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Facing the coming labor shortage

Unions say they want to train younger workers, but often-times feel ignored

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Oregon's business community is sounding an alarm about a looming shortage in skilled labor, but it's not clear to what extent government efforts in "workforce development" will be able to solve the problem. Oregon unions, for their part, have been eager and willing to partner in efforts to improve worker skills, but feel like they too often get left out of plans for workforce training.

Demographics is the number one reason a labor shortage is expected — the baby boom generation becomes eligible to retire in the next five to 15 years. That will likely mean greater competition for skilled workers by employers throughout the economy — construction, high tech, health care, the public sector, even manufacturing.

That last, the notion of a labor shortage in manufacturing, seems to go against conventional wisdom: Hasn't manufacturing taken a beating in Oregon and the rest of the country, losing jobs to foreign competition and corporate outsourcing?

The short answer is, "Yes."

According to the Oregon Employment Department, statewide manufacturing employment peaked in 1998 at 227,000, declined in the 2000-2003 recession, and has been flat since then.

State economists think it will account for 205,500 jobs in 2014, about the same number as the end of 2006. But such numbers hide the reality of turnover and changing skills requirements. Even in an industry with a declining workforce, workers retire or change jobs and need to be replaced. And computerization and mechanization, which contribute to job loss, at the

same time require that remaining workers have higher-level skills.

"New technologies are really changing the workplace," said Lita Colligan, workforce policy adviser to Governor Ted Kulongoski, "and with baby boomers retiring in the next few years, we don't have a pipeline of skilled workers to take those jobs."

That's the message State Rep. Brad Witt has been hearing, loudly. Witt, who served 14 years as secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, became chair of the House Workforce and Economic Development Committee at the beginning of the year. His committee held several weeks of hearings in January to listen to business and labor about what the Legislature could do to increase family-wage jobs in Oregon.

"Not one witness didn't say we're headed for a train wreck in 10 or 15 years," Witt said.

The culprits most often fingered are culture and school: A shift in culture has made young people less interested in technical occupations, and the K-12 school system isn't steering students toward skilled trades careers.

Some labor leaders expect to see the business community clamor for more tax dollars to pay for their workforce training needs. That's the chorus Bob Shiprack, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, says he's heard from business leaders.

"The people that complain the most about not being able to find skilled people are the ones who don't pay them what they're worth," Shiprack said. "What drives me crazy is that they're doing nothing about this supposed labor shortage except asking the taxpayer to give them subsidies to train their workers."

Meanwhile, union training programs, which operate without tax dollars, struggle for recognition. Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain says the state workforce training sys-



Attorney Jim Egan of Albany leads a workshop on Oregon's workers' compensation insurance system.

ANNUAL OREGON LABOR LAW CONFERENCE BLOSSOMS INTO A CROWD OF NEARLY 250

What started 11 years ago as an intimate gathering of about 30 union leaders eager to learn more about state and federal labor laws has blossomed into a conference of nearly 250 union leaders, business agents, shop stewards and organizers who have overflowed the venue.

"We may be looking at moving to the convention center next year," said Norman Malbin, in-house attorney for Electrical Workers Local 48 and founder of the Oregon Labor Law Conference.

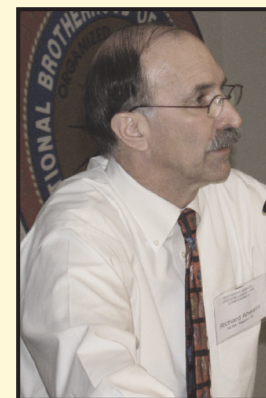
The day-long conference was held Jan. 19 at Local 48's union hall and training center in Northeast Portland.

This year's confab featured a plenary session on "Employment and Labor Law Overview" presented by management attorney Rick Liebman.

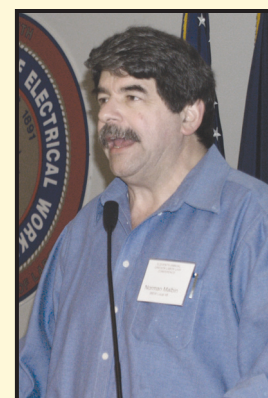
Twenty workshops are offered — ranging from "corporate campaigns" to "union discipline" to a panel on the impacts of last year's Kentucky River decision by the National Labor Relations Board that redefined the definition of a supervisor. The

panel for that discussion featured Richard Ahearn, regional director of the NLRB for Region 19, and attorneys from both labor and management.

Malbin said the goal is to keep registration affordable while offering useful information that union staffers can utilize at work.



RICHARD AHEARN



NORMAN MALBIN



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Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



Fast enters Hall of Fame

BILL FAST, 88, a retired port agent for the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), stands in the spotlight as the newest member of the Labor Hall of Fame. He was given that honor by the sponsoring Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council, which is affiliated with the Portland-based Northwest Oregon Labor Council (NOLC) of the AFL-CIO.

Fast retired in 1988 after serving as MEBA's Portland port agent for 22 years. He and his wife, Beverly, live in Lake Oswego in Clackamas County.

IN HIS CAREER running the MEBA office, Fast was active in a number of organizations. He served as president of the Portland Maritime Trades Council and of the Multnomah County Labor Council, which has since become part of NOLC. He was president of Portland-based Labor's Community Service Agency and was president of the Willamette Democratic Society. His civic service included eight years as a governor-appointed member of the Port of Portland Commission. Another facet of his work was serving as a consultant to the the Marine Cooks and Stewards Union in the Portland area.



BILL FAST

William Martin Fast was born on Oct. 4, 1918 in Kingston, Idaho, west of Kellogg in the metals mining district of the Gem State's Panhandle. After graduating from high school, he followed his father into the lead and silver mines, working for the Bunker Hill Co. Bill moved to Seattle in 1941 and

joined the U.S. Merchant Marine, becoming a member of MEBA. He shipped out of West Coast and East Coast ports in World War II and served on ships transporting supplies to U.S. military forces in various war zones. After the war, Fast made Seattle his home port. When he was not at sea, he became active in politics and worked on election campaigns of Washington's Democratic U.S. Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry (Scoop) Jackson. Later, in Portland, Fast was a labor co-chairman for Jackson when Scoop tried for the Democratic presidential nomination.

AFTER BECOMING MEBA'S man in Portland, Fast traveled Oregon with Democratic U.S. Senator Wayne Morse in his 1962 re-election campaign. Although he's a Democrat, he supported several MEBA-endorsed Republicans for public office, including Mark Hatfield and Bob Packwood, who became U.S. senators in the latter 1960s, and Vic Atiyeh, elected governor in the 1970s. Fast helped Democrat Les AuCoin get elected to Congress and supported Aaron Brown and Tom Moultrie in their elections to judgeships at the Multnomah County Courthouse; both had worked as union members before becoming lawyers. Atiyeh appointed Fast to the Port Commission and also appointed two other union leaders to the Port; he's the only governor ever to name three unionists to the Port's governing board. Fast's political activity also included being the Oregon labor chairman for Richard M. Nixon's successful 1968 presidential run because Nixon had promised to support increased construction of ships in the U.S. In 1976, MEBA and Fast supported Democratic presidential candidate Jimmy Carter in his successful run for the White House. Fast and his wife Beverly attended Carter's inauguration. Fast also supported Congressman Peter DeFazio, U.S. Senator Ron Wyden and others, including Congressman Wendell Wyatt.

As a longtime Merchant Mariner, Fast was among those who campaigned for Congressional approval of veterans' benefits for the merchant seamen of World War II. He still serves on the board of directors of the United States Merchant Marine Veterans League. He told the NW Labor Press that the League has only 80

(Turn to Page 11)

PDC Board wants more time to amend new construction wage policy

Plans to amend a two-week-old Portland Development Commission construction wage policy were pushed back by the PDC Board at its Jan. 24 meeting.

On Jan. 10, the PDC Board adopted a policy to pay construction workers state prevailing wage rates on private projects that receive more than \$1 million in funding from the quasi-public agency, which serves as the development arm of the City of Portland.

In addition to wage rates, the new policy also calls for specific hiring goals for women and minorities on a project-by-project basis.

At the Jan. 10 meeting, Commissioner Charles Wilhoite expressed concern that the policy didn't include language that gave PDC the ability to levy economic sanctions on developers who failed to meet stated hiring goals. After discussing the issue, the Board directed PDC staff to amend the policy to include enforcement actions and to bring it back for a vote on Jan. 24.

At the Jan. 24 meeting, the revised wage policy included language for

economic sanctions, but didn't set specific dollar figures. Wilhoite said any fines should be pooled and earmarked for "diversity organizations."

During public testimony, attorney Jim Francesconi, speaking on behalf of the Carpenters, Operating Engineers and Laborers, said the unions support the wage policy in general, but he pointed to a couple of "loopholes" in the policy that "will certainly cause controversy down the road."

One provision states that "when the total floor area of publicly-owned space is less than 50 percent of the total floor area of the combined public-private space, the policy shall not apply to the construction of the privately-owned space unless this portion of the project receives \$1 million or more in PDC resources."

The other provision says: "if projects constructed privately include public and private ownership portions that can be separated for construction purposes, the public portion of the project shall be subject to the policy and the private portion shall be exempt from the policy."

Francesconi said that bringing ownership back into the equation is what caused so many problems in the first place. "Ownership injects a whole lot of confusion," he said. "I think you're setting yourself up for a whole lot of controversy."

Francesconi, a former city commissioner and mayoral candidate, said the Operating Engineers also would like to see demolition included in the \$1 million threshold. As it stands, the wage policy states that demolition and environmental remediation will be consistent with rules under the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries.

Other suggestions the Board heard for amending the construction wage policy included adding incentives as well as sanctions to hiring goals; mandating apprenticeship training on projects; requiring nonunion contractors and training programs to submit annual affirmative action reports (the policy instructs only affiliates of the Building Trades Council to file reports); and exempting certain trades from working on projects if they don't meet affirmative action goals.

PDC Chairman Mark Rosenbaum asked, and the Board agreed, to delay a vote on amending the policy until its next meeting on Feb. 14. "I think that after the discussion today, we need to bring it back," he said.

NOTE: John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council attended his first meeting as a commissioner of the PDC on Jan. 24. He was appointed to the Board by Portland Mayor Tom Potter and confirmed by a unanimous vote of City Council on Jan. 17.



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First U.S.-made streetcars will carry union label

The nation's first U.S.-manufactured modern streetcars will be union-built at Oregon Iron Works.

At a press conference Jan. 26 at the company's headquarters in Clackamas, company officials, politicians and union leaders announced that Oregon Iron Works, through its subsidiary United Streetcar, LLC, had secured a \$4 million contract to manufacture a prototype streetcar for the City of Portland.

"It will create dozens of good union jobs," said Mike Lappier, business manager of Iron Workers Shopmen's Local 516, which represents workers at Oregon Iron Works.

Lappier joined Gov. Ted Kulongoski, U.S. Reps. Peter DeFazio, Dar-

lene Hooley and Earl Blumenauer, Portland Mayor Tom Potter, Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams, Clackamas County commissioners, and TriMet General Manager Fred Hansen for the announcement.

Funding for the project was secured as a \$4 million line-item in the 2005 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) bill, which authorizes the federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit for the five-year period 2005-2009.

United Streetcar LLC will build a prototype streetcar based on the model currently manufactured in the Czech Republic by Skoda, which makes cars

for Portland's streetcar system.

If interest in streetcars develops, United Streetcar could be supplying them to cities across North America.

"We believe there are 80 cities interested in streetcar systems," said DeFazio, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Transportation. "The resurgence of streetcars throughout the United States will play an increasing role in urban transit."

According to Chandra Brown, vice president of Oregon Iron Works, the project will create 20 new jobs, with the potential for hundreds more as national demand increases.

"We intend to provide modern, efficient American-produced streetcars, and to be a pioneering force in increasing urban transit options throughout the United States," Brown said.

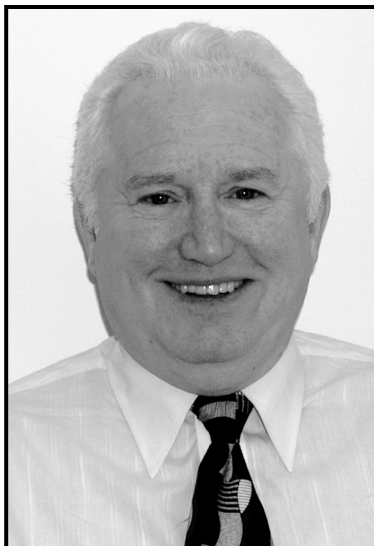
Using United Streetcar, a domestic

company, means the streetcar would comply with all federal Buy American rules.

"This project is a shining example of how when we come together across public and private sector lines, that we can deliver economic benefits for businesses, individual Oregonians and our communities," Kulongoski said.

When the prototype streetcar is completed it will be added to the Portland Streetcar fleet, increasing capacity and working towards the expansion of streetcar service to the Eastside, Lake Oswego, and city-wide.

Oregon Iron Works is a specialized fabrication and manufacturing company that produces components for the U.S. and foreign governments, as well as dams, bridges and other civil engineering and commercial projects. The company employs over 400.



TOM GUNN

School District hires former union official for labor relations job

Tom Gunn, a former grievance director for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and a business agent for Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, has been hired as director of labor relations for Portland Public Schools.

Gunn worked for AFSCME during the 1980s, leaving in 1991 to accept a governor's appointment to the Oregon Workers Compensation Board. He served there until 1996. He then joined the Local 555 staff before leaving to take a job as employment relations manager for Marion County in Salem.

Gunn has a full agenda at the school district, where the 15-union District Council of Unions has been working under the terms of a contract that expired in 2006. Negotiations also are ongoing with classified employees and cafeteria workers. The Oregon Education Association contract doesn't open until 2008, and bargaining has yet to begin for school custodians, who were reinstated last year by order of the Oregon Supreme Court.

"People at the School District are interested in solving problems, not creating them," Gunn said. "The direction for me is to build a collaborative relationship with the unions."

Gunn, 58, lives in Hillsboro with his wife, Pearl, a retired school teacher.

Kaiser gets okay to build new hospital

Kaiser Permanente has received approval from Oregon state regulators to build a \$285 million hospital on a 15-acre site in the Tanasbourne area of Washington County.

Kaiser has historically used union contractors and workers on its construction projects.

The 138-bed, 380,000-square-foot facility will house surgical suites, an intensive care unit, an emergency department, a labor and delivery unit and a pharmacy. The campus will also include a specialty care medical office and outpatient surgery center.

State law charges the Oregon Department of Human Services with reviewing proposals for new hospitals and nursing facilities to ensure health-care consumers don't pay for the cost of unnecessary facilities.

The hospital is projected to be complete in 2011.

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Carpenter organizer gets reprieve before deportation

José Cobián, better known to local Carpenters as union organizer José Luis Mendoza, won temporary freedom Jan. 23 when Federal Judge Anna Brown declined to impose house arrest in the weeks before his Feb. 13 immigration hearing.

As reported in the Nov. 17 NW Labor Press, staff at the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters were taken by surprise last August when "Luis" was arrested and it came to light that their co-worker of five years had entered and worked in the

United States illegally. Cobián, 36, left his native Colima, Mexico in 1989 to take under-the-table construction jobs in the Portland area. He taught himself to speak fluent English, and in 1996 was able to obtain false documents, which he used as the foundation to

build a life resembling that of a citizen. He joined the union, became an organizer, married, had two children, and bought a home in Molalla. All that unraveled last year when federal agents showed up at his house.

Cobián pled guilty in September to passport fraud and was released on bail pending sentencing. Because he was legally unable to work, his union co-workers stepped forward with donations to support him and his family. His wife Maria de Rosario Lucio, who was visiting from Mexico on a temporary visa when they met, had been able to remain in the United States because of his supposed citizenship status; now that is due to be cancelled as well.

Leading up to his sentencing, Cobián's supporters in the union appealed to Judge Brown for leniency, with letters and a DVD of videotaped testimonials.

"I have found him to be a dedicated, loyal and hardworking advocate for the working class ... [who] stood up against the exploitation of workers in a very public way," wrote Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters President Bruce Dennis. "While he may have violated some of the laws of this country, I feel he has embraced the democratic spirit of America."

Cobián could have been sentenced to a prison term of six months to two years for the passport violation. But Assistant U.S. Attorney Kemp Strickland, saying Cobián was not considered a flight risk and had cooperated at



JOSÉ COBIÁN

every point in the government's investigation, recommended the lowest sentence within the federal guidelines — house arrest. Judge Brown went further, questioning what useful purpose house arrest would serve if Cobián is due to be deported anyway. She sentenced Cobián to three years probation instead.

It was an emotional moment for Cobián and two dozen supporters from the Carpenters who filled the courtroom. Brown said she'd watched the DVD, and told Cobián he was fortunate to have so many people standing by him.

The judge asked Cobián if he had anything to say. "I did something wrong," Cobián said, "and I'm deeply sorry for that, especially because it hurt so many people, including my family and co-workers. It's something I want to teach my kids: If you lie, you've got to accept the consequences."

For Cobián, the consequences will almost certainly be a return to Mexico and ban from ever coming back to the United States. Cobián and his union supporters hope he will be allowed to depart voluntarily with his family rather than be deported under custody. Eight-year-old Alexis Mendoza and her four-year-old brother Dante are U.S. citizens by birthright, and have never been to Mexico. Cobián is trying to sell his home, and hopes to use the proceeds to repay his co-workers for their support.

Unlike the federal civil case against him, Cobián's Feb. 13 immigration hearing won't be open to the public.



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Union card is still a good investment

• In almost every occupation and demographic, union members increased their advantage in earnings over their nonunion colleagues in 2006. The median weekly earnings figure for union members nationwide — that point at which half are above and half are below — was \$833 in 2006, up by \$32 (3.85 percent) in one year. The median for nonunion workers rose by \$20 to \$642 in 2006. The median for all workers also rose by \$20, to \$671.

• Union members had an edge in median weekly earnings in factories (\$755 to \$692 for nonunion), construction (\$969 to \$610), retail (\$583 to \$518) and almost everywhere else in 2006. Retail trade was the sole occupation where the median for union members slid (\$7), while the median for nonunion workers rose (\$5).

• In 2006, the union membership rate was higher for men (13 percent) than for women (10.9 percent). The gap between their rates has narrowed considerably since 1983, when the rate for men was about 10 percentage points higher than the rate for women. This narrowing occurred because the union membership rate for men declined more rapidly than the rate for women.

• Black workers were more likely to be union members (14.5 percent) than were whites (11.7 percent), Asians (10.4 percent), or Hispanics (9.8 percent).

• Among age groups, union membership rates were highest among workers 45 to 64 years old (16 percent) and were lowest among those ages 16 to 24 (4.4 percent).

Union membership in U.S. falls by 326,000

Washington State bucks the trend with a 26,000-member increase

The number of workers in the United States belonging to a union fell by 326,000 in 2006 to 15.4 million — or 12 percent of the workforce — according to the latest statistics released by the U.S. Department of Labor.

In Oregon, union membership fell from 213,000 in 2005 to an estimated 211,000 last year. That's 13.8 percent of the workforce.

Washington State bucked the trend, increasing its ranks by 26,000 members last year to an estimated 549,000 members, or 19.8 percent of the workforce.

Washington now ranks fifth-highest in the nation in terms of union density, trailing only Hawaii (24.7 percent), New York (24.4 percent), Alaska (22.2 percent), and New Jersey (20.1 percent).

Among the five states reporting union membership rates below 5 percent in 2006, North Carolina and South Carolina continued to post the lowest rates (3.3 percent each). The next lowest rates were recorded in Virginia (4 percent), Georgia (4.4 percent), and Texas (4.9 percent).

Nationally, the public sector still has the highest number of organized workers, at 36.2 percent. In the private sectors only 7.4 percent of workers are represented.

The largest decrease in union membership rates occurred in manufacturing, where union membership dropped 1.3 percentage points to just 11.7 percent of manufacturing workers. For the first time since the Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking these trends, and likely for the first time in U.S. history, union membership rates were

lower in manufacturing (11.7 percent) than in the rest of the economy (12.0 percent), reported the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

The national unionization rate has steadily declined from a high of 20.1 percent in 1983, the first year for which comparable union data are available.

"While I'm very encouraged that more workers in Washington State have organized to gain a voice at work and win strong union contracts, this news about declining national membership is another troubling sign that America's middle class is struggling," said Rick Bender, president of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. "It's bad news for all workers, not just union members, when fewer of us have a contract to protect our living standards from being eroded away."

He said the factors that have contributed to the national decline include the outsourcing of jobs, the decline of America's once-powerful manufacturing sector and the enormous difficulty workers face when trying to form or join unions to improve their lives.

A recent survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates shows that the public support of unions is at a 25-year high — 65 percent approve of unions while only 25 percent disapprove. More than half of all workers say they would join a union today if given the chance.

According to last week's Department of Labor report, full-time wage

and salary workers who were union members in 2006 had median weekly earnings of \$833, compared with a median of \$642 for wage and salary workers who were not represented by unions. Unionized workers also are more likely to have better employer-paid health insurance and pensions.

The biggest obstacle, Bender said, is that "too many unscrupulous employers routinely fire, harass and intimidate workers who express interest in joining unions — even though that's supposed to be illegal."

Weak labor laws have allowed union-busting consultants to make the union election process a virtual minefield. Studies have found that among employers faced with union organizing campaigns:

- 30 percent will fire pro-union workers.

- 49 percent will threaten to close a worksite, but only 2 percent actually do.

- 51 percent will coerce workers into opposing unions with bribery or favoritism.

- 82 percent will hire high-priced union-busting consultants to fight union organizing drives.

- 91 percent will force employees to attend one-on-one anti-union meetings with their supervisors.

To combat this, unions are lobbying for legislation at both federal and state levels that would allow workers to form a union by simply signing authorization cards.

The Employee Free Choice Act will be re-introduced in Congress later this year.

Last year, the EFCA was co-sponsored by 215 U.S. representatives and 44 senators.

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Asbestos Workers 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, followed by a 10:30 a.m. General Meeting, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland.

PLEASE NOTE: There is an opening for an Executive Board position to be filled at the next meeting. Please call the union if you are interested.

Boilermakers 500

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

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Carpenters 1388

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 276 Warner-Milne Rd., Oregon City.

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, 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, Feb. 6 and Feb. 13, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Electrical Workers 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 26. Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, in the Executive Boardroom.

Residential Unit meets 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, in the Dispatch Lobby

General Membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. pre-meeting buffet.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at NIETC, 16021 NE Airport Way.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb. 7 and Feb. 21 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 Feb. and are payable at 50 cents each: No. 2132, Bernard E. McNamee, and No. 2133, Denzil Smith, Jr.

Electrical Workers 280

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

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Joint Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Central Electrical Training Center, Tangent.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, 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, Feb. 21, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

Fire Fighters 452

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

Fire Fighters 1660

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

Glass Workers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir, #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir, #300, Portland.

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at Old Country Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

Laborers 483 Municipal Employees

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

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, preceded by a 7 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Executive Board meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland.

BAKERS 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet



Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, 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, Feb. 12, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, 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, Feb. 15, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Multnomah County Employees 88

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards' meeting, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 26, in at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Operating Engineers 701

District 1 members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 2, at Gladstone Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 5 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 6, at Gladstone Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at Cousin's Restaurant, 2115 W. 6th, The Dalles.

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at DTC Office, 148 Main St., Hermiston.

District 1 members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 9, at Longview Electricians Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave., Longview.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Courtyard Marriott, 600 Airport Rd., Medford.

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

PLEASE NOTE: The following meeting is "Special Call." All members are requested to attend.

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

New Hours: Effective Dec. 1, 2006, Local 10 will be open from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 23, 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, Feb. 13, at 6025 E. Burnside Portland.

General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8.

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

Sheet Metal Workers 16

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

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at UA 290 Hall, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, preceded by a 5 p.m. VOC meeting.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14, at Abby's Pizza, 7480 Crater Lake Hwy., White City.

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at the Southern Oregon Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 5, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 16, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19, at the Eugene #290 Hall.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at 650A Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 19, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E. St., Eureka, Calif.

United Steel Workers 1097

Members meet 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

United Steelworkers L&E Committee Dist. 12

Members meet 10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 23, in Salem at the Oregon AFL-CIO office, 2110 State St. For more information call 503-585-6320

The committee will be lobbying legislators following the meeting.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13, at Steamers Restaurant, 8303 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. A brief business meeting and drawing will follow. For more information and reservations, call Vera at 503 252-2296.

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 9, 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, Feb. 12, at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 100G, Portland.

land.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503-239-9858, ext. 124.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet at 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 8, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland

TRANSIT 757

Retirees meet 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 7, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd, Portland.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 15, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Portland.

...Schools focus on college prep, not blue-collar careers

(From Page 1)

tem too often overlooks union apprenticeship programs, and invests in redundant programs at community colleges.

And sometimes, the shortage is quite plainly due to a lack of employer commitment to train the workers they'll later need.

At some local electric utilities, heavy overtime — in some cases over 600 hours a year — is an early symptom of a labor shortage among journeyman linemen. Travis Eri, business manager of IBEW

Local 125, says over 40 percent of his membership — mostly utility workers — will be eligible to retire in the next five years. It takes three and a half years of apprenticeship to become a journeyman lineman, but journeymen average \$33 an hour,

so for many apprentice openings, over a hundred people apply.

In the past, utilities didn't skimp on training, but Eri thinks this has changed at large investor-owned utilities, where understaffing may be a strategy to boost short-term profits. The worst offender is currently PacifiCorp, which cut its apprentice training program after it was bought by Warren Buffett's Mid-American Energy Holdings Company. Previously-hired apprentices will continue in their training, but PacifiCorp said it will hire no new apprentices in 2007.

But Witt said he hears from many good employers who *are* planning for the future and are willing to commit their own resources, and still want government to help, at least by maximizing the use of resources already being spent.

Witt expects his committee will support a set of ideas being proposed by the governor.

Those include:

- Making an Oregon high school diploma a thing of value to employers, by ensuring that it means competence in core skills like reading, math and science, as well as problem solving, communication ability and teamwork;

- Helping to create industry consortiums (clusters of businesses in the same overall market that require workers with similar skills) that could forecast their collective workforce needs instead of waiting and then raiding each other's workers;

- Identifying high-skill, high-demand occupations, and then giving training grants to individuals willing to work in those jobs, with those currently on public assistance getting priority;

- Making it easier to get information about the necessary pathways to high-

UA Local 290 got no response to its invitation to Wilsonville, Tigard-Tualatin and Sherwood school districts offering them the use of their state-of-the-art training center to help students understand how the math and science and grammar they study could help them win entry into careers in the pipe trades.

wage careers; and

- Better linking K-12 education to workforce needs.

That last idea is something unions have been asking for for years.

"There is a lack of vocational education in high schools today," Shiprath said. "I had shop class in grade school, and four years of it in Marshall [High School]."

"There was a real tie between blue-collar jobs and education when I was in school," Chamberlain, a firefighter, adds. "Now, we know that there's an attitude in our K-12 system that pushes kids toward college, whether they end up there or not."

And the problem is, union officials say, an exclusive focus on college prep doesn't well serve the three-quarters of high school graduates who don't go on to college.

Witt calls it the lost decade: "Union apprentice programs say the average age of their applicants is late 20s.

These young people banged around in low-skilled jobs for 10 years before finding their way to a career track."

Last October, one local union made its own attempt to expose young people to the skilled trades "pipeline."

Tualatin-based Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290, foreseeing rising demand for their trade as new energy facilities break ground in coming years, wrote to the superintendents of the Wilsonville, Tigard-Tualatin and Sherwood school districts and offered them the use of their multimillion-dollar state-of-the-art training center, to help students understand how the math and science and grammar they study could help them win entry into lucrative and worthwhile careers. There would be no charge to the district, and the union would even pay for the "consumables" — acetylene oxygen, etc.

"Our journeymen make over \$30 an hour on the check, and have a total wage and benefit package of \$50 an hour," said Local 290 Business Manager John Endicott. "That's not a bad living. And our apprenticeship program means they earn while they learn."

Local 290 got no response to its invitation. The union followed up with letters to the board members of the districts, with the same offer. Still no response. The union is pretty steamed about the brush-off, but union officials are trying to stay positive and plan to attend board meetings in the near future to continue the outreach.

"Skilled labor has sort of fallen out of fashion in school," said Norm Eder, executive director of Manufacturing 21, a workforce training advocacy group made up of manufacturers, community colleges and the Oregon AFL-CIO. "Teachers and high school counselors are themselves doing a different



BOB BAUGH

kind of labor, and don't necessarily tell students that there are fabulous careers in the skilled trades."

Eder's group hopes to change that, and last year kicked off a pilot project in Clackamas County called "Manufacturing Road Trip." Teachers and counselors were given tours of local manufacturing operations, and heard from human resources people about the growing skills shortage.

Eder acknowledges there's another side to the culture shift: Manufacturing has a serious image problem. Young people don't think manufacturing is a stable and rewarding career direction, and mass layoffs like the 800 announced by Freightliner Jan. 26 only add to the perception it's a doomed, shrinking sector.

That's one of the themes Witt heard from Bob Baugh, head of the national AFL-CIO's Industrial Union Council, who came to testify at a Jan. 19 hearing of Witt's Workforce Committee.

"Neoconservative economists want to tell you, 'Don't worry about job loss, don't worry about what's happening in manufacturing,'" said Baugh, a former secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO. "It's really the fault of the worker. They just need to get smarter. They just need more training and education."

"I support training and education," Baugh continued. "I want our workforce to have the greatest skills in the world. But it's like giving your kid swimming lessons, getting their swimsuit on and saying 'Now go jump in the pool,' but nobody's paying attention to see that the drains are unplugged and the water's going down."

Oregon may be an exception, Eder says, with a stronger, more competitive manufacturing sector than many states. But either way, if there's one thing all sides can agree on, it's that relentless hype about the "information economy" has drowned out voices arguing for the continued importance of building and making things.

Makers and builders hope to regain their voice this legislative session, and may work with organized labor to produce the needed cultural shift.

"There's this impression that if it's not college track, it's second class," Witt said. "But we need to have the highest level of skills for tradespeople as well."

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L.A. lab works to improve odds against asbestos cancer

When Olympic Gold medalist Terry McCann began having chest pains, he knew something was wrong. He never drank or smoked. He worked out daily in the gym and was a member of the San Clemente morning surf "dawn patrol" in California.

The chest pain went away, but mesothelioma, the deadly cancer within his chest wall, did not. Before Terry passed away last year at age 72 — more than two years after his symptoms had surfaced — he had already beaten the odds. Ten years ago, men and women with mesothelioma faced a certain and swift death. The cancer, which kills 2,000 to 4,000 men and women a year, oftentimes misdiagnosed as pneumonia or as an inflamed lining of the lungs, would

quickly surround the victim's lungs and heart sac with a concrete-like sheath, and crush the patient to death.

People with mesothelioma still face a tremendous struggle, but in Los Angeles cutting-edge research and treatment to detect and manage the illness is being conducted at the non-profit Pacific Heart, Lung & Blood Institute and its Punch Worthington Research Laboratory (PWR), in collaboration with the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

Dr. Robert Cameron, a surgeon and scientist who directs the PWR Lab, has put together an aggressive agenda to tackle mesothelioma head-on. The lab's Risk Reduction Program is focusing on prevention of mesothelioma in workers exposed to asbestos and

early detection through breath and blood tests. The Lab's Mesothelioma and Asbestosis Treatment Program is seeking to improve therapies for people with already existing disease.

Mesothelioma is caused by inhalation of asbestos fibers. It has a long latency period (the time between first exposure to asbestos and the diagnosis of the disease). In rare cases the latency period has been as short as 10 to 15 years. Typically, however, mesothelioma occurs 20, 30, 40 or more years after the first exposure.

Workers in the construction trades are particularly vulnerable to exposure, but the illness itself doesn't discriminate based on the color of the collar. "This disease affects Olympic athletes, drywallers, congressmen,

pipefitters, admirals in the Navy, Hollywood icons, insulators, young women college students, painters, interior decorators, boilermakers and everyone in between," said Roger Worthington, an attorney and board member of the Pacific Heart, Lung & Blood Institute. The Punch Worthington Laboratory was named in the memory of Roger's father, David "Punch" Worthington of Salem, a union organizer and Ph.D. in genetics who died last year from asbestos-related cancer.

The Portland area is considered a hotspot for mesothelioma due to its historic shipbuilding and paper mill industries, yet the closest treatment centers with doctors who specialize in mesothelioma are in Seattle (at the Swedish Cancer Institute) and Los Angeles, Worthington said.

"It's too bad the local doctors haven't responded to the asbestos epidemic here in Oregon," said Greg Deblock, a retired business manager of Portland-based Steamfitters Local 235, which later merged to become the United Association of Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 290. In November, Deblock was diagnosed with malignant mesothelioma. He is struggling to find specialized care in Portland.

Worthington says too many doctors are resigned to "doomsday" with asbestos cancers. "They assume that mesothelioma cannot be cured," he continued, "but the sad truth is neither industry nor the government has invested in finding cures for this orphan cancer. How do we know it's 'incurable' if we don't try to cure it?"

To date, there isn't a reliable test to detect mesothelioma at an early stage. Imaging tests, such as X-rays and CT scans, are not satisfactory. Screening tests exist for breast cancer, colon cancer, prostate cancer and lung cancer, and have resulted in better diagnosis

of early disease and improved cure rates. Early detection for mesothelioma could lead to similar benefits.

One promising test under study at the PWR Lab involves identifying evidence of mesothelioma and even asbestos exposure through markers in a person's exhaled breath or blood.

The Institute is recruiting volunteers — particularly workers and their families residing on the West Coast — for the early detection breath and blood screenings, although the start date has not been finalized, the Lab is taking names and will contact volunteers once the trials begin.

Since asbestos inflames the lining of the chest (pleura), the lab's prevention program also is testing agents that inhibit inflammation as a means of preventing the disease. Doctors believe that interrupting the long cycle of inflammation could break the progression of changes that lead to cancer. Indomethacin, celecoxib, aspirin and other agents may hold the key.

The PWR Lab is testing celecoxib right now. This trial is for people who have been exposed to asbestos and who have a history of smoking. (The testing is free, but participants will have to go to Los Angeles to participate.)

For more information about the celecoxib test, call Jessica Like, executive director of the Pacific Heart, Lung & Blood Institute, at 310-622-4960.

For more information about the early detection program, or for information about meso treatment options, contact Dr. Cameron at 310-622-4960.

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Movie fictionalizing 1999 WTO protest films for 3 days in Seattle

"Battle In Seattle," a film about the 1999 World Trade Organization (WTO) protests, ended up filming for three days in Seattle, and 28 days in Vancouver, British Columbia. In effect, most of the filming and all of the post-film production work was "globalized," for budget reasons, to Vancouver, British Columbia.

The movie's producers also sought initially to shoot nonunion in Seattle, but Seattle Film Commission director James Kebblas was able to broker a deal with local unions — including Teamsters and the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) — that enabled the production to use union film crews. [The production used a mix of union and nonunion workers in Vancouver, where filming took place Nov. 4 to Dec. 14.]

Dec. 9-11 was an odd kind of déjà vu for downtown Seattle, as several hundred extras played "protester." Many extras had been real protesters the first time around, and some

brought the same signs they carried during the week of massive protests.

"It brought back a lot of memories," said Kebblas, who took part in the largest of the WTO protest events, the 35,000-strong union march.

"Battle in Seattle" stars Charlize Theron, Woody Harrelson, Ray Liotta, Andre Benjamin, Martin Henderson, Channing Tatum, Michelle Rodriguez, Jennifer Carpenter, Connie Neilson, and Joshua Jackson.

Writer-director Stuart Townsend appears to have viewed the events of late 1999 through his own lens. Thousands of union members remember taking part in huge and well-organized protests against corporate-led globalization, but "Battle in Seattle" looks set to emphasize street battles with police — production spokesperson Anna Dupas referred to the event as a "riot" and to participants as "rioters."

Few union members are likely to agree with that characterization: While some vandalism occurred, most pro-

testers were peaceful, including many hundreds who committed acts of civil disobedience that prevented delegates from getting to the meeting on the first day of the summit. On the other hand,

police tactics were repressive and indiscriminate, as amply documented in later lawsuits. That, and a weeklong suspension of civil liberties, produced a political reaction that ended the ca-

reers of Seattle's mayor and police chief.

Townsend's fictionalized take on those events is expected to be released later this year.

Union invites young members to 'Bowl-A-Rama' on Feb. 10

The American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Oregon Council 75 is inviting its younger members to take an interest in unionism with a Feb. 10 "Bowl-A-Rama." The social event starts at 4 p.m. at Hollywood Bowl, 4030 NE Halsey St., Portland, and is open to young AFSCME members and their families. Several younger members of the Oregon Legislature are also expected to attend.

Bowl-a-rama organizers are expecting to see a wave of strikes, but will also settle for spares.

The event is sponsored by Next Wave, a new group of young members promoting involvement in the statewide public sector union. For

more information, call Lydia Hallay at AFSCME's Portland office, 503-239-9858.

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Oregon senator helps scuttle wage bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Oregon U.S. Senator Gordon Smith helped sink a bill in the U.S. Senate Jan. 24 that would have raised the federal minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 per hour in three steps in slightly over two years.

A majority of senators — 54 — voted to raise the minimum wage without any attachments, but opponents threatened to filibuster the bill. It takes 60 votes to end debate (invoke cloture).

“With their amendments and delays, Republican senators tied up a minimum wage increase in more knots than you can find in a scouting handbook,” wrote national AFL-CIO blogger Mike Hall. “For 10 years when they controlled the agenda, Republican leaders used all their power to block a raise in the minimum wage. Now, after the new Democratic-controlled House passed — with bipartisan support — a simple \$2.10-an-hour increase, out-of-power Republican Senate leaders are running a guerrilla war of delay with filibusters and amendments to deny minimum wage workers a raise. They even tried to repeal the federal minimum wage altogether on Jan. 24.”

Smith told the Oregonian newspaper that he voted against the minimum wage bill because it didn't include an education tax provision that he wanted attached.

“I've learned in 10 years around this place that if you want something to move, you better hook it onto any train that's moving,” Smith said on the Senate floor Jan. 24. “This is moving. And yes, I want to vote to raise the minimum wage. But I also want to put on it such things that actually help folks that we're trying to help.”

U.S. senators — who make \$165,200 a year — almost annually vote to give themselves a pay raise without including any attachments. Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.), a leading Senate proponent of a “clean” minimum wage bill, said Republicans have 70 more amendments to attach to the bill.

There were indications senators would attach \$8 billion worth of new tax breaks for small business, approved in mid-January by the Democratic-run Senate Finance Committee, as a price to get the 60 votes needed to shut off debate and pass the bill. But attaching the tax breaks would kick the bill back to the House, causing more delay.

And attaching the tax breaks angered both Change to Win Chair Anna Burger and AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

“The fight for a ‘clean’ (minimum wage) bill is over, but the fight to give America a raise is not,” Burger said. “The minimum wage increase is not dead — it is simply open now to am-

endments. We will continue to work hard to prevent any amendments from being added to the bill that would hurt workers.”

Sweeney says, in the past 10 years, the Republican-controlled Congress showered corporations with \$276 billion in tax breaks, plus another \$36 billion aimed exclusively at small businesses.

“It's just plain wrong to ask these working families to wait even longer to receive a minimum wage increase while many of our nation's leaders shower big business with additional tax perks,” Sweeney said.

President Bush has signaled that he would sign a bill providing for a wage increase with related tax breaks.

In a statement on its Web site, the Oregon AFL-CIO said, “Senator Smith is the only one of Oregon's congressional delegates who is out of sync with Oregon voters on this minimum wage bill. We salute the others — including Sen. Ron Wyden, and Representatives Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, Darlene Hooley, David Wu, and even Smith's Republican colleague Rep. Greg Walden — who supported this long-overdue raise.”

The federal minimum wage has no impact on Oregonians, as they have twice voted in favor of raising the minimum wage at the state level. Oregon has the second highest minimum wage in the nation at \$7.80 an hour.

NLRB to hear case on use of employer e-mail

EUGENE, Ore. (PAI) — Can unions use company e-mail to communicate with workers? The National Labor Relations Board will take on this question in a case this spring.

The case involves The Newspaper Guild's Local 37194, which represents 150 staffers at the Eugene, Ore., Register-Guard. The paper is challenging the union's rights, across the board, to use e-mail in communicating with its 150 members there. The bargaining unit consists of reporters, photographers, copy editors, secretaries, clerks, advertising department employees, and district managers in the circula-

tion department.

The paper's management says its policy bans using its e-mail “to solicit or proselytize for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations or other non-job-related solicitations.” The paper says the ban covers the union. The Guild, an affiliate of the Communications Workers of America, says it doesn't.

Among the issues the board will tackle is whether union members can use the e-mail system to discuss “union or other concerted, protected matters” — such as wages, hours and working conditions — defined by labor law.

If so, what restrictions may an employer place on the e-mails and if not, can the paper permit non-job-related e-mails but not those related to the union? Another question before the Board is whether e-mail access is a mandatory subject for bargaining, just like wages and hours.

A hearing is scheduled for March 27.

The union filed an unfair labor practice charge against the newspaper while negotiating a successor contract in 2000 after the union's president was reprimanded in writing for corresponding union business with employees on their work computers via e-mail.



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Let me say this about that

...Career of Dan Faddis

(From Page 2)

members still living.

Fast's activity beyond the labor movement includes 54 years of membership in the Masonic Lodge.

BILL AND BEVERLY FAST were married in 1962 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho; both had been married previously. They have two daughters, two sons, seven grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren, four great-great-grandchildren and two adopted daughters who are granddaughters whose parents were unable to care for them.

ONE SON, William Lloyd Fast, followed his father into the Merchant Marine, but later worked as a member of the Boilermakers Union and is now retired and living in Portland.

Another son, Phil Fast, lives in Arizona. Daughter Margery Ellen Grieve lives in Portland, and daughter Frances LuAnn Prixley lives in Gresham. The adopted daughters are LaVonna Fast and Angeliqie Grass, who live in the Portland area.

★★★

DANIEL L. FADDIS of Portland, a longtime member of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48, died Nov. 25, 2006 at age 81, and his obituary was published in the Northwest Labor Press. However, his family recently compiled a detailed account of his career, and information from it follows.

Dan Faddis was the director of training at the Metro Electrical Training Center, a facility in Portland at one time operated by IBEW Local 48, but under Faddis's leadership was brought under the joint sponsorship of the union and the National



DAN FADDIS

Electrical Contractors Association (NECA). A native Portlander and a World War II veteran, he spent many years shaping the Metro Training Center into the highest-ranked in the nation for schooling apprentices and for keeping journeymen and journeywomen educated about the newest developments in their trade.

FADDIS GRADUATED in 1954 from the inside wiremen's electrical apprenticeship program, but he had begun working as an IBEW member years before. He had earlier served as treasurer and recording secretary of Local 48 and as unit manager for the electricians who worked on construction of The Dalles Dam.

He was one of the first to earn an associate degree in vocational teacher education from Portland Community College and later was involved in the industrial education program at Oregon State University, where he earned a bachelor's degree. He worked as an instructor in Local 48's apprenticeship program for five years before being appointed director of training in 1964. He held the post for more than 20 years before retiring. He became known throughout the country as the "Dean of Training Directors."

FADDIS WAS INVOLVED in a multitude of activities over the years. He was an officer of the Oregon/SW Washington Apprenticeship Coordinators Group, an Oregon Building Congress Guildsman of the Year and received three Service to the IBEW Awards. He also was presented with awards from NECA and from the Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training. He was inducted into the Oregon Apprenticeship Hall of Fame by the Oregon State Department of Education. He was installed in the National Hall of Fame of the United States Apprenticeship Association. Faddis also received other accolades for his contributions to apprenticeship training and to the electrical industry.

★★★

MARY S. DIETZ, of Gladstone, a charter member of Portland-based Office and Professional Employees Local 11, died Jan. 21 of heart failure at the age of 89. She had worked as a bookkeeper for Operating Engineers Local 701, Waitresses Local 305 and Egg & Poultry Workers Local 231. She often worked on the delegate registration desk at Oregon AFL-CIO conventions.

She was born on Sept. 5, 1917 in North Dakota and moved with her family to Portland in 1923. They later moved to Canby where she graduated from high school. In 1940 she married Ralph R. Dietz, a member of Auto Mechanics Local 1005, and they made their home in Gladstone. He died in 1980.

A FUNERAL MASS was conducted for Mrs. Dietz on Jan. 26 at St. John The Apostle Catholic Church in Oregon City.

Survivors include her sister, Jean Miller, a niece, Helen Gourde; and a nephew, Rick Soderberg.

Memorial contributions can be sent to St. Vincent dePaul Society. Funeral arrangements were by Holman, Hankins, Bowker & Waud.

It's time to repeal the 'double majority'

By KEN ALLEN

While the 2007 Oregon Legislature is just beginning to pick up steam, already there's one measure introduced that I believe deserves support. It's Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 10, and it would eliminate most of the 'double-majority' requirements that plague Oregon election law.

Before I speak to the merits of the measure, let's make one point clear: SJR 10 doesn't itself change the law. Instead, if passed, SJR 10 would call on Oregonians to once again consider the issue at the ballot box. After several years of dealing with the consequences of the double majority, we believe that's an opportunity most Oregonians would welcome.

Here's a quick history lesson. The double majority was the brainchild of anti-taxes, anti-union, pretty much anti-everything Bill Sizemore. (This occurred several years before a jury found Sizemore liable of election-related fraud and racketeering in a civil lawsuit.) The double-majority law says that any property tax increase must both be approved by a 50 percent majority of those voting and that at least 50 percent of those registered to vote must cast a ballot.

In other words, if there's only a 49 percent turnout, there's no need to even count the ballots. It doesn't matter if 99 percent of those who took the time to vote said "Yes." In essence, every single person in the 51 percent who didn't vote is counted as a "No," and that's not right.

Sizemore and other proponents



KEN ALLEN

love to compare the double majority to the concept of a "quorum." If a quorum of a city council isn't seated, they argue, that body can't conduct business. That argument may even sound OK at first blush, but then you have to consider where we live.

Because in 2007, if there's any state in the country where the "quorum concept" doesn't hold water, it's vote-by-mail Oregon. Here, a full 100 percent quorum is reached in every election, because every registered voter receives a ballot and has over two weeks to return it. You don't have to worry about the difficulty of getting out to a polling place if you're handicapped or disabled, you don't need to worry about bad weather or having the flu on Election Day and so on. Every voter is "in the room" once he or she receives their ballot.

Change to Win responds to Bush's State of Union speech

(Following is a statement by Change to Win Chair Anna Burger regarding President Bush's State of the Union Address on Jan. 23.)

In today's rapidly changing global economy, fewer and fewer workers believe they can achieve the American Dream, and they worry even more for their children. But during tonight's state of the union, they didn't hear President Bush address their state of concern on issues like stagnant wages and retirement security.

The president acknowledged skyrocketing health care costs, another reason the Dream is slipping away for so many working families. But our health care system is broken. The president's plan to penalize the shrinking number of Americans fortunate enough to have insurance won't contain costs or expand coverage. We need fundamental reform so every man, woman and child has access to the quality, affordable health care they

need.

We are encouraged by the president's renewed call for Congress to pass meaningful immigration reform. The seven major unions in Change to Win support a realistic and comprehensive solution that provides a pathway to citizenship for the estimated 11 million hardworking, taxpaying immigrants in this country.

However, we see the recent Immigration and Custom Enforcement (ICE) raids at meatpacking facilities across the country counter to the president's words. And at a time when Americans are engaged in a serious dialogue about our broken immigration system, the Bush Administration's own trade policies would do nothing to stem the flow of illegal immigration.

We urge President Bush and the new Congress to get serious about restoring the American Dream. That means forging real solutions on health care, immigration, retirement and jobs.

OPEN FORUM

Once that ballot is in your hand, it's your responsibility to participate. Indeed, as mentioned, the biggest argument against the double majority is the fact that people who don't vote are in essence counted as "No" votes. That includes people who have moved, people who have died or others who, for whatever reason, aren't off each county's election rolls.

The double majority has a history now, and it's not a good one. We've seen proposed levies for countless fire districts, libraries, water districts and others easily pass a majority of those who voted only to be vetoed by those who didn't. The double majority is a slap in the face at the fundamental tenets of democracy, and again, Oregon's unique vote-by-mail system erases its proponents biggest sound bite.

Please note SJR 10 doesn't change everything. If you're concerned about jurisdictions trying to "sneak" levies and such in off-cycle elections, that part of the law wouldn't change. Property tax elections would still have to be held on regular primary and general election dates.

Nationally, Oregon has always been seen as a leader, a place where we're willing to take chances and try new ideas. Vote-by-mail was one such idea, and it's been a good one — several states are now in the process of copying our law.

The double majority has not been a good idea — and it's OK for us to collectively admit that. At the very least, the concept deserves another round of statewide debate, and that's what SJR 10 would do.

I encourage you to contact your state legislators and urge them to make SJR 10 a priority this session. We need to open the door for a full examination of this important topic once again.

(Editor's Note: Ken Allen is the executive director of Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which represents over 27,000 workers in Oregon.)



AFSCME rallies for new contract at Clackamas Co.

About 100 people turned out in Oregon City for a noontime rally Jan. 23 in support of members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 350 locked in difficult contract talks with their employer — Clackamas County.

The union has filed an unfair labor practice complaint for unilaterally implementing a new payroll schedule in the midst of the current contract negotiations. Local 350 represents about 350 county employees in the 911 center, transportation, development, water and environmental services departments. The 911 employees are not allowed to strike and work under a separate contract.

The county employees have been working without a contract since June 30, 2006. Bargaining on a new agreement began May 11, but disagreements over health insurance premiums have bogged down talks.

According to union spokesman Don Loving, Clackamas County wants a 95-5 split on the cost of employee health insurance. "The county is insist-

ing on a cap on its contribution, meaning Local 350 members would likely see their percentage rise considerably above 5 percent next year," he said.

In mid-December a mediator was called in, but after three sessions there has been little movement. The Jan. 23 rally coincided with the third round of mediated talks. The next mediated session is scheduled for Feb. 15.

Local 350 President Rob Hungerford says his colleagues deserve respect. "We are the employees who make this county run," he said. "Managers are in line to get big bonuses, but they can't find money for our wages and health insurance costs."

AFSCME Oregon Council 75 Executive Director Ken Allen told rally-goers, "Clackamas County needs to understand who they're picking a fight with. They're not just going up against Local 350. They're about to get on the wrong side of a large, statewide union that has over \$600,000 in its strike fund. They need to come to the table and settle, because we won't be scared away."

Bus strike looms in Corvallis

City transit and school bus operators reject Laidlaw's final offer, authorize strike

CORVALLIS — Corvallis's transit and school bus drivers turned thumbs down to a proposal by Laidlaw Transit, Inc. that, in effect, would rip up wage gains attained over the past six years.

More than 65 bus operators — 10 at the city and 55 at the school district — are represented by Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757. Their contract expired on June 30, 2006.

On Jan. 23, bus operators voted overwhelmingly to reject Laidlaw's contract proposal and at the same time authorized a strike.

Canadian-based Laidlaw Transit has contracts to provide public transit and school bus service in Corvallis. It is the largest transportation company in North America and is notorious for opposing unions.

Drivers from both the City of Corvallis and the school district joined Local 757 in 1997, but ran into one roadblock after another trying to get a first contract. They walked off the job several times and filled City Council meetings numerous times to protest shoddy treatment.

In fact, it was Laidlaw's resistance to the union that led to a 1999 ballot measure in which Corvallis voters — by a wide margin — approved an ordinance stipulating that wages and benefits for

city transit workers be based on the wages and benefits of other transit workers within a 100-mile radius. The prevailing wage law went into effect July 1, 2000.

The issue for city bus operators centers around a service contract between the City of Corvallis and Laidlaw. According to Ron Heintzman, an international vice president for the ATU and a former president of Local 757, wages in the bus operators' first contract were patterned after the prevailing wage ordinance, and benefits mirrored those received by Corvallis city employees.

"We agreed to that because the city was anticipating taking bus service in-house," Heintzman said.

That transition never happened.

To further complicate matters, the city didn't update the minimum wage and benefit requirements when it renewed its service contract with Laidlaw.

As a result, when the union came looking for wage and benefit increases comparable to those received by city employees, Laidlaw refused, taking the position that unless the city changed its contract in regard to minimum wages and benefits, they wouldn't agree to any changes.

That position has caused the parties to reach impasse, with the union contending that it will not be locked into a contract with no changes for life.

Heintzman said the union came to the bargaining table with 14 items, but narrowed its requests to just three: a 3.5 percent annual raise, an increase in life insurance from \$20,000 to the annual

wage of a driver, and sick leave pay-out comparable to city employees.

"Laidlaw's position is totally unacceptable and to this point in time the city has done nothing to correct it," he said, adding that any increases on Laidlaw could be directly passed through to the city.

In the school bus driver dispute, after six years the union was finally able to bargain a five-year step increase on wages. That step increase was ratified in the 2003 contract, but didn't take effect until the last day of the contract (June 30, 2006).

As a concession to get the step increases, bus drivers agreed to take a wage increase on the last day of the contract, instead of at the beginning, which is typical in other contracts.

In the proposal drivers rejected on Jan. 23, Heintzman said Laidlaw had eliminated step increases and gone back to the original wage structure, totally discounting the past six-year bargaining history.

Additionally, Laidlaw applied the June 30, 2006 raise to its new contract proposal — meaning they didn't offer any raises for the first year of the proposed contract.

"These are strike issues," Heintzman warned, "and our guys have given authorization to do so."

"The question now is whether the parents of Corvallis K-12 students are willing to jeopardize their children's safety to a Canadian corporation that is only interested in profit."

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