor Organizations, At-Large, At-Large and Trustee (3-year term).

Oregon Tradeswomen Network

Members and allies meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, at 1714 NE Alberta St., Portland.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Jan. 27, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N. Lombard, #10, Portland.

Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland.

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11, at Abby's Pizza, 7480 Crater Lake Hwy., White City. Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, at UA #290 Hall, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, preceded by a VOC meeting.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, at the Labor Temple, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

There will be a **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS** to change Building Trades dues structure and percentage paid to Work Recovery. Votes will be taken at the following times and locations:

Medford - 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23, at the Labor Temple, 4480 NE Pacific Hwy, Central Point.

Coos Bay - 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the Labor Temple, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Eugene - 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the UA 290 Hall, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Portland - 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at the Sheet Metal Hall, 2379 NE 178th, Portland

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 16, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 31, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 517 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23, at the Eugene #290 Hall.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23, at the Moose Lodge, 1577 Oak Ave., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at 650A Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 24, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

USW 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 18, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, Westport.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 26, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 9, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 10, at Russellville Park Plaza, 20 SE 103rd Ave., (Burnside St.) Portland. A brief business meeting will be held and a cafeteria-style

lunch and tours of members' apartments will follow. Street parking is available on Ankeny St. For further information and reservations, please call Vera Larson at 503 252-2296

IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 11, 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. 9, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 17, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E.

Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503 -239-9858.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 12, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Salem retirees meet 12 noon Wednesday, Jan. 11, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St NE, Salem. PLEASE NOTE LOCATION CHANGE.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Portland.

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NW Airlines unions say they won't be picked apart anymore

By MICHAEL KUCHTA

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. (PAI) — Union leaders at Northwest Airlines pledged Dec. 7 to stick together as never before to save jobs and fight the airline's strategy of using bankruptcy as an excuse to outsource thousands of workers.

"There's no sense saving Northwest Airlines if we can't save our jobs," Capt. Mark McClain told several hundred workers during a rally in Bloomington, Minn., near airline headquarters.

"Northwest Airlines is not management's airline — it's our airline," said McClain, chairman of the Air Line Pilots Association at Northwest, who sounded a theme repeated in different ways throughout the rally.

"All of us have been here many, many years. We're not going to save Northwest Airlines for management, we're not going to save it for the board, we're not going to save it for the investors. We're going to save it for all of us."

The unity among the Northwest Airlines unions is notable because it marks a change of course. All but one of the unions involved is an AFL-CIO union. The exception is the independent Pro-

fessional Flight Attendants Association (PFAA). It also had steered an independent course during recent troubles.

Northwest's other independent union, the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association — whose mechanics were forced to strike four months ago — was not there. But individual AMFA members were at the meeting and distributed literature.

Nevertheless, pilots, ground workers and flight attendants stood shoulder to shoulder at the rally to send a message of solidarity — the most visible demonstration of union cooperation at the airline in a dozen years.

"We saw what happened on this property with a more go-it-alone strategy," McClain said, making a not-so-veiled reference to AMFA, which disaffiliated from the Machinists Union. Other unions have not honored the picket lines of that independent union, which represents mechanics, cleaners and custodians. They note it did not honor their lines, and tried to raid them.

"That's certainly not going to work," McClain said. "All of us sticking together, working together, is going to be paramount for us to get through this environment." But the unions face a Jan.

17 court hearing where Northwest could demand contracts end.

The speeches are more than rhetoric, union leaders say: The pilots, Machinists Air Transport District 143, PFAA and smaller unions are meeting regularly as a "labor advisory council" to devise common strategies at the bargaining table and beyond.

One reason for the new unity is that members of all Northwest's unions face the threat of outsourcing. The most recent manifestation of that was a company scheme to outsource all Flight Attendant jobs on overseas trips and on planes with a capacity of 100 or fewer. All overseas flights would be staffed by foreign flight attendants.

The three large unions continue bargaining with Northwest, facing a Jan. 16 deadline to reach agreements their members can approve. Northwest says that if the unions don't agree to new contracts, it will ask the bankruptcy court to rip up existing contracts, allowing the airline to impose its will on workers. If that happens, unions say, they have the right to strike, potentially shutting Northwest down, perhaps for good.

In its bankruptcy filings, Northwest says it wants \$997 million in concessions from the three unions. The airline's plan includes additional job cuts, additional wage and benefit cuts, and extensive outsourcing. Besides the flight attendant outsourcing, it is demanding that non-union pilots fly planes that carry fewer than 100 passengers and wants non-union ground crews at most airports outside of Min-

neapolis-St. Paul and Detroit. Those two airports are its two main hubs.

Management decided "to beat concessions out of the employees who have spent years building and bringing success to Northwest Airlines," said PFAA Vice President Doug Moe. He reminded the crowd that while executives "push for too much," they still find ways "to justify bonuses and rewards for mediocre leadership."

Speakers said it is up to workers to support each other and save Northwest.

"We are workers, no matter who or what you do for Northwest," said Bobby DePace, president of Northwest's Machinists local. "We are workers, and we will stand united and we will stand together."

Executives were "morally criminal" at Northwest, said Minnesota AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Steve Hunter. "When you place corporate greed over the lives and families of your workers, that is immoral and it is wrong."

He called Northwest executives "incompetent" and said the flying public should "Thank God that all of you do your jobs better than they do theirs." Workers should "come together as a family: Hold each other up, keep each other strong, be there for each other."

"Don't take the frustrations of this environment out on each other," McClain said. "Keep Northwest Airlines running as best we can. And we'll run Northwest Airlines — in spite of management."

Three Change to Win unions sign Solidarity Charters with Metal Trades Department

Three unions affiliated with the Change to Win Coalition (CTW) have signed Solidarity Charter agreements with the AFL-CIO's Metal Trades Department. The agreements with the Carpenters, Teamsters and United Food and Commercial Workers allow the unions — which disaffiliated from the AFL-CIO — to remain involved in the department at the local council level.

"We recognize the importance of sustaining our local leadership and maintaining the longstanding relationships supporting our bargaining units," said Metal Trades Department President Ron Ault.

Service Employees International Union also is expected to sign a Solidarity Charter agreement with the department.

In October, the CTW unions and the national AFL-CIO reached agreement on a Solidarity Charter program to allow CTW locals to participate in state, area and local AFL-CIO organizations.

Union-Industries Show will proceed under new name and new focus

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The AFL-CIO Union-Industries Show — starting this year in Cleveland — will be promoted under the name "America@Work," followed by the tag line: "100% Union-Made, American-Made Products, Services and Jobs."

Exit surveys from the 2005 show in Portland revealed that more than half the

attendees were not union members, but favored unions in general. They viewed the show as a chance to demonstrate their support for unions, to investigate jobs and training opportunities and to learn about union-made products and services.

The 2006 show, slated for Cleveland, Ohio, May 5-7, also will focus more on educating the public about trade unionism and the role unions play in the economic and political life of a community. The show will highlight and encourage people to join pro-worker organizations such as the Alliance for Retired Americans and Working America, both community organizations of the AFL-CIO.

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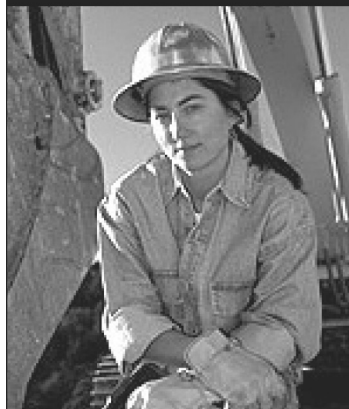
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DCU members ratify Portland school pact — it expired Dec. 31

In voting held Dec. 15-20, school employees narrowly ratify a deal that took 20 months to bargain.

Twenty months of contentious bargaining between the Portland Public School District No. 1 and the District Council of Unions (DCU) ended last month when some 300 employees narrowly ratified a contract in voting held Dec. 15-20.

The school board will vote on whether or not to accept the contract at its regularly scheduled meeting Jan. 9.

Then the sides get to start all over again, because the contract's expiration date is Dec. 31, 2005.

That's right. The "letter of ratification" the union coalition sent to the school district also included an "open the contract" letter to secure bargaining dates in 2006.

"It sounds crazy, I know, but that's how it worked out," said Gene Blackburn, spokesman for the DCU, a group of 16 union locals that bargain jointly with the school district. Blackburn is a business representative of Teamsters Local 206.

The previous contract expired in June 30, 2004. The school employees had been working under that contract while bargaining dragged on.

Negotiating a DCU contract is com-

plicated. First comes "main body" bargaining, under which all the unions are involved. Then locals break away for job-specific talks that represent employees — sometimes from different unions — in eight job classifications. For instance, the Teamsters represent warehouse workers and truck drivers under Appendix A of the contract. This appendix is bargained with its own set of wages, raises and language regarding working conditions. Bus operators bargain their own set of standards under Appendix F, as do maintenance and craft workers, classroom assistants, and so on under separate appendices.

The sides reached a tentative agreement on the main body of the contract relatively early in bargaining. The main body included a \$764 cap on district-paid health insurance premiums. Any costs above that would be borne for the first time by employees.

Then, one by one, appendices were tentatively agreed to, until only two remained — those for the bus operators, represented by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, and maintenance and craft workers represented by a group of locals from the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council. At that point, the sides were far apart on health insurance co-payments and contracting out language.

Months of wrangling ensued. In October 2005, the school district declared an impasse in bargaining and filed an unfair labor practice complaint against the unions. Under state law, the sides had a 30-day "cooling off" period, after which management could implement its last offer and/or the unions could give notice to strike.

One round of mediated bargaining took place during the cooling off period. There were some slight improvements made, Blackburn said, but not enough to seal the deal.

On Dec. 12, 2005, the school district announced it was implementing its final offer of October — unless the represented employees voted by Dec. 20, whereby the school district would present the slightly improved contract negotiated in November.

Some union officials from the DCU were at odds as to whether or not to hold a vote, since a contract had already been implemented. In the end, they chose to present "the better offer," and it narrowly passed.

Under terms of the ratified contract, each of the groups represented by the DCU will receive a one-time stipend or a wage increase in January, which will cost the school district about \$375,000.

Health insurance co-payments will vary widely among employees, depending on what insurance plan they select, how many family members they cover, and which trust fund they are in. Co-payments reportedly can range from \$5 to \$193 a month.

Local 757, an outspoken critic of the co-payment plan, said the school district contract was the first in the last 14 they've negotiated that contains takeaways. "We are not happy about this at all," said Jon Hunt, a business representative of the union.

Building trades unions also are unhappy with sub-contracting language that strips school district requirements to use contractors that have registered apprenticeship programs, that provide health insurance and that pay prevailing wages to their employees.

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Report backs asbestos victims, says trust fund inadequate

Senate Republicans push for January vote on a bill that the GAO says isn't enough to compensate victims and families.

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — A new federal study has given further ammunition to groups representing workers who are victims of asbestos-caused disease and to two key senators, who all say that a proposed asbestos trust fund for victims and their families is too small. The senators fear the taxpayers might have to bail it out.

The mid-December Government Accountability Office (GAO) report paints a dismal financial history of other such trust funds for workers and warns lawmakers the same fate could occur with the asbestos trust fund.

Other funds that exceeded initial cost estimates include the federal black lung program, pushed by the Mine Workers Union, and one for former nuclear plant workers overexposed to lethal radiation, advocated by the then-Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union.

The GAO report comes as Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist (R-Tenn.)

plans to bring the asbestos trust fund bill (S. 852) up sometime this month. The report is important because S. 852 limits the trust fund for the 200,000-plus asbestos victims and their families to \$140 billion over a period of years. It sets extreme standards workers must meet to claim money for asbestos-caused disease.

And it lacks ways to add money to the fund once it runs out. It also bars victims and their families from going to court against asbestos manufacturers and their insurers, throws out past lawsuits and forces victims to start the process all over again. The firms and insurers pushed S. 852 and would pay the \$140 billion, but no more.

The groups, who represent worker victims of mesothelioma — an asbestos-caused cancer — and asbestosis, and their widows and children, say the bill is pro-industry, the trust fund is too small, and that long-suffering victims would be thrown out of court should the trust fund run out of money. Victims, including construction workers, auto workers, steel workers, shipyard workers, suffer from diseases sometimes years after retiring.

The revisions prompted victims'

groups and families to oppose S. 852. Early last year, the AFL-CIO walked away from the negotiations in disgust at business' power to write it. In December the two key senators, leaders of the Budget Committee, objected.

Frist "made a commitment to bring up the asbestos trust fund bill on the heels of receiving a letter from six asbestos victims' groups voicing our concerns with the funding and asking the Senate take more time to review pertinent issues," said Susan Vento, chair of the Committee to Protect Mesothelioma Victims. But "Frist made clear that regardless of whether or not serious problems with the bill are resolved, he will force it to the floor for a vote in January.

"We can understand why stakeholders are trying to hustle this legislation through — every week new problems arise. Budget issues, among many others, must be resolved before Congress even considers this piece of legislation," Vento added.

And GAO warns that, off past history, the money in the trust fund may not be enough to compensate the victims and their families.

"Because these programs may expand significantly beyond the initial costs anticipated when they were enacted, policymakers must carefully consider the cost and precedent-setting im-

plications of establishing any new federal compensation program, particularly in light of the current federal deficit," GAO's report summary says.

GAO found that in the black lung program and two for workers handling the nuclear materials, "the actual number of claims filed significantly exceeded the estimates of the number of anticipated claims." It said the oldest program, for black lung, was supposed to cost \$3 billion in its first, limited, time frame, from 1969-76. It has cost \$41 billion for coal miners permanently disabled by the crippling lung disease.

"The programs have experienced unanticipated shortfalls. For instance, the Black Lung Fund borrowed over \$8.7 billion from the Treasury to date and the interest payments exceeded \$7 billion. All four programs have, at various times, taken years to process some claims, resulting in some claimants waiting a long time to obtain compensation," GAO added.

Senate Budget Committee Chairman Judd Gregg (R-N.H.) and the panel's top Democrat, Kent Conrad (D-N.D.), raised many of the same objections in a letter to Frist. They said the cost of asbestos claims could be up to four times the money — the \$140 billion — that the insurers and asbestos manufacturers pledged to the fund.

That lack of cash would force the taxpayers to bail out the manufacturers and insurers, in order to pay the victims and their survivors, Frist and Conrad said.

Gregg and Conrad want a delay because a study by the economic consulting firm Bales White said the total cost of paying asbestos victims and their survivors could range from \$301 billion to \$560 billion over a period of a decade or more. S. 852 has no provisions for refilling the trust fund should it run out of cash.

"There remain major unresolved questions about the budgetary impact of the bill," the senators warned. They include "the actual cost of the program," whether the trust fund will have enough money to pay asbestos claims, and "a lack of clarity" on how much companies will pay into the trust fund and how much the insurers will pay. Gregg and Conrad also questioned whether even those payments "will generate adequate revenues to satisfy the program's costs.

"We believe these issues should be clarified. Because of the major adverse impact the legislation could have on the federal budget deficit if there are funding shortfalls, we ask that at least until these issues are fully resolved, that the Senate not take any further action on the legislation," the senators concluded.

Service Employees add 26,000 members in Washington State

AUBURN, Wash. (PAI) — With only scattered "no" votes among about 500 delegates, a special convention of an independent union of classified school workers in Washington State voted last month to affiliate with the Service Employees.

The new affiliate, the Public School Employees of Washington, will be SEIU Local 1948. It represents 26,000 classroom para-educators, campus security, computer technicians and other workers in 175 school districts across Washington, union President George Dockins said.

Local 1948's first priority will be to lobby for more money for K-12 education from the State Legislature in Olympia, SEIU said. Currently, the ratio between students and classified employees — who provide key school services, such as secretaries, bus drivers, food service, maintenance, and thousands more classifications — is an outdated 60:1, the union said.

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Reuniting to win: How local union movements overcame the AFL-CIO split

A surprising thing happened after the defection of four major unions fractured the national AFL-CIO last summer. Back home, in state after state, our local unions held together. Or, if they began to disassemble themselves, as happened here in Oregon, they soon found a way to reassemble themselves and are now close to full strength again.

This is what I hoped would happen. But, for many months last year, it is not what I expected would happen. And the fact that the fissures from the national split ultimately did little or no damage to the AFL-CIO's institutions at the local level tells an important story about the importance of old-fashioned solidarity and the endurance of well-organized state federations and central labor councils. It's a story worth remembering as we prepare for the battles of 2006. Here's my summary.

Chapter I, November 2004-June 2005. As the debate about the future of the AFL-CIO takes hold, leaders of central labor councils and state federations weigh in with a strong reminder that solidarity at the local level is the key to success at the national level. The Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board adopts a resolution in December 2004 stating, "All politics is local. And all organizing, even in a global economy, begins in local workplaces ...if we didn't have a local union movement, we would have to create it, state by state."

But, as consensus develops within the AFL-CIO for strengthening its local institutions, dissent polarizes its unions over structure and strategy at the national level. When defection at the national level appears likely, the Service Employees International Union offers a local option for the continued affiliation of breakaway unions at the local level, which the AFL-CIO rejects as unworkable.

Chapter II, July-August 2005. SEIU, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters and UNITE HERE boycott the AFL-CIO convention in Chicago. Then, they announce their disaffiliation from the national AFL-CIO. But they all say that they would like their local unions to remain part of the AFL-CIO's state federations and labor councils. The AFL-CIO dismisses that approach as "pick-and-choose solidarity" and directs its local labor bodies to expel the breakaway unions. The Oregon AFL-CIO sheds 40 percent of its affiliated members within a week after the national convention. The Northwest Oregon Labor Council follows suit, losing close to 25 percent of its members. Similar actions are taken in other states, including Washington. But local leaders in most states take a wait-and-see approach, reluctant to diminish their state federations and labor councils in the face of growing political threats.

Chapter III, September-November 2005. Leaders of the AFL-CIO and national unions on both sides of the split realize that they need state federations and labor councils to wage effective campaigns in high-stakes political contests at the local level. There are key governors' elections in Virginia and New Jersey, a government spending measure in Colorado, and a ballot initiative in California that threatens to restrict the freedom of unions to engage the political process. Recognizing these threats, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney announces three successive grace periods to allow locals of the breakaway unions to continue to participate in state federations and labor councils. Our campaigns are victorious in all four battleground states. And Sweeney eventually reaches an agreement with the breakaway unions to adopt the local option idea, now

called "Solidarity Charters," through December 2006.

Chapter IV, December 2005. SEIU rejoins the Oregon AFL-CIO. UFCW rejoins the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. Oregon's union movement, although not completely healed, is back to fighting strength. And the national AFL-CIO goes a step further with the local option approach as a way to rebuild the union movement from the bottom up: It offers special charters not just to the breakaway unions, but to any non-AFL-CIO union that chooses to affiliate with a state federation or labor council.

Epilogue. What produced this reunification of our union movement at the local level?

Certainly, personal solidarity was a critical factor. At labor councils, in particular, union members march under common banners; they picket together; and, they campaign door-to-door and over the phones to talk to each other's members. These kinds of relationships — and the institutions that sustain them — are not easy to dismantle. Further, at the national level, union leaders recognized that all politics is local — and that our best federations and labor councils do their most effective work in high-stakes electoral campaigns at the local level.

The unraveling that occurred at the national AFL-CIO stopped short of untying the bindings of solidarity forged at the local level. In most state federations and labor councils, the center held. And now it appears that our local institutions may offer new centers of growth for a more inclusive union movement. Re-uniting to win at the local level, it turns out, is as important as changing to win at the national level.

Tim Nesbitt is a former president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

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...Gov. taps Fletcher

(From Page 2)

IRV FLETCHER of Woodburn, a former president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, has been appointed by Governor Ted Kulongoski to the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Salem-based department's newspaper, *Vets News*, said Fletcher is a Korean War veteran who was "honorably discharged in 1954 after serving in the U.S. Navy as a machinist aboard the USS *Corregidor* (CVE 58)." The department said that Fletcher will be on the advisory panel until the end of 2006, filling out the term of a committee member who died.

THE VETS NEWS quoted the department's director, Jim Willis, as saying: "Having an experienced advocate like Irv serving on our Advisory Committee is a big plus for all Oregon veterans. He brings with him integrity and commitment."

The state agency's publication went on to recap Fletcher's career thusly:

"**IN 1973**, Governor Tom McCall became the first of seven chief executives to appoint Fletcher to serve on state government committees. As a lobbyist in the Oregon Legislature, Fletcher played a role in gaining legislative approval for the Labor Education and Research Center, which was established at University of Oregon in 1977.

"Fletcher taught as a junior high teacher for 12 years in Klamath Falls, worked for the Department of Corrections, the Apprenticeship Information Center, and then served as president of the Oregon AFL-CIO from 1981 to 1999. Following his retirement, Fletcher renewed his teaching credentials and also has been very involved in the local Woodburn food bank delivering food to seniors. Irv and his wife Eva reside in Woodburn."

A MAINE NATIVE, Fletcher moved to Eugene from Klamath Falls and held the secretary-treasurer post in the Lane County Labor Council and was on the state labor federation board before becoming its president.

★★★

PENSION HISTORY — A booklet entitled "Labor Firsts in America" contains a short history of pensions in the United States, some of which follow:

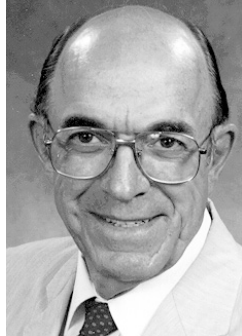


RAY MARSHALL

The first pension was established by the Plymouth colony for its disabled soldiers in 1636. The first federal government pension was established in 1776 to assist wounded and disabled Revolutionary War soldiers. The first private pension plan offered by a labor organization was set up in 1860 by the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, a union of American and Canadian workers. The first private pension plan offered by a company was established in 1875 by the American Express Company. The first private pension plan set up entirely by American workers was created in 1880 by the International Molders Union.

THE FIRST investigation of old age associations was done in 1903 by the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics. The first proposal for federal legislation to provide old age pensions was made by Congressman William B. Wilson, a Pennsylvania Democrat, in 1907. He became the first Secretary of Labor in 1913. The first state to pass a pension law was Arizona in 1914, but the law was ruled unconstitutional. In 1916, Territory of Alaska passed the first pension law to be declared constitutional. In 1923, Montana became the first state to pass a pension law that was declared constitutional.

The "Labor Firsts in America" booklet was published in 1977 by the U.S. Department of Labor when Ray Marshall was secretary of labor in the administration of President Jimmy Carter.



IRV FLETCHER

Bush first president not to attend Council on Aging

To The Editor:

I was honored to be Congressman Earl Blumenauer's delegate to the White House Council on Aging that took place Dec. 11-14 in Washington, D.C. Often called "the President's WH-CoA," it is an event that takes place every 10 years and has delegates sent from all of the states appointed by their senators, representatives and governors.

In the past, resolutions from these conferences have influenced Congress' lawmaking efforts on issues concerning the aging citizens of this country. It was disheartening to learn that this decade's gathering purposely omitted the opportunity for delegates to discuss resolutions not on the "pre-approved" agenda.

The resolutions presented to us

lacked substance and did not clearly state the issues. "Principles to Strengthen Social Security" was one of the resolutions written in a way to totally avoid the anti-privatization sentiments of the majority of the delegation. The conference's Medicare resolution also lacked substance.

When Mark McClellan, the Medicaid and Medicare administrator, made a statement to the delegates about Medicare's Part D drug benefit — suggesting that the implementation of the plan was working well — he elicited snickers and laughter from his audience. Fortunately, when we broke into work sessions, we the delegates were able to gain attention for our priorities — like strengthening Social Security

and providing affordable and accessible drug benefits under Medicare despite the president's highly-scripted agenda promoting his goals.

It was interesting to all of us that this was the first time in history that the president of this country did not attend this conference. Perhaps he really doesn't want to know what we, the delegates, are thinking about the gravely important issues facing the aging population of this country.

Verna Porter
President
Oregon Alliance for
Retired Americans
Portland

AFL-CIO, Change to Win will oppose Alito nomination to Supreme Court

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — The nation's two labor federations have formally joined a broad coalition of foes of President George W. Bush's nomination of federal appellate judge Samuel Alito to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The AFL-CIO and Change to Win labor federations weighed their decision on a wide range of anti-worker rulings on union representation, wage and hour, and job safety and health issues.

Alito's rulings and dissents as an appellate judge in the Philadelphia-based Third Circuit Court of Appeals "reveal a disturbing tendency to take an extremely narrow and restrictive view of laws that protect workers' rights, resulting in workers being deprived of many vital protections," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in a letter to U.S. senators.

After reviewing cases Alito decided or wrote on, "It's clear that his judicial philosophy is at odds with the interests of working families," Sweeney added.

Change to Win Chairwoman Anna Burger said "Alito's workplace would be one where worker rights would be severely curtailed. Alito's record indicates he would side with those who would deny workers a real voice on the job. Change to Win stands for worker rights Alito would oppose and we will work with our allies to stop him from ascending to the Supreme Court."

Alito was nominated by Bush to replace retiring Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Senate Judiciary Committee hearings on Alito open Jan. 9.

The AFL-CIO documented 25 Alito case opinions — most of them anti-worker — and sent them, with Sweeney's letter, to the Senate. They included:

• A 1994 case where two Reagan-appointed appellate judges ruled that re-

porters for a chain of suburban Pittsburgh newspapers were entitled to overtime under the Fair Labor Standards Act, despite its exemption for workers at "small" newspapers. Alito argued "neither the statute nor the legislative history supported the majority's opinion" that the reporters should get overtime pay, the AFL-CIO said.

• A 1991 dissent where Alito, disagreeing with two other GOP-named judges, argued the Fair Labor Standards Act covered seamen sailing on re-flagged tankers. The tankers had been transferred to a "flag of convenience" — Kuwait — during the first Iraq-Kuwait war and the court majority said the labor law did not cover the seamen.

• A 1997 Pennsylvania case where Alito's majority opinion said corporate officers of bankrupt firms could not be held liable for unpaid wages of the workers. "In Alito's view, the corporate officers should not be held liable for wages because once a bankruptcy petition has been filed, they are no longer empowered to choose to divert ... funds to pay accrued wages and benefits," the AFL-CIO analysis commented.

• A 2002 case where Alito ruled a company had not had enough prior notice — despite 13 old job safety and health violations — of 33 new Occupational Safety and Health Administration charges that it "failed to abate" on-the-job hazards. Alito threw out OSHA's new charges.

• A 1997 case where a Republican-named majority said a coal processing plant was a "mine" subject to federal health and safety rules. Alito dissented, saying it wasn't.

• In a 1998 case involving the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union and a failing Atlantic City casino, all three judges ruled it did not

have to give workers 60 days' notice, which the federal plant closing law requires, because the New Jersey Casino Control Commission ordered the closing. HERE argued for the advance notice. "Alito wrote separately to emphasize his view employers are not required to give notice under the WARN Act when the government, rather than the employer, orders the plant closing," the federation noted.

• A 1991 Alito opinion overturning a National Labor Relations Board ruling that the employer involved "discriminatorily failed to recall union supporters from layoff." Alito bounced the board's decision "because it failed to resolve a tension between the board's conclusion that the employer had not proven its defense, and the administrative law judge's decision, which had credited exonerating testimony by the employer." The impact was to leave the union workers laid off.

• A 1993 ruling throwing out a union election in Indiana (Pa.) Hospital. The NLRB upheld the vote and threw out the hospital's objections, but Alito did not. He sent it back to the board on technical grounds. "The issue was the hearing officer's decision to revoke subpoenas for case intake logs of the region's information officer." The hospital claimed NLRB's neutrality was "compromised by advice given by NLRB information officers to employee-voters, and it wanted the logs to determine which NLRB agents the employees had spoken with." Alito told the NLRB to subpoena the logs.

Sweeney's letter to senators also pointed out criticism of Alito by fellow appellate judges for his "excessively narrow view of worker protection and civil rights statutes."

OPEN
FORUM

Union political foes up to their old tricks

A voter-approved clampdown on signature gathering abuse doesn't seem to have changed the behavior of one Portland-based signature gathering company — B&P Campaign Management.

According to evidence released Dec. 22 by the union-backed ballot measure watchdog group Our Oregon, B&P has been paying petitioners by-the-signature. That kind of "bounty" was made illegal by Measure 26, which was passed by Oregon voters in 2002. Under the law, ballot measure campaigns may pay petitioners, but they must pay them by the hour.

B&P allegedly paid petitioners in cash, with no documentation — sometimes on street corners or out of the windows of a car, reporters were told at a press conference on Dec. 22.

Petitioners were required to hand in petitions at 10 a.m. Monday and Thursday, and then come back to collect their cash at 3 p.m. after the signatures had been verified.

The company disputes the allegations.

At least four current ballot measure campaigns are employing B&P to gather signatures, including campaigns headed by union foes Bill Sizemore and Russ Walker.

Last year, B&P owner Parker Bell was fined \$2,500 for the same violation — paying per signature.



Told they might have been cheated out of wages, a number of B&P petitioners filed wage claims with the Bureau of Labor and Industries. Above, Patty Wentz of Our Oregon shares a flyer with information on how to file a claim. Photo by Josh Berezin.

Bell used to work for Sizemore.

The Oregon Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers won a \$2.5 million ruling in September 2002 against Sizemore and his Oregon Taxpayers United Education Foundation, a charity he founded along with a political action committee.

A Multnomah County jury found the charity and the PAC guilty of fraud and forgery, and determined they engaged in a pattern of racketeering to obtain signatures on initiative petitions for tax measures.

During the trial, Sizemore testified that Bell had cheated him, charging him for more signatures than were delivered.

That means Sizemore is going back to paying a signature-gathering crew boss that he himself ac-

cused of cheating.

The unions have yet to see any of the \$2.5 million.

On the most recent allegations, Our Oregon filed a complaint against B&P with the Oregon Secretary of State Elections Division. Director John Lindback said the agency is investigating and will determine whether to pursue criminal or civil charges against the firm.

In the meantime, Our Oregon is asking anyone who sees people gathering signatures for initiative petitions to call its "ballot watch hotline" at 503-239-8029. Our Oregon wants reports on initiatives, locations, dates, names of signature gatherers and the pitch that is given to get signatures.

For more information about the organization, go to www.oureregon.org.

Sweeney links global trading system, poverty

HONG KONG (PAI) — The business-run inequitable global trading system enriches corporate CEOs while leaving people in poverty worldwide, says AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Speaking Dec. 11 in Hong Kong, at the end of a week of demonstrations for workers' rights in the U.S. and around the globe, the federation chief denounced "the link between the current global trading system and the continued poverty experienced by too many in the world."

Sweeney spoke just after protesters gathered in Hong Kong before the latest meeting of world trade ministers for negotiations on international trade rules. Those talks, held Dec. 12-16, went nowhere. The ministers, including U.S. Trade Representative Robert Portman, did not consider workers' rights.

"U.S. workers join workers globally

in calling for an end to an unjust trading system that increases corporate profits at the expense of workers' rights and workers' dignity," Sweeney said of the demonstrations in the U.S., which drew more than 60,000 people nationwide. "We join you in calling for trade justice — a system of trading that benefits millions of workers and the poor by including workers' rights. The current system creates jobs that keep the majority of workers impoverished ... benefits nobody but the CEOs," he stated.

Sweeney reminded the crowd that in the U.S., workers' rights often "exist only on paper," with workers being harassed, intimidated, spied upon and fired when they try to form or join unions. Almost all global trade pacts, including the World Trade Organization's charter, ignore or belittle worker rights. The Hong Kong trade talks were under the World Trade Organization auspices.

...Who's side are they on?

(From Page 2)

cent), Northeast (59 percent) and Midwest (60 percent) say the country is on the wrong track. Among Southern voters, some 48 percent say the nation is on the wrong track, while 35 percent say it's going in the right direction.

A major factor in the disapproval of the nation's direction is the strong belief that both Congress (66 percent) and President George W. Bush (59 percent) are out of step with working families' priorities, the poll found.

The public's concern over the nation's direction crossed economic, political and geographic lines. Among employed adults surveyed, 58 percent say the nation is on the wrong track, as do 64 percent of working women and 63 percent of members of working fami-

lies with incomes of less than \$40,000.

Many media commentators have attributed recent public dissatisfaction to the war in Iraq, but the Hart poll shows working families hold deep concerns over the nation's domestic course, especially in five areas: Health care (69 percent), retirement security (65 percent), fair taxes (57 percent), education (53 percent) and jobs and the economy (47 percent). The survey also finds 63 percent of seniors ages 65 and older dissatisfied with the new Medicare prescription drug benefit plan that opened to enrollees Nov. 15 for coverage that began Jan. 1, 2006.

The survey was conducted Dec. 1-4, 2005, among a representative sample of 801 registered voters, with a margin of error of plus or minus 3.5 percent.



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