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## Portland School District continues to rankle unions

*Drawn-out bargaining and disrespect take a toll on employee morale.*

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

Steve Goldschmidt, chief of Human Resources at Portland Public Schools (PPS), was regarded by workers as a union-buster who twice pushed teachers to the brink of strike, and led the outsourcing of 300 custodians' jobs.

So when PPS newly-hired superintendent Vicki Phillips fired him in February 2005, union leaders celebrated — and hoped his departure would signify a new era of goodwill towards the district's unions.

A year later, they're not sure much has changed.

Goldschmidt lieutenant Gregg Newstrand continued on as labor relations manager. And the district continued its "take-it-or-leave-it" negotiating posture, union leaders say.

At the school district, a two-year union contract can take one year to ne-

gotiate. And union workers routinely work without a contract: The old agreements expire without a new one in place, freezing wages, benefits and working conditions.

"The district's uncertain financial picture makes settlement of monetary issues tough," said PPS spokesperson Bob Lawrence.

Union leaders understand it's a tight-budget era for local government, but haven't felt they could trust PPS to treat them fairly.

The district's unionized employees are divided into four bargaining units, each with its own contract.

- The biggest and best-paid unit consists of the district's nearly 4,000 teachers, represented by the Portland Association of Teachers, an affiliate of the Oregon Education Association, the state's largest labor union. Their most recent contract, which expires June 30, 2006, included 3 and 2.75 percent wage increases. PPS teachers make \$32,000 to \$64,000 a year, depending on education and experience.

- Then there's the District Council of

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### First Thursday Art Walk features union work

Mark Stenberg (left), assistant training coordinator for Plumbers and Fitters Local 290, shows Portland City Commissioner Sam Adams a "refrigeration logo" at the First Thursday Art Walk at City Hall. The monthly event was created by Adams and Commissioner Randy Leonard 13 months ago as a way to open the doors of government to the public. Each month features different Portland artists. February showcased an assortment of art and history by members of several Portland area unions. "People don't realize the artistic talent that union workers have in their everyday jobs," Adams said. "It's functional art." The refrigeration logo was built by Local 290 apprentices in 2000. Each of the city commissioners and Mayor Tom Potter were there mingling with the crowd and enjoying the art, music and food.

## Washington taxpayers hit by \$25 million in yearly health care cost-shifting

OLYMPIA — In Olympia, Wash., where Paul Henry receives health care coverage working at a grocery store, he worries that large employers who don't provide sufficient employer health care are creating a pattern that will undermine his own family's health coverage. Henry also doesn't like his tax dollars subsidizing those same companies, including Wal-Mart, whose workers are forced to rely on Medicaid or the state-subsidized Basic Health Plan.

Speaking last month to a state Senate committee hearing on a bill that would require the state's largest employers to pay a certain percentage of total payroll on their employees' health care costs, Henry said his employer-provided insurance gives him "peace of mind" in taking care of his family.

A confidential state report obtained last month by the Seattle Times shows more than 3,100 Wal-Mart employees in the state — about 20 percent of its workforce — receive taxpayer-funded health

care for themselves or their families. The 3,100-plus workers is nearly double the total for any other company in the state and more than half of the Wal-Mart employees who received federal Medicaid benefits were full-time workers.

"When such large companies as Wal-Mart don't provide affordable health care for their workers, it puts companies that pay good wages and offer decent benefits at a competitive disadvantage," says Robby Stern, special assistant to the president of the Washington State Labor Council.

"It's inhumane to let people go without health insurance," said Stern, who also testified before the Washington State committee. Stern and other Washington activists are seeking to build on recent success in Maryland, where the State Legislature on Jan. 12 passed a bill to ensure large employers pay their fair share.

To ensure the largest corporations stop shifting health care insurance costs onto workers, taxpayers

and other businesses, the AFL-CIO is spearheading a Fair Share Health Care campaign with working families, their unions and community allies mobilizing around Fair Share legislation in dozens of states.

Fair Share legislation has been introduced in Florida, Kentucky, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, Rhode Island and Wisconsin in the 2006 sessions and is in the pipeline in more than 20 other states.

On Jan. 23, the Oregon AFL-CIO filed a ballot initiative to put Fair Share Health Care on November's ballot.

In Oregon and Washington State, more than 1.5 million children and adults are uninsured.

In Washington State, more than 200 union members from AFL-CIO unions, the United Food and Commercial Workers of the Change to Win labor federation, and other unions attended the Fair Share Health Care hearings and lobbied lawmakers. On Feb. 13 supporters were in Olympia for a

mass lobbying day.

In general, Fair Share Health Care legislation requires large corporations to spend a certain percentage of their payroll to provide health care benefits for their employees or pay into a state health care fund. Fair Share will reduce the price taxpayers pay to cover employers' employee expenses, ease the financial strain states face in growing Medicaid costs and help level the playing field between companies that provide good jobs and benefits and those that don't.

"Most large employers do provide health care. The idea here is to hold the ones who don't accountable so they are not undermining the structure of those who do," says Rep. Eileen Cody (D), who sponsored the Fair Share bill in Washington.

Several Washington business owners also testified in favor of the Fair Share Health Care legislation, including Craig Cole, chief executive officer

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## Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



## Mehrens saluted

**WALLY MEHRENS**, the recently retired executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland-based Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, steps into the spotlight as the latest member of the Labor Hall of Fame. The sponsoring Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council selected Mehrens for the honor.



**WALLY MEHRENS**

Mehrens, 55, retired at the close of 2005 after his physician diagnosed him with multiple sclerosis, commonly known as MS. He had held the executive post of the CPBCTC since 1988. A pipefitter by trade, he is a member of the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 290, which is located in suburban Tualatin south of Portland.

**WILLIAM WALLACE MEHRENS** was born on July 28, 1950 in Anaconda, Montana, which is northwest of Butte. His parents were Wallace William Mehrens and Marguerite, whose nickname was "Miggs." Wally's father had the nickname of "Lefty" because he was a southpaw baseball pitcher who hurled for a number of teams in the minor

leagues.

Lefty Mehrens started his professional baseball career as a pitcher for the Fort Worth team in the Texas League in 1940 and also played for teams in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and South Carolina. His best record was 16 wins and five losses for Winnipeg in the Canadian League. Wally said his dad "ruined his arm" pitching for a U.S. Navy team in World War II. He was a pharmacist's mate in the Navy. After the war, Lefty pitched for a while for a Spokane team in the Western League.

**THE SENIOR MEHRENS** worked as a pipefitter in Anaconda at the Anaconda Copper Mining Company's smelter, the world's largest copper smelter. The giant Anaconda Copper Co. was a dominating economic and political force in Montana and owned a number of newspapers in the state. Wally's father's career also included working as a police officer in Anaconda.

The Mehrens family moved to Portland in 1965. Lefty joined Steamfitters Local 235. Young Wally attended three Portland high schools — Lincoln, Jefferson and the old North Catholic. After graduating, he went to Anaconda to work as a pipefitter in the copper smelter, but returned to Portland seven months later and joined Local 235 as a fitter in the Swan Island shipyard, where he learned welding.

**WALLY MEHRENS** took and passed an exam for building trades pipefitter and went into construction work. He was employed on the construction of Portland General Electric's Trojan nuclear power plant at Rainier, which is no longer in operation. He also worked on the construction of Boise Cascade paper mills in Oregon and Washington. He was a shop steward for Local 235. Later, he became a general foreman. He was a delegate to the UA's international convention in 1976 and the next year was elected vice president of Steamfitters Local 235. In 1982 he was elected as a business agent of the union.

UA Local 290 was formed in 1985 by merging Local 235, Portland Plumbers Local 51, Salem Local 347, Eugene Local 481 and locals covering Klamath Falls, Medford and Coos Bay. Mehrens was elected as #290's first president and also served as a business agent and organizer. Three years later, he was elected as the executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, which has its office in Kirkland Union Manor II at 3535 SE 86th Ave., Portland. He succeeded Earl B. Kirkland, who retired from the building trades post in 1988 but still serves as board chairman of the Union Labor Retirement Association, which built and oversees the federally-financed Union Manor retiree apartment complexes in Port-

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## Oregon AFL-CIO seeks donations to build Worker Memorial in Salem

**SALEM** — The Oregon AFL-CIO Health and Safety Committee is seeking donations from unions, businesses and individuals to build a memorial at the State Capitol honoring workers who have died on the job.

The cost of the Worker Memorial, which will use no taxpayer funds, is estimated at \$25,000, said Tom Chamberlain, president of the state labor federation.

Delegates to the 2005 Oregon AFL-CIO convention passed a resolution calling for establishment of a permanent Worker Memorial on the State Capitol grounds to serve as a remembrance to all those who have been killed

or injured at work and as a reminder to lawmakers that workplace safety must never be neglected.

Nationally, there are 133 worker memorial sites in 33 states — ranging from life-size bronze statues of miners to wall placards.

The Health and Safety Committee envisions a "circle of remembrance" that would include four to six pillars engraved with quotes. The pillars would rest atop a cobblestone base, with each stone engraved with the name of a financial donor. In the center would be a bell to toll as the names of workers killed on the job are read during Workers Memorial Day ceremonies.

In 1989, the national AFL-CIO declared April 28 as Workers Memorial Day — a day to remember and honor workers who have been killed on the job. Since then, labor has held a service, either in Salem or Portland, to read the names of workers killed in Oregon.

"We would like a permanent site for Workers Memorial Day," said Marilyn Terhaar, chair of the Safety and Health Committee.

The committee has a location picked out on the west side of the State Capitol near the Circle of Flags. But first it must get approval from the city's planning commission.

The Portland architectural firm of Fletcher, Farr and Ayotte has donated its time to draw up plans for the memorial.

"We hope to get them (the plans) to the commission before the next AFL-CIO Executive Board meeting on March 10," Terhaar said.

In the meantime, the state labor federation has begun collecting donations. The United Steelworkers of America was the first contributor with \$1,000.

Terhaar said several building trades unions have been approached to donate their skills in erecting the memorial.

Chamberlain hopes donations will come in quickly and that the monument can be completed by Workers Memorial Day April 28, 2007. Contributions can be sent to:

**Workers Memorial Fund  
c/o Oregon AFL-CIO  
2110 State Street  
Salem, OR 97301**

## McCall Oil workers ratify first contract

Eleven workers at McCall Oil and Chemical who struck for 36 hours in December got their first-ever union contract since voting in March 2005 to join the Inlandboatmen's Union (IBU) of the Pacific, the marine division of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Wages will increase more than 16 percent over the life of the two-year agreement. Seniority language will govern scheduling and vacation time, and workers got a grievance process and a stronger policy on harassment. The workers will have a union shop, where everyone is a member of the IBU.

In January 2005, all the workers

marched in to demand that their boss recognize the union. When he refused, they voted unanimously in a government-supervised election to join the IBU, and they voted as a bloc to go out on a 36-hour unfair labor practice strike in December.

On Jan. 31, they approved the contract in a unanimous vote.

"We got this contract because we stuck together 100 percent," said McCall maintenance worker Charlie Finger.

Finger also credited the labor community for its support, including Portland Jobs with Justice, all four Portland-area ILWU Locals, and many other unions.

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# ...Employees feel shortchanged by Portland School Dist.

(From Page 1)

Unions (DCU), an alliance of 16 unions representing about 300 workers in a number of occupations, including maintenance workers, school bus drivers and mechanics, radio station employees, and driver-ed instructors. It took the DCU close to two years to get its 1999-2004 contract. And its most recent contract — which spanned from mid-2004 to the end of 2005 — took nearly two years to bargain, and wasn't signed until less than two weeks before it expired. Chief negotiator Gene Blackburn of Teamsters Local 206 said DCU reps are not relishing the thought of returning for the next year-and-a-half of bargaining.

• Next are 1,200 clerical support staff, classroom assistants and specialized assistants, who are represented by the Portland Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees (PFTCE), also known as Local 111 of American Federation of Teachers-Oregon. They've been without a contract since June 30, 2005. Four mediated bargaining sessions are scheduled for March.

• And last in line are the "lunch ladies." The 250 cafeteria workers in the nutrition services department belong to Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503, Oregon's second-largest labor union. They've also been without a contract since June 30. All but a dozen of them are women. Most earn \$9.07 an hour. One lead worker per school earns \$11.80 to \$13.16 an hour.

To represent school district management in negotiations with these work-



**At one of two remaining work stations, cafeteria workers package frozen potato sticks in a cavernous kitchen that once prepared much of the food served at Portland Public Schools. Last year, budget cuts eliminated 32 cafeteria positions, and struck cinnamon rolls and wiener wraps from the menu.**

ers, PPS pays an outside attorney \$190 an hour. The attorney is Richard Liebman of the Barran Liebman law firm; PPS in-house attorney Jollee Faber Patterson says the district is getting a special deal — that's half Liebman's normal rate.

Cafeteria workers, the lowest-paid workers in the district, say they don't work for the wages; they work for the benefits — full-year, full-family health coverage for 171 six-hour days of work. For these workers, health coverage

costs work out to \$8.84 per hour. [Part-timers get less-expensive employee-only health coverage.]

The district now proposes to eliminate health benefits for new-hires who work less than full-time. [About two-fifths of the unit are part-timers.] And for the remainder, the district wants to cap its health insurance contribution at \$779 a month, with employees paying any increase over that amount. They currently pay from \$0 to \$107 a month, depending on the plan.

"They're not willing to move in any direction for us," said lead cafeteria worker Deanna Gathman, who serves on the union's bargaining team.

The two sides also disagree on wages, contract length and contracting out. Cafeteria workers want a three-year contract with 3 percent annual raises; the school district wants four years of 2.65 percent annual raises. Faced with the threat to job security from private companies like Sodexo and Aramark that run many school district cafeterias, workers want the chance to "bid" if PPS moves to contract out cafeteria services altogether. Management has refused that union proposal.

Cafeteria workers used to belong to the same SEIU local as the district's 300-plus custodians (School Employees Local 140), but in 2002 the district terminated the custodians and hired an outside janitorial company to do the work. Local 140 was dissolved and the remaining cafeteria workers were merged into Local 503.

However, Local 140 challenged the school district's action in court, arguing that it violated a state law that requires school custodians to be civil service employees. The law applies only to Portland. The case went to the Oregon Supreme Court, which ruled against PPS management in October 2005. PPS attorneys asked the court to reconsider. Local 140 lawyers think the court will "reconsider" by mid-year, and will uphold its decision. That could mean reinstatement and back pay for the terminated custodians, the union says, though the district would likely fight that.

For the cafeteria workers, as negotiations dragged on, they began taking their cause directly to the elected school board, attending board meetings and seeking to meet with board members. Only one board member, Dan Ryan, has met with cafeteria workers so far.

"These workers are treated as second-class citizens by the district," says SEIU staffperson Shannon Strumpfer, who was assigned to help the cafeteria workers negotiate with management.

Newstrand, the PPS labor relations

manager, resigned in January, but with attorney Liebman still in charge of bargaining, union leaders aren't hopeful that the district's approach will change.

PFTCE President Kathy Hornstein said when her union didn't accept the school district's offer, Liebman's demeanor changed. "He took our counter offer, and shoved it back across the table without even reading it. He said 'We told you what we were giving you and that's it, take it or leave it.'"

Union leaders acknowledge that times are tough at PPS, but they feel disrespected, and they're mistrustful of the district's numbers.

"They're tripping over dimes and nickels as they lose dollars," said the DCU's Blackburn.

Some, like Hornstein, think top administrators get secret raises.

Lawrence disputes that, and says the district has been in a belt-tightening mode since voters passed Ballot Measure 5, a property tax limitation, in 1990. Lawrence said just 4 percent of the PPS budget is spent on central administration, and the district has made all the cuts it can make without hurting classroom education.

After Measure 5, school districts got most of their funding from a state school fund — all property taxes in the state are put in a pool, which the Legislature divvies up. PPS backers say the Legislature's formula disadvantages Portland, which has a higher cost of living, more special education students, and older buildings that cost more to heat and maintain. In recent years, local voters approved local property and income taxes to prevent cuts in the district. But the expiration of the local option property tax last year resulted in a \$26 million budget cut. PPS' budget went from \$391.6 million for the 2004-05 school year to \$365.7 million for the 2005-06 school year. The district reacted to the loss with a variety of cuts — including 250 teaching positions, 150 clerical and teacher assistant positions and a new approach to school lunches.

To save money, PPS no longer prepares food from scratch. Instead nutrition service workers repackage, heat and serve canned and frozen food, and the district contracted with a private company to make and deliver salads and sandwiches. The change cost 32 union jobs, and it meant the loss of some of the district's best-loved foods, including cinnamon rolls and wiener wraps.

This year Multnomah County's temporary income tax is due to expire, with the result that the district's budget for the next school year is projected to fall \$36 million, to \$329 million, barring some further rescue from local taxpayers. As of press time, Portland Mayor Tom Potter was mulling whether to campaign for a new school-supporting tax on the May ballot.


But the bad blood between the district and its unions has union leaders wondering out loud whether they'll even support a campaign for a new tax.

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# WHAT'S HAPPENING

## UFCW Local 555 backs Kulongoski for re-election

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 has endorsed Oregon Democratic Governor Ted Kulongoski for re-election.

Local 555's political arm, the Active Ballot Club, made the announcement Feb. 2 following its monthly meeting.

The union is an affiliate of the new Change to Win labor federation, but has signed a one-year Solidarity Charter with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

Local 555 also endorsed Skip Durham for re-election to the Oregon Supreme Court, Position 1; Gene Hallman, a Pendleton trial lawyer who is seeking an open seat on the Oregon Supreme Court, Position 6; and Dan Saltzman, who is seeking re-election to the Portland City Council.

"Working families are under a lot of pressure and they need to have friends in office. We believe these candidates will best serve those interests," said Local 555 President Gene Pronovost.

UFCW Local 555 is the largest private-sector union in Oregon, with some 18,000 members.

## Diane Linn picks up endorsements from three labor unions

Multnomah County Chair Diane Linn has picked up endorsements from three unions in her campaign for re-election.

The latest is Portland Fire Fighters Local 43, which made the announcement Jan. 31.

Other labor groups endorsing Linn are Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 and the Portland Association of Teachers, an affiliate of the Oregon Education Association.

"Portland's firefighters support her re-election because she has provided real leadership and produced real results for the workers of Multnomah County," said Fire Fighters President Jack Finders.

"Livability of our community equals the strength of its educational system. Diane has stepped out at great risk to ensure that our children and teachers have the tools they need to be successful," said PAT President Ann Nice.

## NECA-IBEW to receive Urban Pioneer Award

Portland State University will honor the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) Oregon-Columbia Chapter and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 48 with its 2006 Community Organization Urban Pioneer Award.

The award is in recognition of the groups' successful joint partnership and programs.

"Together, NECA and IBEW Local 48 have partnered to create the nationally acclaimed Electrical Training Center apprenticeship program, safety program, health and welfare and pension plans, and other joint services," the university said.

The Urban Pioneer Award was created by PSU to honor community leaders who exhibit the ideals that are taught to students and are valued by faculty and community partners.

NECA-IBEW will receive the award at a banquet May 2 at the Portland Hilton Hotel.

## PCC 'Brown Bag Series' will explore global outsourcing

"Going Global" will be the topic at the next Brown Bag Series Wednesday, Feb. 22, sponsored by Portland Community College.

Dana Shannon, international business counselor and trade adviser to the State of Oregon, will discuss what's happening with outsourcing,



## Corrections specialists picket

Community corrections specialists and counselors in Washington County, members of AFSCME Local 3913, staged an informational picket line Feb. 10 at Washington Community Corrections Facility in Hillsboro to draw attention to stalled bargaining. The unit voted to join AFSCME last year but has been unable to come to terms on a first contract. Wages and benefits are the key issues. "Washington County government has been notoriously anti-union over the years," said AFSCME Rep Stacy Chamberlain. "It's the only Portland-metro county where a majority of the employees are not in some union or association." On Feb. 3, Local 3913 members took a vote authorizing a strike if a settlement is reached soon.

trade and issues concerning imports and exports.

The discussion will be held from noon to 1 p.m. in Terrell Hall 122 of the Cascade Campus, 705 N. Killingsworth St.

Attendees can bring lunch; coffee will be provided. For more information, call 503-978-5242.

## Tradeswomen Leadership Institute slated March 3-4

A "Tradeswomen Leadership Institute" will be held Friday and Saturday, March 3-4, at Sheet Metal Workers Local 16's HVAC & Metals Institute, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

The institute, co-sponsored by the Oregon Tradeswomen Network and the Labor Education and Research Center of the University of Oregon, is designed to build leadership and advo-

cacy skills of union women working in the construction, mechanical and utility trades.

Participants will learn how to be more effective leaders in their unions, workplaces and community.

The institute is from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on March 3, and from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on March 4. Registration is \$55. For more information, call Connie Ashbrook at 503-335-8200, extension 22.

## Annual 'Faith-Labor Breakfast' March 14 at Portland church

The fourth annual "Faith-Labor Breakfast" will be held from 8 to 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 14, at St. Philip Neri Church, 2408 SE 16th Ave. (off Division St), Portland.

The event is sponsored by Portland Jobs with Justice, Ecumenical Min-

istries of Oregon and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

This year's theme is "Reclaiming the Prophetic Voice."

"In Biblical times, the prophets played the role of calling the whole society towards justice. As labor unionists and people of faith, we raise our voices for justice," said Margaret Butler, executive director of Portland Jobs with Justice.

Clergy, lay leaders and union members are invited to attend. Cost for breakfast is \$5.

For more information, or to register, call Jobs with Justice at 503-236-5573.

## Labor bowl for MDA scheduled Sunday, April 23

The 17th annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 23, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave., Portland.

Portland area labor unions have raised \$257,000 for the charity. Money raised helps provide wheelchairs and braces for youngsters, medical care, research and summer camps.

Pledge packets are available at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council or by calling MDA at 503-223-3177.

## PSU will host Women's Day event Sunday, March 5

The 31st annual International Women's Day will be held Sunday, March 5, at Portland State University's Smith Center Ballroom, 1825 SW Broadway, Portland.

Festivities celebrating the value of women and their contributions to the community start at 10 a.m. and continue until 4 p.m. Featured will be workshops, art exhibits, a health fair, entertainment, retail vendors and international food.

For more information, contact event coordinator Ursula Miniszewski at 503-516-6440



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## Office staffer wraps up 40 years at IBEW union halls

A retirement party for Anita Stammer, longtime executive assistant and secretary at International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, will be held Friday, March 3, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the NECA-IBEW Training Center, 16021 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Stammer spent her entire working life at IBEW — starting at age 18 as a secretary for IBEW Local 49, which represented sound and communications electricians. In 1984, she left to go to work for Local 48, the construction local. Four years later, Local 49 merged with Local 48.

"I was born into IBEW," said Stammer, who worked for nine elected business managers, including her brother, Greg Teeple, who left for a position with the IBEW international union.

Her father, Herman Teeple, also was a business manager of Local 48 and he, too, left to take a job with the international union.

Anita Teeple met Roger Stammer, also a member of Local 48, after graduating from Portland's Grant High School. They married in 1965. Their daughter, Jenni Roth, works in the Kent, Wash., office of the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters.

The high point of Stammer's union service came in 2001, she said, when

she attended the 36th International Convention of the IBEW as an invited guest — along with her father and brother. The low point came one day later, when the conventioners learned of the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

For many years, Stammer was a member of Office and Professional Employees Local 11 and once held the elected post of sergeant-at-arms.



ANITA STAMMER

## New political party gains momentum

The campaign to form a new union-backed political party in Oregon continues to gain momentum.

Representatives from a dozen unions and allied organizations have been meeting to plan the launch of the party, which would be called The Working Families Party of Oregon, after a similar party in New York. A similar effort is under way in the state of Washington.

On Jan. 26, the Working Families group filed a statement with the Oregon secretary of state that they intend to collect signatures to achieve ballot-line status as a minor party. Currently, that takes 19,000 signatures. They plan to gather 30,000 by April 25, so as to be able to run candidates in the November 2006 election. The group also formed a

political action committee — Oregonians for a Working Families Party — to raise money for the effort. And they put up a Web site — [www.oregonwfp.org](http://www.oregonwfp.org) — where people can get more information and sign up to help.

As of press time, Working Families founders were also weighing whether to try to get an initiative on the November 2006 ballot that would return "fusion" voting to Oregon. Under fusion voting, parties can use their ballot line to run their own candidates or to endorse those of other parties.

In New York, the Working Families Party uses its ballot line to endorse Democrats, and occasional Republicans, who support its agenda, and occasionally runs its own candidates.

## ...Wal-Mart leads way in taxpayer-paid health care

(From Page 1)

of the 29-store chain Brown & Cole Stores.

"The real problem here — the public is picking up the tab for what should be Wal-Mart's responsibility," he said.

The number of Americans without health insurance continues to climb — from 41 million in 2000 to 46 million in 2004, according to government statistics — even as more corporations are cutting back employer-based health coverage.

In 2000, 69 percent of firms nationally offered health coverage to workers, but in 2005 that percentage dropped to just 60 percent. In fact, more than a quarter of all firms with more than 500 employees don't offer employer-based health insurance for workers and their families, according to a study by the Commonwealth Fund, a nonpartisan private foundation that supports independent research into health care issues.

As more firms drop health insurance coverage, workers, taxpayers and other businesses are forced to pick up the tab. Some workers buy their own health insurance or pay out-of-pocket for health care costs. Other workers and their families are forced to turn to such taxpayer-

funded programs as Medicaid or the State Children's Health Insurance Program, costing taxpayers some \$21 billion a year, according to the Commonwealth Fund.

For example, 46 percent of the children of Wal-Mart's 1.33 million U.S. workers are either uninsured or on Medicaid, according to Wal-Mart's own information. In addition, fewer than half of Wal-Mart's workers have health care coverage on the job.

As a result, many Wal-Mart workers and their families turn to emergency rooms and other public health services as their only health care option. In 12 of the 13 states where data has been released and analyzed, Wal-Mart workers rely on public health programs more than workers from any other company in those states.

The Commonwealth Fund also estimated employers with employee health coverage are forced to spend about \$31 billion a year to cover the cost of employees shifting the health care costs of their uninsured family members to their employer-provided coverage.

(Editor's Note: The national AFL-CIO contributed to this report.)

Michael Straeter,  
President, UFCW Local 1442  
Trustee, UFCW Food Employers Trust Funds



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# OFFICIAL NOTICES

## Auto Mechanic 1005

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday Feb. 18, preceded by a 9 a.m. shop steward training class. Shop stewards must attend training class and regular meeting to be compensated.

Executive Board meets Wednesday, March 15, at 4:30 p.m. All meetings and elections are held at our Union Hall, 3645 SE 32nd Ave. Portland, Oregon.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Rochelle Conrad will be available from 8 a.m. to noon during the regular lodge meeting to answer any questions you have concerning health, welfare and pension plans.

**ELECTION RESULTS:** The following members were elected to the position of District Delegate. Joe Estes, Carroll Wikander, Gene McGlothlin, Tony Mims, Gilberto Robles, Fred MacKenzie, Frank Rouse, Joe Estes, Marcia Keck.

## Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, followed by a 10:30 a.m. general membership meeting, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Effective March 1, 2006, our office hours for dues/membership record issues will be Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (excluding the lunch period.)

## Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

## Carpenters 247

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, at the Carpenters Hall, 2215 N. Lombard, Portland.

## Carpenters 1388

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 276 Warner-Milne Rd., Oregon City.

## Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive Board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

## Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, 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. 21 and Feb. 28, in Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

## Communications Workers 7901

General membership meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the CWA Office, 2950 SE Stark, Portland.

Executive Board meets 4 p.m. Thursday, March 16, at the CWA Office, 2950 SE Stark, Portland.

## Electrical Workers 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27. Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28. General Membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. pre-meeting buffet.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 15.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at NIETC, 16021 NE Airport Way.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 1 and March 15.

Bylaws Committee meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, in the Executive Boardroom.

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

**DEATH ASSESSMENT:** The following death assessment has been declared for Feb. and is payable at 50 cents: No. 2093, Max Winder.

## Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 9, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland. **SPECIAL NOTICE:** Nominations for delegates to the National Convention will be held March 9 at the general meeting.

## Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

## Fire Fighters 452

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

## Glass Workers 740

Executive Board members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 2, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2, at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, March 6, at Holiday Inn Express, 3480 Hutton St., Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 7, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

## Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland.

## Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland.

## Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, March 3, at Home Town Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver,

## Laborers 483

## Municipal Employees

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, 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, March 6, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

## Lane County Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

## Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, preceded by a 7 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

## Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is **SPECIAL CALL** for the purpose of taking a strike sanction vote.

Executive Board meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, March 6, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 23, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is **SPECIAL CALL** to vote on a contract proposal.

## Machinists 63

Executive Board meets 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 8. Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 11, preceded by a 9 a.m. stewards' meeting.

Meetings are at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland.

## Machinists 1432

Swing and graveyard shift members meet at noon Wednesday, March 8.

Regular membership meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 8.

Shop stewards' training session 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 18.

Meetings are at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland.

## Metal Trades Council

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, at IBEW #48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, March 13, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

## Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 16, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

## Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at IBEW #48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

## Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 15, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Plasterers 82

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

## Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2. Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 9.

Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland.

## Sheet Metal Workers 16

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

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** There will be a **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS** and a vote taken at this meeting on an Executive Board recommendation to fill only one Production Business Agent position at the June 2006 elections and to leave the other position open indefinitely.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 8, at Abby's Pizza, 7480 Crater Lake Hwy., White City.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 9, at UA 290 Hall, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield, preceded by a 5 p.m. VOC meeting.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 16, at the Labor Temple, 3427 Ash St., North Bend. New member orientation will be held at 5 p.m.

## Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy.#3, Central Point.

## Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

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

## Transit 757

Charter members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, in the Machinists Building, 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland. Charter day members meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at Schoppert Hall, 1801 NE Couch, Portland.

Salem members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the Red Lion Hotel, 3301 Market St. NE, Salem.

Eugene members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, and Eugene day members meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the Woodworkers Local Lodge, 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Corvallis members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the McKenzie Conference Center, Salbasseon Suites, 1730 NW Ninth St., Corvallis.

Medford members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the Hampton Inn, 1122 Morrow Rd., Medford.

Portland school bus members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at Rigler School, 5401 NE Prescott, Portland.

Vancouver members meet 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26, at the Laborers Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver, Wash.

AMR Northwest Clark County members meet 6 to 9 a.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at Starbucks, 78th St and Hwy 99, Hazel Dell; and Multnomah/Clackamas members will meet 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd, Gateway Area, Portland.

Tillamook members meet 1:00 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 26, at the Odd Fellows Hall, next door to the Bay City Fire Hall in Bay City.

**VALLEY TRANSIT**—See your liaison officer.

**PLEASE NOTE:** ATU members are invited to attend any of the above-listed meetings.

## United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet Tuesday, Feb. 28, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, at the Eugene #290 Hall.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 20, at the Moose Lodge, 1577 Oak Ave., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 650A Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 22, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, Calif.

## USW 1097

Members meet 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

## Wyden relocates Portland office downtown

Oregon U.S. Senator Ron Wyden has moved his Portland office in the Lloyd District to the Edith Green/Wendell Wyatt Federal Building at 1220 SW 3rd Avenue, Suite 585, Portland, OR 97204. The phone number is 503-326-7525

Wyden also has offices at:

- The Jamison Building, 131 NW Hawthorne Ave., Suite 107, Bend, OR 97701; 541-330-9142.

- 151 West 7th Ave., Suite 435, Eugene, OR 97401; 541-431-0229.

- SAC Annex Building, 105 Fir St., Suite 201, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691.

- Federal Courthouse, 310 West 6th St., Room 118, Medford, OR 97501; 541-858-5122.

- 707 13th St., SE Suite 285, Salem, OR 97301; 503-589-4555.

- 230 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510-3703; 202-224-5244.

# RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

## ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

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

Executive Board meets 9 a.m. Thursday, March 9, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

## ASBESTOS WORKERS 36

Retiree breakfast 9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 2, at the Dockside Restaurant, 2047 NW Front Ave., Portland.

## BAKERS 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

## CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, March 13, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet

Tuesday, March 14, and travel on a FREE 48-seat luxury bus to Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, WA. The bus will leave at 8:30 a.m. from Westminster Presbyterian Church, NE 16th and Hancock, and return at 4:30 p.m. Receive casino coupons, enjoy lunch for \$4.95, plus raffle gifts and snacks for the drive home. We need at least 40 to go or we will be staying one hour longer. Bring friends and let's fill the bus! For reservations, please call Vera Larson (503) 252-2296.

## GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

## IRON WORKERS 29

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

## MACHINISTS

Retired Machinists meet 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland for a brief busi-

ness meeting and lunch at a restaurant to be determined at the meeting. Rhonda Sastrum from PacificCare will attend to explain Medicare Part D.

## NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, March 13, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

## OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 21, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E Burnside St., Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503-239-9858, ext. 124.

## UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 16, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Rusty Pipes meet 12 noon Wednesday, March 8, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St. NE, Salem.



## Sheet Metal apprentices shine at regional contest

Three apprentices from the HVAC & Metals Institute — members of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 in Portland — received the “highest combined score” trophy at the annual regional apprenticeship contest, held Jan. 19-20 in Pasco, Washington.

Contestants from Local 16 included Cyndy Chan of Vancouver Roofing and Sheet Metal; Jeff Rydquist of General Sheet Metal Works, and Matt Armstrong of R&J Metal Fabricators.

Chan (pictured above) captured first in the TAB (testing, adjusting and balancing airflow) competition to qualify for the national finals March 27-30 in Las Vegas. It will be her second trip to the finals, which pits top apprentices from every region of the United States. In 2004 Chan placed 7th.

Jeff Rydquist (photo right) finished second in HVAC (heating, ventilating and air conditioning) and will be an alternate if the winner cannot fulfill his commitment.

Matt Armstrong placed third in industrial sheet metal.

The regional contest is a grueling two-day event testing apprentices in three specialty areas: including written and welding exams, blueprint reading, drafting, fabrication and duct redesign. Competitors come from Oregon, Washington, Alaska and British Columbia.

“The level of competition was extremely high and the scores of the top competitors were very close,” said Ric Olander, assistant coordinator of the HVAC & Metals Institute in Portland.

Oregon has one of the best sheet



metal training programs in the country. The institute is a \$3.5 million state-of-the-art facility with top-notch instructors and staff, and an award-winning international curriculum.

“The main purpose of apprenticeship is to train, but sometimes we forget all of the benefits available to apprentices,” Olander said. “College credit hours, continuing education, extremely competitive pay, and an outstanding benefits package, to name just a few.”

Besides the opportunity to compete, the apprentices also had a chance to win prizes. Chris Smith of FM Sheet Metal, who attends classes at the Eugene Campus of the HVAC & Metals Institute, won a Lincoln SP175 welder.



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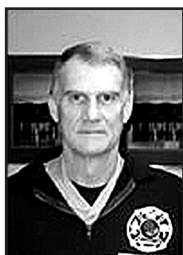
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**‘Residential Fire Sprinkler Night’**  
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**Friday, March 3, 7 p.m., Rose Garden**

*At the end of the first period, apprentices from UA Local 290 will take on firefighters from Local 43 in a “Broom Ball” hockey game. Contestants will don tennis shoes and plastic brooms as they try to slap a foam ball into the net.*

*Come out and root for your favorite team and look at the latest in home residential fire sprinkler systems.*

*Local 290 Plumbers & Steamfitters offer the only program endorsed by the Oregon Fire District Directors Association, the Portland Fire Bureau, and the Oregon Building Codes Division.*



Jack Finders  
President



John Endicott  
Business Manager



# Industry-backed asbestos bill criticized by victims, labor

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — Senate foes of both parties, upset by a controversial asbestos trust fund's bill treatment of victims and leery of its fi-

nancial hazards, stalled the measure in debate the second week of February. A vote to end the talk-a-thon was held Feb. 13.

The national AFL-CIO, the Change to Win labor federation and the National Education Association have joined a growing chorus of crit-

ics. The bill, S. 852, was written by large asbestos manufacturers, their insurers, and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and would create a \$140 billion trust fund. Over the next 30-50 years it would pay medical costs of victims of asbestos, a substance used in everything from ships to cars to buildings that got into workers' lungs and caused mesothelioma, asbestosis and other fatal illnesses.

Sick workers and widows and families of those killed by asbestos exposure have filed thousands of lawsuits against companies, many of which continued using the material after it was determined to cause cancer.

Some senators estimate asbestos has 200,000 victims, but Public Citizen reported 681,756 asbestos claims against just eight big firms alone: Union Carbide/Dow Chemical, General Electric, GM, Ford, Georgia Pacific, Honeywell/Bendix, Pfizer and Westinghouse.

Public Citizen said the bill would save 10 big manufacturers who have been sued an estimated \$20 billion over 50 years, in today's dollars. If the trust fund is created, the firms — Armstrong, Babcock & Wilcox, Combustion Engineering, GAF, Honeywell, Kaiser Aluminum, Owens Corning Fibreboard, Pittsburgh Corning, USG and W.R. Grace — would pay from zero to \$2.3 billion. Their payments to the fund would total \$5.57 billion. Without the fund, claims by injured workers against those firms total \$25.91 billion.

The trust fund created by S. 852 would be the victims' only recourse, and it would bar present victims from court; it would also bar future victims, including survivors of the World Trade Center attack and Hurricane Katrina. Both of those events released asbestos from buildings.

The "interests of the defendants" — asbestos makers and their insurers — "have become paramount and the

needs of victims have become secondary," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

Asbestos victims groups called the measure totally unacceptable and said that if it becomes law, they and their families would be out on the hustings reminding the country of what they call a miscarriage of justice.

"This was drafted by and for a narrow band of very large defendant companies who are seeking to dump their asbestos liability onto others," NEA Government Relations Director Diane Shust wrote to senators.

"Schools, colleges, and universities are settings where asbestos exposure has occurred and continues to pose significant health risks. With this legislation, asbestos victims will lose their rights and will be forced into a federal system that won't help them cope with the devastating health and financial consequences as a result of asbestos poisoning."

Anna Burger, chair of the Change to Win labor federation, said the big asbestos manufacturers kept retreating from a commitment to treat the victims fairly "and now we find that a last-minute amendment may" let insurers evade all \$40 billion they would owe to trust fund.

"This asbestos bailout bill poses more questions than answers and adds insult and injury to asbestos victims and their families who have been insulted and injured so personally," said Susan Vento, of the Committee to Protect Mesothelioma Victims. That disease killed her husband, the late Rep. Bruce Vento (D-Minn.).

"Each year, hundreds of thousands" of asbestos victims suffer from lung conditions which make breathing so difficult that they cannot function at all," and 10,000 die, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said on the Senate floor. "These are the real victims. They deserve to be the first and foremost focus of our concern."

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## Portland schools: When the handbasket arrives in hell

For Portland Public Schools, this is the year that the handbasket will finally arrive in hell.

All the stopgap funding measures that kept Portland's schools from going under have or will soon run out. As a result, a district which cut almost 10 percent of its teaching positions last year now faces a budget hell-hole large enough to consume 30 percent of the teachers who will still be on its payroll next September.

And school parents will be invited to help the district choose between shortening an already short school year or packing more kids into already overcrowded classrooms.

It was a long, bumpy ride, this descent to the netherworld where Oregon's largest city can no longer maintain a fully functional school system for its children. But it's not as if we didn't see this coming.

We talked about our schools going to hell in a hand basket when Measure 5 appeared on the ballot in 1990. But Measure 5's supporters offered a Faustian bargain that a majority of Oregon voters couldn't refuse. We can cut our property taxes, they argued, and let the state take care of financing our schools.

There were real devils in the details of that bargain. Trusting the state was one. Even in years when our economy was booming, the Legislature never managed to replace the funding that Portland and other high-tax districts lost to Measure 5. To be fair, state lawmakers had to address other demands. But they also focused more on equalizing school funding statewide than on helping the districts that were hurt most by Measure 5.

Even more devilish details emerged when it came to paying for the state's increased school support. Portland taxpayers saw more of their state income taxes go to other school

districts, because of the emphasis on equalization.

And working families statewide paid more for schools, while businesses paid less. Measure 5 cut local property taxes, which were the largest source of business tax support for schools, and forced the state to replace those lost property taxes with state income taxes, which are paid largely by working families.

This shift of school funding from businesses to working families was the most diabolical effect of Measure 5. I have quantified this shift of responsibility for financing our schools at different times over the past few years. The numbers vary, depending on what extra taxes have been approved by voters at the local level. But the bottom line looks like this: Prior to the passage of Measure 5 in 1990, businesses paid about 40 percent to 45 percent of the operating costs of our K-12 schools; now they pay only 25 percent to 30 percent.

Part of that 10 percent to 20 percent of school costs that are no longer paid by Oregon businesses has been taken out of school budgets. The rest is now paid by Oregon's working families. Measure 5 not only short-changed our schools, it overcharged our working families to make up for the windfall tax reductions it gave to Oregon businesses.

If voters in Portland, whose schools have suffered more than most from Measure 5, now tell pollsters that they're tired of paying more for schools and never solving the school funding problem, they're not being selfish. They're being real. But their reality has been largely ignored by the political establishment. Portland's political leaders aren't asking these voters if they want to restore business tax support for schools; they're asking them if they want to pay more

from their own pockets. And that has become a losing proposition.

Maybe the prospect of an infernal future for Portland's schools will convince our elected leaders to take another look at businesses' responsibility for financing our educational system in Oregon.

One way to do that would be to enact a property tax surcharge on commercial and industrial property, whose owners benefited most from Measure 5. The last time that was proposed, in 1992, Oregon's business community fought it, and the voters rejected it. But that was before our largest school district had to face the consequences of Measure 5's Faustian bargain.

To their credit, many business leaders played a positive role in the campaigns for the "local option" property taxes and the temporary county income tax that kept Portland and other school districts from going to hell in a hand basket until now.

But those solutions were not sustainable because they never overcame the underlying unfairness and instability of Measure 5's school funding scheme. Now that working families are rebelling at the prospect of paying more temporary taxes to support schools that appear to be in a permanent state of crisis, we have to find a way to make our school financing system a little more fair and a lot more stable. That means that business leaders are going to have to do more than lead the charge for school funding. Their businesses are going to have to pay their fair share for supporting our schools as well.



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

# Local Motion

January 2006

Union election activity in Oregon and SW Washington, according to the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board

## Elections held

Company	Date	Union	Location	Results:		
				Union	No Union	
<b>Mercy Medical Center</b>						
1/11	Oregon Nurses Association	Roseburg	178	97		
<b>Corvallis Regional Communications Center</b>						
1/11	CRCCA vs AFSCME	Corvallis	11	1	0	
<b>Lincoln City Rehabilitation Center</b>						
12/22	SEIU Local 503	Lincoln City	15	13		

## Elections requested

Company	Location
Union	# of employees
<b>Sidwell Airfreight</b> (decertification)	White City
Teamsters Local 962	22
<b>Southern Oregon University</b> (Honors Dept.)	Ashland
SOU University Seminar Association	17
<b>American Medical Response</b>	Ore. & SW Wash.
NEMSA vs. ATU Local 757	532
<b>Umpqua Community College</b> (full-time faculty)	Roseburg
Oregon Education Association	61
<b>City of Port Orford</b>	Port Orford
Teamsters Local 206	10




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# OPEN FORUM

## Military planning at the local level for success

### To The Editor:

Past military leaders quickly learned that without strategic planning, battles would be lost. The goal of their planning was to achieve a competitive advantage. Just as business has done in the 1950s to now, strategic planning is another tool companies have to achieve a competitive advantage.

American corporations are stronger than ever when it comes to labor issues. After the fall of the stock market in 2000, significant legislation was passed in the employer's favor. Outsourcing, international trade agreements, lower interest rates, plant shutdowns, huge employee cutbacks all gave companies a competitive advantage.

Labor is in a defensive position. Now American workers are picking up the pieces by relocating, retraining or being forced into early retirement. Any hiring has been slow and job increases are in lower-paying service-sector industry non-union positions.

Alan Greenspan has turned the reins over to Ben Bernanke while interest rates swing back up. Inflation remains under 4 percent and we sign contracts with 2

percent wage increases, 100 percent health premium increases, plus other major takeaways. Labor must use strategic planning as part of their overall business plan or be willing to accept constant losing and decertifying locals.

Strategic planning means something new to most of us and new things mean change. That is not always easy to do. Change can be hard only if you don't want it. But look at what the options are. Everyone must realize how much power and control companies have taken over and the importance of unions moving toward offensive posturing, and then change becomes the only natural choice.

Local union leadership must make behavioral changes and become proactive, build a higher professional standard of expectation, responsible learners and teachers and develop an entrepreneur's spirit.

The point is, it is up to us at the local union membership level to control what we can. We must take responsibility for our own future and make intelligent choices. We must develop strategic plans that fit into our overall business plan and goals. If we want to survive as leaders, we must provide a direction that

leads and always strives for excellence from ourselves and for our members.

**Ray Low**  
Standing Committee, Treasurer  
AWPPW Local 60  
Newberg, OR

### Carpenters' golf tourney raises funds for scholarships

The Pacific NW Regional Council of Carpenters is looking for sponsors and players for its fifth annual Scholarship Endowment Golf Tournament.

This year's event is slated for July 27 at Trophy Lake Golf and Casting Club in Port Orchard, Wash. The nonprofit scholarship fund helps Carpenters' children and grandchildren go to college. In the first four years, 171 scholarships have been awarded, totaling \$98,000.

Entry fee for the four-person scramble is \$150. Sponsorships range from \$250 to \$5,000 for a Title Sponsorship.

For more information, call John Schraner at the Willamette Carpenters Training Center, 503-287-3708, or 877-287-9282.

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### School bus safety poster contest open to students

Students K-12 are eligible to enter in a National School Bus Safety Week poster contest and win U.S. Savings Bonds valued from \$50 to \$1,000.

Thousands of school districts in over 40 states participate in local and state-level competitions to select artwork that depicts school bus safety-related themes and encourages and promotes school bus safety. The winning posters are used to promote safer school transportation for everyone.

Entries must be turned in by April 19 to: Ron Mapes, 10100 NE Prescott St, Portland, OR 97220.

For contest rules and informatino go to: [www.optaschoolbus.org/Activities/Poster\\_Contest/index.htm](http://www.optaschoolbus.org/Activities/Poster_Contest/index.htm).

For more information, contact Angel Priest at [apriest@pps.k12.or.us](mailto:apriest@pps.k12.or.us).

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### Korean War Veterans

organization is looking for new members. The group meets the 4th Tuesday each month (Feb. 28), at noon at Milwaukie Elks Lodge, 13121 SE McLoughlin Blvd. For more information, call Max Loucks at 503-286-1464

## Workers Memorial Scholarship deadline is March 1

SALEM — The deadline to apply for a Workers Memorial Scholarship for the 2006-07 academic year is March 1. Applicants must be Oregon residents receiving fatality benefits, a dependent or spouse of a fatally-injured worker, or the dependent or spouse of an Oregon worker who incurred a permanent total disability while on the job.

For more information, call Kathy Mossbrucker, Oregon-OSHA, at 503-947-7992.

Let me say this about that

## ...Public service

(From Page 2)

land and neighboring Vancouver, Washington.

**THE CPBCTC REPRESENTS** 13 labor unions with jurisdictions in Northern Oregon, from Astoria on Oregon's Pacific Coast to The Dalles in the Columbia River Gorge, and across the river in Vancouver and other Southwest Washington localities. The affiliates have more than 12,000 skilled members working for nearly 2,000 signatory contractors in the construction industry. The union members employed under CPBCTC collective bargaining contracts perform more than 25 million hours of work annually, with an economic value of nearly \$80 million.

**OVER THE COURSE** of his many years as an elected officer of labor organizations, Wally Mehrens became a well-known figure in labor, industry, governmental, political and civic circles.

He has served on the executive boards of the Oregon State and Washington State Building and Construction Trades Councils, plus the E-boards of the Oregon AFL-CIO and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. He is president of LINK Community Development Corp., a nonprofit group set up to provide affordable housing, and serves on the executive committee of Worksystems Inc., which is the name of the Portland Private Industry Council. Other organizations Mehrens has been involved with include: Columbia River Crossing, which is considering a new bridge linking Vancouver and Portland plus an expansion of Interstate 5 at Portland's Delta Park; a mayor-appointed committee to study new economic development strategies for the Portland Development Commission; the Labor Advisory Board of the Labor Education and Research Center of the University of Oregon; and an expansion study committee formed by Metro, the regional government.

**MEHRENS'S OTHER ACTIVITIES** have included helping to establish golf tournaments in Oregon and Washington in which labor, business and political people plus others participate, and in the process raise money for charitable organizations that serve children. The golf events have generated hundreds of thousands of dollars for the charities.

Wally and his wife Judi have long been active in the Democratic Party. She was a delegate to the 2004 Democratic National Convention, and he has been involved as a Clackamas County precinct committee person and earlier as chair of the Multnomah County Democratic Central Committee.

**MEHRENS SAID** he wants to publicly thank some unionists who were particularly helpful to him in his career. They include Earl Kirkland, his predecessor mentioned earlier; Tom and LeRoy Worley of Iron Workers Local 29; Jim McNannay of Bricklayers Local 1; Bob Shiprack, executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Building Trades; and Robert Stanfill, one of Shiprack's predecessors, and Ray Shiprack, Bob's late father who was manager of Cement Masons Local 555 and later was an international union representative; Del French, who succeeded Ray Shiprack in both jobs; and Billy McNicholas and Don Getman, retired pipefitters who were Local 290 business agents.

Wally has two brothers, Mike and Marty, who are Local 290 pipefitters; Marty is on the union's executive board.

★★★

**RALPH OLIVER**, a union printer who was a participant in the 1959-65 Portland newspaper strike-lockout, died Jan. 25 at age 95.

He was a member of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58 employed at the Oregon Journal as a Linotype operator when the strike-lockout began at that paper and at the Oregonian on Nov. 10, 1959. Local 58 maintained that its members were locked-out of their jobs because the two papers replaced them with strikebreakers when members of the Stereotypers Union went on strike.

**OLIVER WAS AMONG** those union members who were assigned to sell stock in the strike-born Portland Reporter to provide money to help finance the Reporter. He also was a typesetter at the Reporter plant at 1714 NW Overton St. After the Reporter ceased publishing, Oliver worked at Portland Linotype.

He was born on April 25, 1910 and lived in the Rose City all of his life. He was a graduate of Benson Polytechnic High School.

**SURVIVORS INCLUDE** his wife, the former Ruth Ekdahl whom he married in 1940; a daughter, Margaret A. Hoffman, a son, Lee J. Oliver; two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Feb. 4 at St. Mark Presbyterian Church in Southwest Portland. Arrangements were handled by Autumn Funerals and Cremations.

## Unionist wishes that all could be on Oregon Health Plan

**To The Editor:**

Tim Nesbitt wrote a very thought-provoking article about (Think Again, "What My Daughter and Grandson Can Tell Us About Health Care Reform, Jan. 20) health care reform. But the last two decades have shown us that more and more employers are forcing employees to help shoulder the fast-rising costs of health care.

Nesbitt points out that in order to collect benefits from the government health care system, we must spend down our own assets and be poor.

The experience of my family is also a telling example of what is right and wrong with our health care system. My wife draws Social Security insurance

from her disability because she never earned enough work credits in her life. She also qualifies for the Oregon Health Plan.

The OHP has been a lifesaver for my wife. Without it she would not be able to afford her lifesaving medicine that prevents her seizures, controls her pain and calms her mind. OHP pays for her medicine and all her doctor bills. Recently, she spent a week in the hospital with Crohn's disease. All paid for by taxpayers.

I wish all Oregonians were on the Oregon Health Plan. It would seem only fair that everyone benefit from our government health care system.

John Kitzhaber's plan makes perfect

## Kulongoski had role revamping comp system in '90

**To The Editor:**

In your article "Building Trades first labor group to back Kulongoski for reelection" (Jan. 20), a statement by Bob Shiprack about Governor Ted Kulongoski was misleading.

Shiprack credited Kulongoski's efforts "in establishing Oregon's revamped workers' compensation system that protects injured workers, which is now the envy of many other states."

Before and during the 1990 special session of the Legislature, then-Insurance Commissioner Ted Kulongoski was the driving force behind Senate Bill 1197, a major workers' compensation overhaul. The bill's major provision involved exclusive remedy and provided immunity from civil claims to "negligent" employers, even when injury claims were completely denied by the workers' compensation system, a common occurrence.

In 1995, the Oregon Supreme Court found the exclusive remedy provision of 1990 unconstitutional because it denied "due process of law" to workers. In the same year, the State of Washington considered exclusive remedy. Their court ruled that although in the past it may have been acceptable that the blood of the worker was a cost of production, such a standard was no longer the public policy of a state that wished to consider itself civilized.

The Oregon Legislature, apparently uncivilized by Washington standards, quickly reworded the associated statutes but kept exclusive remedy intact. Put simply, they voided the court ruling. And Senate Bill 369 (1995) applied retroactively, preventing those denied a constitutional right any justice for harm done to them by illegal legislation.

Fast forward to May 2001. Once again the Oregon Supreme Court, including then-Justice Ted Kulongoski, unanimously find exclusive remedy unconstitutional in a ruling eerily similar to the 1995 decision. With his vote, Kulongoski was admitting that the 1990 effort he led violated the remedy clause of

Article I, Section 10, of the Oregon Constitution, which provides that "every [person] shall have remedy by due course of law for injury done him in his person, property, or reputation."

In reaction, the 2001 Legislature revamped exclusive remedy, allowing lawsuits only when a claim is completely denied and an employer's negligence caused the injury. Insurers have gotten around the change by awarding some disability, but at a rate so low that many seriously injured workers receive only a few hundred dollars but are saddled with thousands in medical bills and never compensated for lost wages. It's resulted in many Oregonians losing assets earned over a lifetime. Bankruptcy is not uncommon. And many expect the 2001 revision to be found unconstitutional, too.

To give Governor Kulongoski some credit, he has made positive management changes at the Department of Consumer & Business Services and its Workers' Compensation Division. The agency now acts impartially and not as a servant of insurance companies and other special interests. But the governor vetoed House Bill 2588 last year. Ironically, it would have restored treating physicians to the system that his 2000 legislation took away. The governor did this at a time when many injured can't find a doctor willing to treat them.

To be clear, I could never support Kevin Mannix for governor. During his legislative career, no one there was a bigger stooge for insurers than he. As an insurance company attorney preventing workers from receiving medical treatment, he profits handsomely. Mannix is also a lobbyist that advocates for anti-worker legislation. That said, Kulongoski needs to step up as an advocate for workers in our state. He shouldn't be the least of two evils.

And Shiprack needs to admit that, if other states "envy" us, it's because of Oregon's low worker's comp premiums. As a longtime member of the state's Management-Labor Advisory Commit-

sense in today's world-class economy. For employers to be competitive in today's world economy we must unshackle basic health care away from employers and support it in a fair tax system where everyone pays — good and bad employers alike.

Why should workers struggle and battle employers, even go on strike, to obtain health care coverage, when basic health care could be made available for all Oregonians through a fair and just tax system?

**Douglas Heuer**  
Steelworkers Local 8378  
Salem

tee, he knows very well that the "revamped workers' comp system" has come at the expense of workers' safety, health and well-being that have unjustly shattered tens of thousands of families across our state.

**Ernest Delmazzo**  
Teamsters  
Co-founder  
Injured Workers Alliance  
West Linn

## Retirees group looking for input

**To The Editor:**

I am fortunate to have friends who are younger than me and who are still working.

Many of my friends tell me that they don't believe they'll ever be able to afford to retire. Most of them are over 50 and they're watching in horror as pension funds evaporate, their Social Security status is threatened, and they've already cashed in some of their 401(k) accounts to keep from going deeper into debt. Often, that debt is due to medical bills because their coverage is no longer adequate, even though they pay an increasingly larger share of the monthly premium.

Retirees must ally ourselves with as many people in this 50-plus age group as possible. Pre-retirees have the same issues that we do. We MUST start working together.

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans certainly could use the ideas and energy of younger members. The Alliance is already focused on the crucial retirement security issues that they — and we — are concerned about.

The message to the soon-to-retire, the hope-to-retire and the never-gonna-retire Baby Boomers is: Please join us! Together we can increase our strength and broaden our message.

**Verna Porter**  
President  
Alliance for Retired Americans  
Portland

OPEN  
FORUM

# Training center teaches apprentices how to build bridges — literally

It's not often that you will find a section of bridge at a training center. But that's exactly what the Willamette Carpenters Training Center has erected on the back lot at its new facility in Northeast Portland.

"To my knowledge, we're the only training center that has an actual bridge for apprentices to work on," said Dan Voight, bridge building instructor and author of the 40-hour course curriculum. "Our bridge building class has been created with not just virtual, but actual hands-on training."

There will be plenty of work for qualified hands.

The Oregon Legislature approved a transportation bill in 2003 to, in part, replace and repair some 335 bridges around the state at a cost of approximately \$1.3 billion. Funding comes from increases in driver registration fees, titles and commercial truck weight-mile fees.

The Oregon Department of Transportation, which is overseeing the work, has instituted a program to increase apprenticeship, minority and women participation on all of its bridge and highway projects.

"There will be work for a decade," said Bob Acker, president of Portland-based Pile Drivers and Divers Local 2416.

The core element of the Carpenters' bridge training is two 40-hour courses. The first course consists of layout and erection of the false work, including layout and erection of bents, X-bracing, beam caps and decks. Safety, hand rails and tie-offs also are covered.

The erection of the actual box girder bridge is a separate 40-hour class. The deck is 14 feet high with a

box girder bridge that is approximately 40-feet by 30-feet, and approximately 5 feet high.

"After completion of this training, apprentices and journeymen and women will know bridge-building techniques and sequences. They will be able to walk onto a job site — understand bridge terminology — and be ready to work," said Voight. He has 30 years of bridge-building experience as a member of Local 2416.

The mock bridge is drawing a lot of attention to the training center.

Several signatory contractors have attended classes and donated material and equipment (to the tune of \$60,000) to ensure that specific construction methods for Oregon bridge structures are being used.

Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors also have toured the structure, offering guidance on safety regulations and procedures.

"We've had good participation from contractors and state agencies," said John Schraner, apprenticeship coordinator for the training center. "I think it's the most advanced training for bridge work anywhere in the Northwest."

The bridge-building course is a required class for all apprentices.

Acker said the Willamette Carpenters Training Center will train approximately 350 apprentices in the basics of bridge building.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners has invited Voight to teach bridge-building at the Carpenters Training Center in Las Vegas. He is currently working on a curriculum that will be utilized by Carpenter training centers nationwide.



Instructor Dan Voight (left) explains the basics of bridge building to apprentices Jim Bender, Raeleen Ross and Reid Stephens. The Willamette Carpenters Training Center has a section of a mock bridge constructed by apprentices on the back lot of its new facility in Northeast Portland.



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FOR YOUR COMFORT WE PROVIDE TV WITH HEADPHONES IN EACH OPERATORY

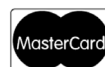
After 26 years, we are proud to say that the Teamsters Dental Center is still going strong. We have just completed an extensive remodeling project, and are continuing to update our operatories with the latest that dental technology has to offer. All of our doctors are highly trained and we provide a full spectrum of dental services. By providing a broad range of services at our location we are providing our patients with the convenience of not having to travel to expensive specialists. **All employees are members of Teamsters Local 162 and we take great pride in the fact that we are union-oriented.** We support all different locals and their members. Over the years, we have developed great working relationships with insurance companies like BlueCrossBlueShield, Oregon Dental Service and OTET. Because of these relationships, we have been able to keep our fees 15% to 20% lower than other dental offices. We pass these savings on to our patients through lower out-of-pocket costs.

**Free bleaching to all new patients**  
Value \$375.

(Offer good till March 31, 2006)

Cannot be combined with any other offer

Compare Our Prices



Hours: 7 am - 6:30 pm



Apprentices at the Willamette Carpenters Training Center, 4222 NE 158th Ave, Portland, get hands-on training in bridge-building from instructor Dan Voight. The section of bridge is constructed on the back lot of the training center as part of a required class for apprentices. Journey-level workers also can get skill-advancement training. Oregon has \$1.3 billion earmarked for bridge building and repair over the next decade.