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Labor Lobbyist

AFSCME's Mary Botkin has been traveling the halls of Salem for 24 years working on behalf of public employees.

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

Friday, Feb. 16, 6:30 a.m.: It's still dark. Mary Botkin, tall and silver-haired, climbs into her black Ford Explorer outside her Southeast Portland home.

"I'm nervous," she says.

Botkin is Oregon's most experienced labor lobbyist, with a 24-year record of representing the public employees union Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees at the Legislature. She's known nearly every Oregon lawmaker going back two decades, and a great many figures in local and national Democratic Party circles.

But today is important to her.

"I've been trying to get this bill passed for 20 years," Botkin says.



Mary Botkin (center) talks with Multnomah County Commissioner Lonnie Roberts at a community forum.

The bill, HB 2401, would give 911 dispatchers with 25 years of service an early retirement option — with reduced benefits. At no extra cost to the government, emergency operators weary of "carnage, car crashes, and crank calls" could call it quits after a quarter-century.

But 10 separate Oregon Legislatures have declined to pass it.

At 3 p.m., the bill will get its first committee hearing in the new Democratic-controlled Oregon House.

Emergency operators — AFSCME members — will be coming to the State Capitol to testify alongside her. If committee members are persuaded, they'll send the bill to the full House and recommend its passage.

One minute and two stoplights down the road, Botkin pulls over. AFSCME lobbyist Joe Baessler gets in. The two live six blocks apart, and share the 98-mile Portland-Salem round-trip.

Baessler, 31, is Case Western Reserve Law School Class of 2000. Botkin, 59, is Jefferson High School Class of 1966. But he's learning from her, because it's his first session as a lobbyist, and her 12th.

Botkin first went to Salem in 1977 as a legislative aide to State Rep. Rod Monroe. She worked briefly as a committee staffer for Bill Bradbury, who was then a committee chair in the Oregon Senate. Cecil Tibbetts, executive director of AFSCME's statewide council, hired her as a full-time lobbyist.

On the drive down, Botkin and Baessler compare notes and talk tactics. At the hearing, they're going to play recordings of 911 calls for the committee — "fatals," Botkin calls them. There's a mobile home fire and a shotgun suicide. Will the recordings help them get their point across?

Botkin has long been assigned to defend the interests of public safety and corrections officers, and is fiercely protective of them. She's been known to go to the mat for a minor work rule, or call in all her chits to get an unjustly-fired worker reinstated.

At 7:20 a.m., Botkin pulls up outside the Capitol building and parks in a handicapped spot. She was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1975, but it's in remission now, and she uses it, jokingly, as an excuse when she forgets things.

Botkin wants to check for messages, and heads to Room 40 in the basement. The sign at the entrance says "Capitol Club

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Teamsters blast plan to open border to Mexican trucks

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Bush Administration announced Feb. 23 it intends to open the U.S. border to Mexican trucks in the next six to eight weeks for a one-year experimental pilot program.

The announcement drew harsh reactions from organized labor, especially the Teamsters Union.

"As with the Dubai Ports debacle, President Bush is willing to risk our national security by giving unfettered access to America's transportation infrastructure to foreign companies and their government sponsors," said Jim Hoffa, Teamsters general president. "They are playing a game of Russian Roulette on America's highways."

The Teamsters Union has led efforts to keep the border closed since the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which called for opening

borders to the trucking industries of Mexico, Canada and the United States.

President Bill Clinton blocked cross-border trucking because of concerns that Mexico's trucks weren't safe.

However, in 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a lawsuit brought by labor and environmental groups to stop implementation of the open-border trucking policy because of the Mexican government's failure to meet the truck safety and driver training requirements of NAFTA.

The border has remained closed, except for transfers within a 20-mile commercial zone in the U.S.

"Mexico refuses to meet their end of the bargain, yet President Bush rewards them with open access to American highways," Hoffa said. "It is the American driving public who will pay the consequences."

Two years ago, the Department of

Transportation inspector general found that the Mexican government and Mexican motor carriers did not meet congressionally-mandated requirements. An inspector general audit report is due in the next couple of months, raising serious questions as to why President Bush is pushing this experimental program ahead of that report, the Teamsters Union said.

"Where is the inspector general's report that tells us that Mexico is meeting U.S. standards?" Hoffa asked. "Why is the president willing to move forward when his own inspector general has stated that Mexico cannot meet its obligations?"

The Bush Administration plans to open a one-year experimental program that will allow 100 Mexican carriers to begin travel beyond the currently permitted commercial zones. Supposedly no hazardous material shipments will

be permitted in order to avoid the required background checks.

The Department of Transportation did not say how many trucks will be participating in the experiment or whether there will be a system in place to differentiate between those trucks traveling to the 20-mile commercial zones and those permitted to travel throughout the United States.

Mexico exported \$198 billion in goods to the U.S. last year, with more than 80 percent shipped by truck. As it stands, Mexican truckers are required to transfer cargo to U.S. carriers within the border zone.

U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, (D-Wash.), chair of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, will hold a hearing March 8 to determine whether the Bush Administration has met safety requirements Congress set earlier.

When the Administration first pro-

posed opening the U.S. border to long-haul Mexican trucks without adequate safety standards, it set off a firestorm in Congress, Murray said.

The House voted to prohibit cross-border trucking outright, and President Bush threatened to veto it.

Murray authored a bipartisan compromise requiring dozens of new safety requirements to ensure that cross-border trucking would not pose a risk to the American public.

"The Bush Administration and Mexican authorities now maintain that they have fulfilled every one of these safety requirements. That remains to be seen," Murray said.

Oregon U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio told Bloomberg News that he questioned how Mexico will oversee driver drug testing and monitor driver fatigue, since Mexico doesn't require truckers to keep trip logs.

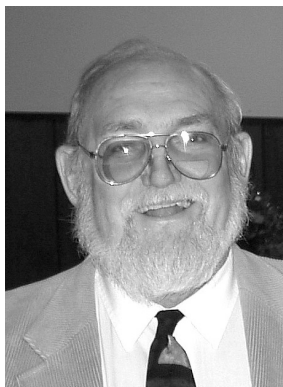
Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



John Klein dies at 67

JOHN JAMES KLEIN, a retired business agent of Portland Teamsters Local 305 who devoted decades to public service, died of leukemia on Feb. 8, 2007. He was 67. Klein was the current president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council, which is affiliated with the NW Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO. He also held the presidency of the Teamster Retirees and was a trustee of the Oregon Chapter of the labor-backed Alliance for Retired Americans.



JOHN KLEIN

A Funeral Mass was conducted for him on Feb. 13 at the Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Church in Lake Oswego, where he was a member for decades.

KLEIN WAS BORN on Aug. 6, 1939 in Anamoose, North Dakota, the youngest of 11 children. The family moved to Portland in 1941. He graduated from Lincoln High School in 1957 and the next year married Helen Smith. After their marriage they made their home in Lake Oswego. Mrs. Klein worked for 38 years at Consolidated Freightways as a member of Office and Professional Employees Local 11.

Klein was a member of several locals in the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) before joining Local 305 while driving a transport truck for Franz Bakery. He was elected as

Local 305's business agent when Frank Kies retired, and held that post for 20 years until retiring in 1996.

HE REPRESENTED the IBT as a volunteer with the Portland Police Bureau's Sunshine Division, which helps the needy, for nearly 30 years. He served for 11 years with the Lake Oswego Police Reserves, earning the rank of lieutenant. He was longest-tenured member of the Clackamas County Water Commission, with 30 years on that board representing the Rivergrove Water District. He spent eight years on the governor-appointed Oregon State Mortuary and Cemetery Board. He represented the IBT for many years on the Portland Rose Festival's Board of Directors. He was a volunteer in the Teamsters Credit Union for years; and raised funds for the Elks Lodge Children's Eye Clinic while holding leadership posts in the lodge. He's a past president of Oregon State University's Dads Club.

Survivors include his wife, Helen; two daughters, Chris Taylor of Beaverton, and Lori Weed of Snohomish, Wash.; six grandchildren, Erica, Anna, Matthew David, Tony, Nolan and Matthew Wesley; two sisters, Katherine Zucher of Portland; and Loretta Marovich of Lake Oswego; three brothers, William Klein of Portland, Al Klein of Prineville and Lawrence Klein of Bend; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions can be sent to the Children's Eye Clinic, c/o Oregon State Elks Association, P.O. Box 189, Salem OR 97308.

Arrangements were by the Riverview Abbey Funeral Home.

★★★

THE LABOR HONOR ROLL was started by the Northwest Labor Press to give posthumous recognition to union members of yesteryear. The Labor Hall of Fame sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council honors retired union activists while they are still living.

In this issue, the Labor Honor Roll will spotlight two unionists who were active in the 1950s, '60s and into the '70s.

SYLVESTER McCULLUMN was both a union leader and a church leader. He was a business representative of Ship Scalers and Auto Painters Local 1404, one of the few black union activists at that time. I met him in late 1962 shortly after I started working full-time for the Labor Press, for which Jim Goodsell was the editor. I had started doing free-lance writing for Jim in 1960, a few months after the start of the strike against the Newhouse-owned Oregonian and the then-locally-owned Oregon Journal.

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Unions want to bargain safety issues for corrections guards, police, firefighters

SALEM — Labor unions are lobbying lawmakers to pass a bill that would make workplace safety issues a subject of contract negotiations for corrections officers, police and firefighters.

Senate Bill 400 and House Bill 2404 are identical bills working their way through their respective chambers.

In 1995, the Republican-controlled Legislature made changes to the public employee collective bargaining law, stripping unions' right to make safety a mandatory subject of bargaining. Now that Democrats are in control, union leaders are trying to restore that right.

"Employees who deal with flames, criminals or convicts as part of their daily work environment surely deserve to talk about safety issues in bargaining," said Oregon AFL-CIO Political Director Duke Shepard in testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee last month.

Management is opposing both bills, claiming that the potential cost of bargaining staffing issues could bankrupt some districts.

Public safety employees are forbidden to strike and instead contract disputes go to binding arbitration.

"The costs of SB 400 won't be known for years, depending on arbitrator rulings," said Tillamook County Commissioner Tim Josi, a former Democratic state legislator.

Oregon State Fire Fighters lobbyist Bob Livingston discounted those claims in earlier testimony, reminding committee members that allowing the subject of safety and staffing to be brought to the bargaining table doesn't mean the union automatically gets its way. "It just opens an important discussion," he said.

Randy Ridderbusch, an AFSCME staff rep and former Food Service coordinator for the Department of Corrections, said it's always more costly to take corrective safety action after the fact than it is to pro-actively address safety concerns ahead of time.

"Years ago, one of our members had to be beaten with a free weight bar before the Legislature stepped in and passed our bill to ban free weights in the prisons," Ridderbusch told law-

makers. "Numerous officers had to be stabbed before we passed a bill providing for safety vests. These were issues we could have talked about in bargaining if we were allowed to do so."

To illustrate how heated this issue has become, the Portland City Council on Feb. 21 postponed voting on a resolution supporting the rights of safety employees to bargain safety issues because the council, in a highly-charged discussion, was divided on the wording.

The resolution — co-sponsored by Randy Leonard, a former Fire Fighters Union president, and Erik Sten — sought to change the city's position of opposition to SB 400 and HB 2404 to that of supporting the legislation.

The proposed resolution would "reflect the City's high regard for the safety of police and fire personnel, as well as the City's high regard for the collective bargaining rights of its workers."

Mayor Tom Potter opposed the resolution and the bills in the Legislature. Portland Police Chief Rosie Sizer also testified at City Hall against the resolution. "I want to make clear, I'm not anti-union," Sizer said. "I've been a union member all my adult working life."

However, she told commissioners that a labor leader told her that "demand to bargain letters would be flying" if the bills are passed in Salem "Senate Bill 400 is too broad. I don't support it," she said.

Leonard and Sten emphasized that their resolution didn't focus on any specific bill before the Legislature, but merely for the council to support a safety officers' right to talk about job safety issues with management.

"I'm disappointed to hear what I'm hearing today," Leonard said.

Leonard and Sten agreed to re-write the resolution and bring it back to the council.

(Editor's Note: Don Loving, public affairs director of Oregon AFSCME Council 75, contributed to this report.)



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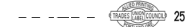
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AFSCME files for union election at PDC

Non-supervisory employees at the Portland Development Commission took a step closer to forming a union Feb. 23 when representatives from Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees filed for an election with the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

For the past two months organizers have quietly been meeting with PDC employees. The agency is the quasi-public development arm for the City of Portland. Its executive director is Bruce Warner, a former Oregon Department of Transportation bureaucrat who was appointed to the post a year-and-a-half ago by Mayor Tom Potter.

"A group of employees from PDC came to us in December, and it's just snow-balled from there," said Organizing Director Sue Lee-Allen.

Lee-Allen told the Northwest Labor Press that a majority of the 132 non-supervisory employees have signed union authorization cards.

"This is a highly-educated, highly-skilled level of folks who like everyone else want to be treated with fairness and respect at work," Lee-Allen said.

All PDC employees are considered "at will" employees and can be fired without cause.

Lee-Allen said it is one of the most fearful groups of employees she's dealt with in more than a decade of organizing. "The level of fear here is pretty pervasive," she said. "They've worked at PDC for a long time, and they've just had enough with the way they've been treated by some managers."

An election won't take place for another eight to 12 weeks, which is worrisome, Lee Allen said, because union organizers know that leaves a lot of time for management to try to dissuade workers from joining.

State law prohibits employers from interfering with employees trying to organize a union. Warner has told reporters his agency will stay neutral.

However, Warner reportedly told staffers that he personally opposes the

union. "We'd prefer to deal with employees on a one-on-one basis," he said.

And, not three days after word got out about the union organizing campaign, the nonunion Oregonian newspaper — a staunch supporter of the PDC — weighed-in with a blistering editorial against unionization.

The editorial and Warner's comments prompted Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard to write a letter to the PDC director asking that he post a notice to all employees acknowledging their right to organize and pledging that the administration will remain neutral during the campaign.

Leonard and colleague Erik Sten also drafted a resolution supporting PDC staffers' efforts to organize. The Portland City Council passed that resolution unanimously on Feb. 21.

"I am heartened that the Portland City Council has spoken unanimously in support of PDC employees' right to organize," said Leonard, a former president of Fire Fighters Local 43. "I hope that the PDC management will choose to embrace the organizing efforts of their workers rather than fear them."

Oregon AFSCME Executive Director Ken Allen penned a response to the Oregonian editorial, but was told it wouldn't be printed.

"In my 20-plus years here, I've

never seen the Oregonian editorialize against workers who are trying to join a union," Allen said at the Feb. 23 Executive Board meeting of the Oregon AFL-CIO. "I think this type of editorial against workers sends a new message in our community. The Oregonian needs to stay out of our business."

Allen said he plans to put together a coalition of labor leaders to meet with the newspaper's editorial board to discuss their position.

At the monthly PDC commissioners' meeting on Feb. 28, newly-appointed Commissioner John Mohlis asked that the administration and management remain neutral until an election is held. Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Columbia-Pacific Building and Construction Trades Council, said PDC staffers have contacted him and other commissioners asking for a commitment to neutrality.

A flier produced by a core group of union supporters lists several reasons why PDC staffers should vote for the union. The list included: no cost-of-living increase in over eight years; no legitimate grievance procedure; vindictive and retaliatory managers and supervisors; unjust discipline; lack of promotional consideration; humiliating, disrespectful and hostile supervision; wages that lag behind comparable city and open market positions; personnel policies that are ignored; excessive overtime without benefit of an

agency-wide time policy for exempt non-supervisory employees; minority employees feeling disrespected and undervalued; and more.

PDC's annual budget of more than \$200 million is funded by tax dollars. For years it operated under the radar, with little public scrutiny. Its former executive director and commission chair were under fire for allowing no-bid contracts to friends, inside deals with staffers and contractors, and lavish spending on meals and alcohol. Its free-spending drew the attention of the Portland City Club, which in 2005 released a scathing report questioning PDC's lack of public accountability.

After Potter was elected mayor, he vowed to make the agency "more transparent." He brought in Warner and appointed a new commission.

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...Labor Lobbyist

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work area: Members only.”

The Capitol Club is Oregon’s 400-strong lobbyist professional association, and Room 40 is their clubhouse — a combination lounge/workspace where they can retrieve messages and hang out between appointments. There’s wi-fi, coffee and closed-circuit television screens showing whatever’s under way in legislative committee chambers.

Ducking into the Legislative Printing Office, she grabs a copy of the Joint Legislative Schedule — a compendium of every official proceeding at the Capitol that day. Today’s is 42 pages long.

Botkin joins Baessler at Café Today, a basement diner where lobbyists and capitol staffers chow on the cheap. Lawmakers have their own cafeteria, off-limits to the public.

A legislative assistant to House Democrat Mike Schaufler walks by.

“How are you, Mary?”

“I’m fine,” she sighs.

“That wasn’t very convincing,” he says.

She’s thinking about the hearing. Her bill is assigned to the House Business and Labor Committee. Schaufler, a former member of the Laborers Union, is the chair.

She’s got hours to kill before her first scheduled meeting, and heads back to the Capitol Club. It’s not yet 8 a.m., and the lounge is nearly empty.

By now, Botkin is multi-tasking. She’s checking e-mail on her laptop, reading a bill, browsing a specialized legislative database that helps lobbyists track 90 lawmakers and thousands of bills. At 8:30 she picks up the remote control and flips channels on the TV, stopping to watch Portland Democrat Diane Rosenbaum chair a hearing on ballot measure reform.

A few minutes later, AFSCME lobbyist Ralph Groener walks in. “Mary, I need your help.”

He has a 9:30 meeting with the gov-

ernor and he needs a proposal typed up. Groener is “old school,” a high-tech holdout who refuses to cart around a laptop.

“I’m not a production typist,” Botkin says. “If you want it by 9:30, you better give it to me right away.”

Lobbyists trickle in and out of the room; several confer nearby.

Without time to read every bill, lobbyists rely on each other to stay on top. It’s like a hive. They exchange little pieces of information with each other as they pass in the hall.

“Holvey just left the hearing.” “Schaufler is looking for you.” “Any idea what this bill is supposed to do?” “What did you think of Kardon’s presentation?”

Botkin has a special status in the hive, and 20-plus years at the Capitol have earned her an outsized reputation. Critics and admirers alike describe her as a fighter, loyal, hot-tempered, blunt and funny. All day long, fellow lobbyists come up to her with questions or greetings, asking for directions to someone’s office, borrowing mouthwash.

Botkin says it’s her policy to treat other lobbyists with professional courtesy, regardless of who they work for.

“There’s no bad guys. Everybody has a job to do,” she says.

Besides, sometimes they work together.

A minute later she’s speaking into her wireless cell phone earpiece: “I really need to know what’s going on with the 911 bill.”

It’s time to make the rounds, visit a few lawmakers.



At a Feb. 16 hearing on a bill to give 911 operators early retirement, AFSCME lobbyist Mary Botkin testifies along with 911 dispatcher Stephanie Babb.

Rep. John Lim, a Gresham Republican, is the first.

“How are you?” she asks.

“Working hard for you,” he replies.

“You always work hard for me,” she says. They get right to the point. She’s pushing a bill to require that state workers be reassigned if an on-the-job injury prevents them from doing their old job. Lim asks questions. How many people does this affect? Who will oppose it? Will it cost money? Which committee is it assigned to?

Botkin closes the meeting by asking Lim what his priorities are. Reciprocity is an unspoken rule of lobbying. She’s asking his support on one of her bills; maybe she can help on one of his.

Botkin has no qualms working both sides of the aisle in Salem, but in the wider world, she’s a diehard Democrat. From 1988 to 2004, she served as one of two Oregon representatives on the Democratic National Committee, the body which chooses the party’s national

leadership. She chaired the national Democratic Women’s Caucus until 2004, when she was unseated from her DNC post by party activist Jenny Greenleaf.

Back at the Club, it’s 11:45, and Botkin is preparing her testimony for the hearing. She looks in her computer for notes of what she said in 2005.

At 12:30, she grabs lunch and heads to a fourth-floor conference room for the weekly meeting of the United Labor Lobby — an informal roundtable of the Capitol’s union lobbyists. Today a couple dozen labor lobbyists sit around a table, reacting to a \$220 million bombshell. Last night, Josh Kardon of U.S. Senator Ron Wyden’s office delivered a grim message — the federal government isn’t going to renew its subsidy to rural counties that used to collect revenue from federal timber sales. They debate responses, but don’t see a way out. AFSCME stands to lose 350 members who work in rural county government.

Botkin has seen a lot of layoffs over the years. In fact, layoffs were her introduction to legislative politics. In the late ’70s, when rising natural gas prices cost her husband Mike his job at Oregon Steel Mills, Botkin threw herself into organizing a group called the Plant Closure Committee. They didn’t stop the plant closures, but they did help win a federal law requiring companies to give 60-days notice before mass layoffs.

After lunch, Botkin sees Rep. Paul Holvey in the hall. He’s a Eugene Democrat and a union carpenter.

“Do I have to lobby you?” she asks.

“It depends on which side you’re on,” he says.

“I’m on the side of the angels,” she says.

“I’d better read the bill,” Holvey says, teasing.

Botkin’s record of candor provokes the same from legislators, and the more experienced ones don’t beat around the bush or obfuscate where they stand on a bill. That helps her do her job, because she needs to know where they stand in order to count votes and know when compromise is needed.

It’s 2 p.m., an hour before the hearing. AFSCME council representative Deb Kidney and several 911 dispatchers have arrived. They are setting up in the hearing room. The recordings are truly horrifying. They decide not to use the one where the caller’s daughter has just shot herself.

At 2:30, City of Portland lobbyist Mark Landauer takes Botkin aside. In hushed tones he tells her he’s going to ask the committee to hold off on the bill, to give the city attorney more time to look at whether it would create a problem for Portland in its negotiations with police and fire unions.

Steam is practically pouring out of Botkin’s ears as she re-enters the hearing room, closing the door behind her.

At 2:50, Sally Jones walks in, beaming. Jones, a lobbyist for an association of 911 managers, tells Botkin she’s supporting the bill this time and will testify. In past sessions, they didn’t support it.

Then Schaufler, the committee chair, comes in to fetch Botkin back outside to the hall — he’s heard about the fracas with Portland and wants to see if tit can be resolved. No settlement is reached.

At 3 p.m., the hearing begins.

Chair Schaufler bangs the gavel, and calls Botkin and Stephanie Babb as the first witnesses. Babb is a 15-year veteran of the Portland 911 call center. She walks the committee through the recording. They listen as a 911 operator helps calm and guide a woman trapped in a burning mobile home. They stop the recording.

“What happened?” Rep. Vicki Berger wants to know.

“She burned to death,” Botkin answers.

The second recording, a few seconds in, a woman screams, “He blew his head off.” Schaufler interrupts: “I think we’ve heard enough.”

The point is made. Imagine listening to that, day after day, week after week, for 25 years.

Then Landauer takes the microphone.

“We’d like more time to review this bill. We’re concerned that it creates a potential fairness issue, because it would allow dispatchers to retire without reaching the age of 50, which is the present standard for Police and Fire.”

Fire and Police would ask for the same, he suggests. Behind him, the 911 workers are fuming.

Out in the hall after the hearing, Botkin is all gloom. “You people are never going to retire early,” she tells the dispatchers.

Landauer calls her over for a quick word. “It’ll get fixed. I’m a straight shooter. You have my word.”

Schaufler comes out, and speaks to Botkin.

“They’re going to move the bill anyway,” she tells her people. Schaufler is the bill’s sponsor, and they’ve got the votes. The delay is a courtesy.

In the car ride back to Portland, she decompresses. “It’s not about who you are,” she tells Baessler. “When they talk to you, it’s our organization they’re talking to.”

Turning philosophical, she tells a story.

“One of our [corrections] officers came in to testify. He was really nervous, and he spoke in voice so soft you could hardly hear him.”

But he followed Botkin’s advice — “talk about what you know — your job.” Having his union behind him meant he could give lawmakers his honest opinion, without fear of repercussion. Soon, they were asking him questions, and he straightened up. The effect was physical. Seeing that elected leaders were interested in what he said, he became taller.

Over the years, Botkin has won passage of more bills than she can remember. But what gives her the greatest satisfaction is the thought that her work enables her members, public employees, to stand a little taller.

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U.S. House takes action on union organizing bill

As this issue of the Northwest Labor Press was going to press, the U.S. House of Representatives announced it would vote on House Resolution 800 — the Employee Free Choice Act — on March 1.

The result of that vote was not available until after this issue went to press, however, prior to the vote there were a bipartisan 233 co-sponsors of the bill, more than enough for passage in the House.

HR 800 is a top priority bill of the AFL-CIO and Change to Win. Its intent is to level the playing field between workers who want to join a union and their employers, who most of the time don't want their employees joining a union.

HR 800 would:

- Establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first-contract negotiations.
- Provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes.
- Allow employees to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation without having to go through the National Labor Relations Board. Right now, card check is one

method the NLRB has approved for union recognition, but only if the employer agrees. Otherwise, unions and workers must go through a long, business-tilted NLRB elections process.

And though U.S. laws are supposed to protect workers' freedom to belong to a union, employers routinely harass, intimidate, coerce and even fire employees trying to gain a union so they can bargain for better pay, benefits and working conditions.

Cornell University scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner said 75 percent of employers hire outside consultants to run anti-union campaigns, often based on mass psychology and distorting the law. Bronfenbrenner has studied hundreds of organizing campaigns and found that:

- Ninety-two percent of private-sector employers, when faced with employees who want to join together in a union, force employees to attend closed-door meetings to hear anti-union propaganda; 80 percent require supervisors to attend training sessions on attacking unions; and 78 percent require that supervisors deliver anti-union messages to underlings.
- Half of employers threaten to shut

down partially or totally if employees join a union.

• In 25 percent of organizing campaigns, private-sector employers illegally fire workers because they want to form a union.

• Even after workers successfully form a union, in one-third of the instances employers do not negotiate a contract.

If unfair labor practice charges are filed, union campaigns can be delayed even longer. And, oftentimes if an employer is found guilty by the NLRB, the punishment is minimal, including posting a sign stating they won't do it any more.

Corporate front groups are waging a major campaign to stop HR 800, with support from President Bush.

Bush says he will veto the Employee Free Choice Act if it reaches his desk.

A group calling itself the "Coalition for a Democratic Workplace" claims to be rank-and-file workers who want to preserve their right to a secret ballot vote for a union. Reportedly, no rank-and-file workers are named in the coalition's literature, but some 20 or 30 employer groups are, ranging from the National Restaurant Association, to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

"Bush and some Republicans in Congress see labor unions as a threat to the bottom line of their corporate friends," said Rep. Phil Hare (D-Ill.). "Opponents of this legislation have every right to express their disdain for unions and the service they provide to working families. However, they do

not have the right to silence the will of the majority through scare tactics and intimidation during a National Labor Relations Board election."

As it stands, the bill doesn't have enough votes to pass the Senate, given that the Republican minority has promised to filibuster the bill once it hits the Senate floor. It requires 60 votes to end a filibuster and Democrats, who hold a 51-49 majority, don't have the votes to stop it. A vote in the Senate has not yet been scheduled.

Oregon Republican U.S. Senator Gordon Smith has yet to take a position on the bill. To talk to Smith or his staff about the Employee Free Choice Act, call him from Portland at 503-326-3386 or go to his Web site at: www.gsmith.senate.gov/public/.

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Asbestos Workers 36

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

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 27, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland.

Boilermakers 500

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

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

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

Carpenters 1388

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

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 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, March 15, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

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

Electrical Workers 48

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

Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 14, in the Dispatch Lobby.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, March 7 and March 21 in the Executive Boardroom.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: There are no death assessments for March.

Electrical Workers 280

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

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

Salem Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 15, at the Salem Heights Community Center, 3505 Liberty Rd. S, Salem.

Eugene Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 21, at the LU 290 Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Elevator Constructors 23

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

Fire Fighters 452

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

Fire Fighters 1660

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

Glass Workers 740

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

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

Iron Workers 29

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

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

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

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

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

Laborers 483

Municipal Employees

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

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 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, March 7, preceded by a 7 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Linoleum Layers 1236

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

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 22, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is **SPECIAL CALL** to vote on allocation of the contractual increase effective April 1, 2007.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

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

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

Mid-Columbia Labor Council

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

Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 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, March 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, March 7, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

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

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

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

Office & Professional Employees 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 6, at Laborers/Teamster Hall, 2212 Andresen, Vancouver, Wash.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

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

New Hours: Effective Dec. 1, 2006, Local 10 is 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, March 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, March 13, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

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

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

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

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, April 5. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland. (503 232-4807)

Sheet Metal Workers 16

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

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

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

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

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

PLEASE NOTE: Northern Organizer Position Available - Members interested in applying must meet the Constitutional Requirements for officers and must submit a resume to the Business Manager by 5 p.m. March 12, 2007.

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

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

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

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

United Association 290

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 20, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

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

United Steel Workers 1097

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

Retirees' group to hold convention in Portland March 17

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans will hold its fourth annual convention Saturday, March 17, starting at 9 a.m. at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8 Hall, 2435 NW Front, Portland.

Invited speakers include former Gov. John Kitzhaber; Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner; U.S. Rep. Darlene Hooley; State Rep. Mitch Greenlick; State Sens. Ben Westlund, Bill Morrisette and Alan Bates; Barbara Dudley, vice chair of the Working Families Party of Oregon; Jim Davis of the United Seniors of Oregon, and others.

Topics will include health care reform, Medicare Part D, pension protection, third-party politics, reforming Oregon's initiative petition process, the aging baby boomers, and a report on unions and their importance to retirees.

Other items of business to take place at the day-long meeting will be consideration of bylaw changes and election of officers.

Current officers whose terms of office are expiring include: president, Verna Porter; first vice president, Paul Krissel; secretary, Val Jack, and treasurer, Ron Rogers. Two currently vacant positions, second vice president, and trustee will also be elected.

Individuals wishing to run for an office should send a letter of interest to Election Committee, Oregon ARA, 4125 NE 72nd, Portland, OR 97218-3616.

For more information and convention registration, log onto: www.orara.org, or call 503-284-8591.

Registration deadline is March 8 for a fee of \$25.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

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

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 22, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

CARPENTERS

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

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, March 13, at Russellville Park Plaza, 20 SE 103rd Ave., Portland. Lunch will be served in the

main dining room for \$6.50 each including gratuity. Tours are available following lunch. For more information and reservations, please call Vera Larson (503) 252-2296.

IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 14, 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, March 12, at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 100G, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 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 11:30 a.m. Thursday, March 8, at Nicola's Pizza, 4825 N. Lombard, Portland.

TRANSIT 757

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

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Salem area retirees meet 12 noon Wednesday, March 7, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St., NE, Salem.

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

Union members ask Portland to take anti-sweatshop action

At a Feb. 19 rally, Portland Fire Fighters Local 43 Vice President Ed Hall linked current anti-sweatshop campaigns to campaigns at the dawn of the labor movement. A 1911 fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist factory killed 146 New York City garment workers, Hall said, but led to better factory safety standards — and fire safety codes that fire fighters enforce in Portland and elsewhere.

“But it is now the 21st century,” Hall said, “and children are still working and dying in sweatshops.”

Last February, Hall noted, 54 workers, some of them children, died in the KTS Composite Textiles factory in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

“As a firefighter, when I go to work and I put on my uniform, I want to



Portland firefighter Ed Hall addresses a crowd at City Hall Feb. 19 calling on the City of Portland to pass a resolution that ensures it is not purchasing goods made under sweatshop conditions that violate labor laws. Hall is a vice president of Fire Fighters Local 43.

know that the company that makes that shirt and pants supports the same values we do ... having a safe and fair workplace.”

Hall and other activists are calling on the City of Portland to ensure it is not purchasing goods made under conditions that violate labor laws.

About 110 people attended the noon-hour rally, held outside Portland City Hall on Presidents Day. A former sweatshop worker from Bangalore, India, told of managers abusing the mostly young, female workforce, and said he was arrested for trying to

unionize factory workers at a shop that produces goods for Wal-Mart. And a Colombian woman who worked 10 years at a flower plantation that sells to Albertsons and Wal-Mart described allergies and skin problems

from excessive fungicides and pesticides.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner also said he favors passage of a local anti-sweatshop ordinance, saying his agency, the Bureau of Labor

and Industries, was founded in 1903 to study conditions in factories.

“We must not allow public money to go to companies that don’t comply with basic labor laws,” Gardner said.

The Portland Sweatfree Campaign, backed by 13 local unions and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, has been meeting with staff in City Hall, but so far no commissioners have committed to anything but a symbolic resolution.

“We don’t want a feel-good ordinance,” said Kate Lore, social justice coordinator for the First Unitarian Church. “We want one with teeth.”

Labor bowl for MDA scheduled Sunday, April 22

The 18th annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave., Portland.

Portland area labor unions have collected \$276,041 for the charity. Money raised from pledges and a silent auction 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 Tor at MDA at 503-223-3177.

Tickets on sale to win motorcycle and help sick children

Tickets are on sale to win a new Harley-Davidson motorcycle and raise funds for Doernbecher Children’s Hospital in Portland.

The fifth annual Motorcycle Poker Run and Chili Cook-Off will be held Saturday, June 9 in Northeast Portland. The event is sponsored by “Unions for Kids,” a non-profit organization comprised of members of various unions in Portland and Southwest Washington.

Tickets to win the motorcycle — a 2007 suede blue and black Dyna Low-Rider FXDL — are \$10 each. Only 3,500 tickets will be sold. The motorcycle is on display at the IBEW United Workers Federal Credit Union, 9955 SE Washington St., Portland.

For more information, go to www.unionsforkids.org or call Lee Duncan at 503-260-5905.

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Fire Fighters launch Union Sportsmen's Alliance

SEATTLE (PAI) — Carrying out a plan that International Association of Fire Fighters President Harold Schaitberger first floated three years ago, the union has joined other labor and conservation groups to create the new Union Sportsmen's Alliance.

Unveiled in Seattle last month, the Alliance is an outgrowth of the existing Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership between 20 unions and conservation groups. But unlike the partnership, the new alliance will offer goods and services and its own clubs to unionists who like to hunt and fish.

Besides the Fire Fighters, key unions behind the new alliance include the Machinists, whose president, Thomas Buffenbarger, will be

on the group's board of directors.

"For many of our members, hunting and fishing isn't just what they do in their free time, they're part of who they are," said Schaitberger. "We're proud to offer a program to help our hard working men and women enjoy the activities they're passionate about."

The alliance's working papers say it will "create an outdoor hunting and fishing club exclusively for union members and their families with the purpose of actively engaging union sportsmen in the ongoing fight to create a better future for hunting and fishing while helping to create their own outdoor community that will extend union member benefits beyond the workplace, into the woods and

onto the water."

It will have its own dues structure, multimedia information program — including a publication — and program where unionists who hunt and fish can buy goods and gear at a discount through the alliance.

When Schaitberger first floated the idea before the 2004 presidential election, he noted "politics" as another reason for creating the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. That led him to try to get the AFL-CIO Executive Council to formally back creation of the club, but he did not succeed.

Schaitberger explained then that because many unionists hunt and fish, they got goods and gear — and a heavy dose of political propaganda — from the National Rifle Association and its American Rifleman magazine. That lobby is one of the most

powerful in the U.S. and it transmits a strong and bitter anti-union line.

The political angle is important, however, because the Fire Fighters Union is plurality Republican, and its hunter/fisher members — along with other union hunters and fishermen — can be swayed by the NRA.

Schaitberger did not mention politics in last month's announcement.

Carpenters' Cobian gets more time in U.S.; fundraiser set

At a Feb. 13 immigration hearing, José Cobián, known to local carpenters as José Luis Mendoza, was given an extra month to remain in the United States. His next hearing is scheduled for March 15.

As reported in previous issues of the Northwest Labor Press, Cobián, 36, was a well-regarded union organizer with the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters until his September 2006 arrest on immigration-related charges. He pled guilty to passport fraud and was sentenced to probation, with the expectation that he will be deported to Mexico by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Thus far, Cobián has been unable to afford a lawyer. A public defender represented him in the passport fraud case, but immigration is considered an administrative, not criminal, proceeding, without the right to a court-appointed attorney.

To raise money for an attorney, Cobián's supporters will hold a fundraising dinner and silent auction March 10 at 7 p.m. at Peace House, 2116 NE 18th Ave.

Contributions can also be made at any U.S. Bank branch or mailed to U.S. Bank, 636 SE Grand Ave., Portland OR 97214. Checks should be made out to the Luis Mendoza Solidarity Fund.

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AFL-CIO backs Kitzhaber plan

The Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board has endorsed former Gov. John Kitzhaber's Oregon Better Health Act, a plan to overhaul the health care system in Oregon.

The proposed legislation seeks authority from Congress to allow Oregon to reallocate public resources currently being spent on health care by creating a system in which everyone has access to a defined set of essential health services. This "core benefit" would be portable and not tied to employment.

Supporters say the "core benefit" would relieve employers and employ-

ees of the cost of paying for health insurance, but would allow employers to offer and purchase secondary insurance for additional services.

In addition, the legislation includes a provision whereby the general public, employers, employees, senior citizens, and health-care providers will have an opportunity to compare the new system with the current system before moving forward with implementation.

The Oregon Better Health Act is the product of the Archimedes Movement, an effort to create a new health

care system by challenging the underlying structure of the current system and offering an alternative to replace it.

"Our current system is based on structures and assumptions that are now 40 to 50 years old and reflect the realities of the last century, not the realities of today," said Kitzhaber, who practiced emergency medicine for almost 20 years before becoming governor. "Without finding the courage to rethink these assumptions in light of today's realities, we will be unable to meet the health-care challenges facing our state and the nation."

There was little debate at the quarterly Board meeting held in Northeast Portland. Board members said the Oregon Better Health Act will certainly be modified to consider labor's interests before it is ever enacted.

"The more we can raise this issue now, the better off we will be," said Ken Allen, executive director of Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and maker of the motion to endorse the Act.

The motion passed on a unanimous voice vote.

UNITE HERE Local 9 placed under international reins

Jim Grogan was named trustee of UNITE HERE Local 9, which represents hotel and laundry workers in the Portland metro area. The local was placed under trusteeship by its national office in October. Grogan will be in charge of the local through the end of 2007.

A long-time organizing director for UNITE, Grogan said he hopes to get the Portland local more in line with locals in San Francisco and Seattle, which have focused much attention on organizing hotels. The local is also bracing for what could be difficult contract negotiations this year with the Hilton Hotel chain. Local 9 represents the Hilton Portland and Executive Tower in downtown Portland.

The union also represents employees at the Benson and Paramount Hotels in downtown Portland. Employees at the new Hilton Vancouver and Convention Center in Washington signed recognition cards to join Local 9, but have yet to ratify a first contract.

Local 9 secured a neutrality agreement before the taxpayer-financed convention center and hotel complex was built in 2005. The Hilton operates the hotel under a contract with the City of Vancouver. The hotel and convention center employs 120 workers.

UNITE HERE was formed in 2004 with the merger nationally of UNITE (Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees) and HERE (Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union). The merged Portland local has 1,200 members in industrial laundry and 1,000 in hotel and food service.

Grogan replaces financial secretary Jeff Richardson, who resigned Oct. 13 following a routine internal audit by the national union. Richardson was re-elected by acclamation to a third term in 2005.

Local 9 President Gloria Gonzalez, who also was re-elected by acclamation in 2005, will remain on staff during the trusteeship.

Demand is high, so Carpenters Food Bank will open 1 hour earlier

The Carpenters Food Bank will start distributing food one hour earlier each month because of long lines waiting to receive food boxes.

The all-volunteer Food Bank, now in its 24th year, is housed in the basement of the union hall at 2205 N. Lombard, Portland. The Food Bank feeds 450 to 500 families the third Friday each month.

Mike Fahey, a former executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland Metal Trades Council and member of Pile Drivers, Divers and Shipwrights Local 2416, who along with his wife Sandy, coordinates the program, said residents oftentimes start lining up at 6 a.m.

"I hate to see people standing out there, so we let 'em in," Fahey said.

The new distribution hours will be from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The next distribution is Friday, March 16.

The Food Bank is also seeking cash donations to help purchase food items — including meat and turkeys — at bulk rate prices.

Contributions can be sent to: Food Bank, P.O. Box 17358, Portland OR 97217.





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New analysis finds Oregon hit hard by cuts in president's budget for '08

Oregon would lose \$123 million in federal funding next year for a wide range of public structures, including K-12 education and Head Start, under President Bush's budget for 2008, according to a report released by the Washington, D.C.-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

The funding cuts, scheduled to deepen in future years under the president's proposal, would force Oregon to either raise taxes to compensate for the lost federal funds, or reduce basic public services. The analysis prompted criticism of the president's budget by Governor Ted Kulongoski, advocates for Oregon children, and a local research institute.

Janet Bauer, a policy analyst at the Oregon Center for Public Policy who reviewed the analysis, expressed disappointment at the president's priorities. "This budget says that maintaining critical infrastructure in Oregon such as education, safe drinking water and public safety is not as important as extending tax breaks, including tax giveaways for millionaires. These priorities would send Oregon and the country in the wrong direction," she said.

Bauer also noted that the president's budget worsens the federal deficit by including massive tax cuts along with the program cuts. "The president's budget would worsen the federal government's fiscal situation, because the tax cuts would cost much more than the program cuts would save," she said.

"This budget is a roadmap toward greater inequality in Oregon," Bauer added. Under the president's budget, the average millionaire nationally would receive \$162,000 in 2012 alone, while funding cuts would harm low- and moderate-income families across the country, including in Oregon.

The new Center on Budget and Policy Priorities report estimates, for example, that the President Bush's budget would:

- Cut federal K-12 education funding to Oregon by \$70 million over the next five years, relative to the 2007 level. The president's proposal would take back much of the additional funding Congress provided to help states implement the federal No Child Left Behind law.

- Cut Oregon's child care funding by \$5 million over the next five years relative to the 2007 level. Today, federal child care funding is already below the 2002 level.

- Cut Oregon's child care funding by \$5 million over the next five years relative to the 2007 level. Today, federal child care funding is already below the 2002 level.

"If we want to support working parents and ensure that our kindergarteners are ready to learn, then we need to invest in quality child care and early education. This budget goes in the opposite direction, leaving more children without the child care help they need," said Cathy Kaufman, of the nonpartisan advocacy group, Children First for Oregon.

- Cut Oregon's Head Start funding by \$2 million in 2008 and by \$22 million over the next five years relative to the 2007 level. These cuts would come on top of cuts already made to the program.

Faced with these funding cuts, Oregon's Head Start programs have several choices. They can serve fewer children; cut back on teachers' salaries, classroom materials, and the specialized services they provide to children; or they can try to raise money from other sources. The federal funding Oregon would receive in 2008 would serve 1,000 fewer children than we would serve if funding had kept pace with inflation since 2002.

The president's proposal is inconsistent with the priority outlined by Gov. Kulongoski to fully fund Head Start so that all eligible Oregon children can benefit.

"Head Start is critical to ensuring every Oregon child enters kindergarten ready to learn. Now is the time to move forward to make early childhood education available to all eligible kids — not take steps backward with budget cuts and reduced enrollment, which is what the president's budget would deliver," said Kulongoski.

- Cut Oregon's funding for low-income energy assistance by \$5.5 million next year and by \$31 million over the next five years. The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides funding to states to help vulnerable households pay their home heating bills. Most households that receive LIHEAP include someone who is elderly or a person with disabilities. The increase in energy prices over the past few years has made LIHEAP more important than ever.

- Cut Oregon's funding for clean and safe drinking water by \$5 million next year and by \$29 million over the next five years. Some of the biggest cuts in the president's budget would come in environmental programs. Oregon relies on federal resources for sewage treatment plants and clean drinking water programs. Wastewater infrastructure projects would be cut

(Turn to Page 11)

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Let me say this about that

...Don Chandler dies at 63

(From Page 2)

Until his retirement in the early 1970s, Reverend McCullum was a pastor at the Morning Side Missionary Baptist Church at 106 NE Ivy St. That is the historic church that burned down a month ago, on Feb. 5-6, 2007, in a fire that is still under investigation.

HENRY MCCARTHY, the executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland and Vicinity Metal Trades Council, introduced me to Rev. McCullum. The two were discussing Local 1404's business when I stopped in at McCarthy's office in the old Portland Labor Temple. The venerable House of Labor, situated at Southwest Fourth Ave. and Jefferson St., diagonally across from City Hall, was the headquarters for the Portland labor movement from 1922 until mid-June of 1966 when it gave way to the new Portland Labor Center at 201 SW Arthur St., which was lost in a mortgage foreclosure in 1978.

McCullum had succeeded McCarthy as business agent for Local 1404 in 1958 when Henry was elected as the leader of the Metal Trades Council. After World War II service on U.S. Navy submarines, McCarthy worked as a business agent for several unions — Ship Scalers and Auto Painters Local 1404, Sign Painters Local 428 and the Hardwood Finishers Union.

MCCARTHY DIED of a heart attack at age 60 in 1976. He had served for many years on the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board.

There is enough space left to mention another unionist who rates space on the Labor Honor Roll. He is Bruce Baer, who worked as a member of Portland Newspaper Guild Local 165 and as a member and Portland Chapter Executive Board member of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

BRUCE BAER joined Local 165 when he went to work as a reporter for the strike-born Portland Daily Reporter right after he graduated from Portland State University where he was the editor of The Vanguard newspaper. He did not come out of the city's newspaper strike but enlisted in the strikers' crusade for a free press in Portland. After a couple of years he accepted the opportunity to become a reporter at KATU-TV, Portland's Channel 2.

He covered politics and the Oregon Legislature with a perception that gained him a host of viewers and listeners. He also wrote editorials for K2, and he was a regular on an OPB Channel 10 news analysis roundtable.

BAER DIED of cancer in August 1977 just weeks short of his 41st birthday.

Later on, when Bud Clark was mayor of the Rose City, he kept a framed photo of Bruce on his office wall at City Hall.

★★★

DONLEY G. CHANDLER, a former business manager of Portland Boilermakers Local 72, died Feb. 7, 2007 at age 63. He was afflicted with both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.



DON CHANDLER

He was born in Portland on June 11, 1943. He later served in the U. S. Air Force.

HE JOINED LOCAL 72 while working as a boilermaker and a welder in the shipyards on Portland's Swan Island. Later, he served for 10 years as the business manager and secretary-treasurer of Local 72. That local has since merged into Boilermakers Local 500 of Portland.

He also served as executive director of the Am Vets organization for two years.

SURVIVORS INCLUDE his wife, Cherie Macknight, whom he married in 2003; a son, Daniel G. Chandler; two stepchildren, Joaquin M. Baca and Darcy A. Macknight; three grandchildren; and a brother, Harvey D. Chandler.

Memorial contributions can be sent to AmVets. Funeral arrangements were handled by Rose City Funeral Home and Cemetery in Northeast Portland.

★★★

LOUIS DAY of Portland, a retired school custodian, died on Feb. 5, 2007 at age 69. He worked for the Portland School District from 1990 until the summer of 2002 when he was forced into early retirement because district officials contracted-out custodial services to a private firm. He was an active member of School Employees Local 140 of the Service Employees International Union and was active in SEIU Local 503 as an associate member after the international merged Local 140 into 503.

Day was born on July 7, 1937 in Chicago, Illinois. The family later moved to Portland, where he graduated from Holy Rosary School.

HIS HOBBIES included collecting antiques, attending swap meets with other collectors and dining at all-you-can-eat restaurants.

Survivors include his daughter, Leasia Day; grandchildren Jenaree Porter and Marisha Day; first cousins Wanda Crawford of San Diego, Calif., Gwendolyn Bowers and Marguerite Bowers of Dayton, Ohio.

His funeral was conducted on Feb. 10 at Cox & Cox Chapel in Northeast Portland.

Congress should restore freedom to choose union

By RICK BENDER

President

Washington State Labor Council

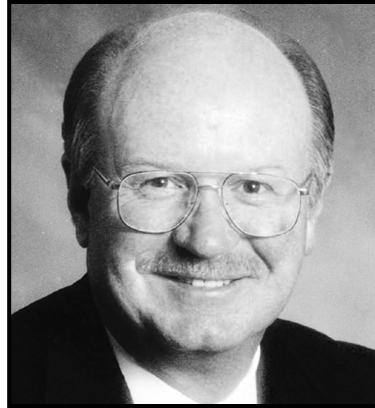
In America, we are supposed to have the freedom of association. At our jobs, that translates to the freedom to choose whether we want to organize a union and bargain collectively. But the federal labor law that is supposed to guarantee that freedom has been chipped away for decades, and now employers routinely deny workers this freedom of association.

Current law says Americans have the right to choose unionization free from intimidation, harassment and coercion by their employers. But in reality, enforcement is so weak and the penalties so small that employers routinely ignore the law. Some threaten to close plants. Others just fire union supporters. Some simply ignore that a union election has taken place and refuse to negotiate a first contract.

Who's to stop them? There are no police assigned to stop this type of illegal activity. Some, but not all, unions can afford to pursue a legal complaint-and-appeals process that takes years on behalf of illegally fired workers who technically aren't even their members. If they succeed, maybe the employer will have to pay some back wages.

Too many employers are willing to pay that price to prevent their workers from getting a union contract. It's gotten so bad that about one of every five union supporters can expect to be illegally fired as a result of their union activity, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

"Aggressive actions by employers — often including illegal firings — have significantly undermined the ability of U.S. workers to unionize their workplaces," says the study released this year. "With the legal penalties for such actions being so slight, employ-



ers can break the law to head-off organizing efforts and face almost no real repercussions."

It's time for us to stand up and say, enough is enough! We are Americans, and we will not have our freedoms and our right to collective bargaining taken away by union-busting corporate attorneys, nor by a government that turns a blind eye to their illegal activities.

The new Congress aims to level the playing field and restore the freedom to choose unionization through the Employee Free Choice Act.

The EFCA would establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and it would provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes. But most importantly, it would allow workers to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation. This would help avoid worksite elections where employees are routinely pressured, harassed and manipulated by their employers.

Corporate lobbyists who oppose the EFCA say they want to preserve "secret ballot elections." Of course they do. These "elections," which are scheduled by the government after a majority of workers have already indicated they want a union, give employ-

OPEN FORUM

ers several months to harass and intimidate captive employees into voting "no."

Imagine an election where a political candidate could force you to attend meetings bashing his or her opponent and could also threaten your family's livelihood, and you begin to get the idea. These elections are a joke, and the deck is severely stacked against workers.

More than half of all Americans say they would like to organize a union at their workplace, according to a new survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Why wouldn't they? Union members make more money, are more likely to get health and retirement benefits, and have better job security.

And yet, the overall U.S. unionization rate continued its decades-long decline in 2006 to 12.0 percent, as union membership dropped 326,000 to about 15.4 million.

The EFCA, which was introduced earlier this month, is co-sponsored by 234 U.S. Representatives, including Washington Reps. Jay Inslee, Rick Larsen, Brian Baird, Norm Dicks, Jim McDermott and Adam Smith.

"The Employee Free Choice Act is one of the most important pieces of legislation we will address," says Rep. Smith (D-Tacoma). "Our worker protections have slowly deteriorated as the National Labor Relations Board fails time and again to preserve workers' right to organize. We are long overdue in strengthening our federal labor laws and the Employee Free Choice Act is a monumental step in the right direction."

It's time to take that step. It's time for our bosses to butt out of union elections, so working people have a real opportunity to make up their own minds.

...Bush budget hits Oregonians hard

(From Page 10)

significantly. Under the budget, these funds nationally would be 40 percent smaller in 2008 than in 2001.

• Cut Oregon's community development funding by \$7.5 million next year and by \$44.5 million over the next five years. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) helps fund a range of community development projects in Oregon including housing and homeless programs, improvements to public facilities such as senior and youth centers, and economic development. Although CDBG already has seen substantial funding cuts in recent years, the Administration's budget would slash it by an additional 21 percent nationally in 2008 and more in later years.

• Eliminate grants that assist state

and local law enforcement in Oregon, costing Oregon \$11 million in funding next year and \$58 million over the next five years. The budget would replace a program that supports crime prevention and corrections activities, and a program which helps offset the cost of incarcerating undocumented immigrants, with two much smaller competitive grant programs. The new programs would receive only about half the funding of the programs they replace. While some states would qualify for funding under the new competitive programs, there is no way to know how the funds would be distributed.

In addition to the proposals in the president's budget, Congress faces other budget and program decisions important to Oregon. The Food Stamp

Program and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known by its initials SCHIP, are both up for renewal in 2007.

"Congress must take this opportunity to strengthen these highly successful programs so they can help more of those who need assistance," Bauer said. "Oregon's success in reducing its hunger rate has hinged primarily on an expansion of the state's food stamp program. These gains are now threatened by the proposed cuts," she added.

The SCHIP program has helped reduce the share of low-income children in Oregon who are uninsured. "Oregon will need additional funds in coming years to reach the goal of insuring all of the state's children so they get the health care they need," Bauer said.

Freightliner counts down to mass layoff at Swan Island

By **Don McIntosh**
Associate Editor

The last Freightliner truck ever to be made in Portland will roll off a Swan Island assembly line March 29, at which point 802 local union workers will lose family-wage jobs.

In all, 632 members of Machinists Local 1005, 65 members of Painters Local 1094, 94 members of Teamsters Local 305 and 11 members of Service Employees Local 49 will be laid off March 30, with no expectation of recall.

German-based Daimler-Chrysler, which owns Freightliner, will continue to manufacture Western Star brand trucks at the Portland plant, so about 900 union jobs will remain.

But as of April 1, Freightliner, a brand begun by Portland trucking magnate Leland James, will be made only at plants in North Carolina and Mexico. Nearly 1,200 workers are also being laid off at the Cleveland, North Carolina, plant (a little under a third of the work force there), but are being told to expect recall when demand returns for Freightliner trucks.

In recent years, demand has risen and fallen in time with progressively stricter emissions standards imposed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of its mandate to enforce the Clean Air Act.

Before each new technology is introduced, trucking companies, cautious about increased cost or decreased reliability, engage in a buying binge. They "buy ahead" before the new model year kicks in. Then the new truck comes out, demand drops, and workers are laid off.

In this case, the EPA standards for 2007 call for a 90 percent reduction in particulate matter, the ultrafine soot that can be seen coming out of exhaust pipes, which is linked to cancer, bronchitis and increased heart disease.

In the past, truck-makers were able to meet federal emissions standards for diesel trucks by making changes within the engine compartment, like altering the shape of the cylinder, or improving

fuel-metering. But to get to the new level, engine manufacturers have to treat tailpipe emissions, burning the particles and running exhaust through a catalytic converter for the first time. The device uses platinum and rhodium, rare metals, and will render U.S.-made diesel engines the cleanest in the world, as clean as vehicles that run on natural gas. Freightliner has boasted that emissions from the new trucks will be so reduced that a white handkerchief placed over the exhaust pipes of a running truck will come off clean.

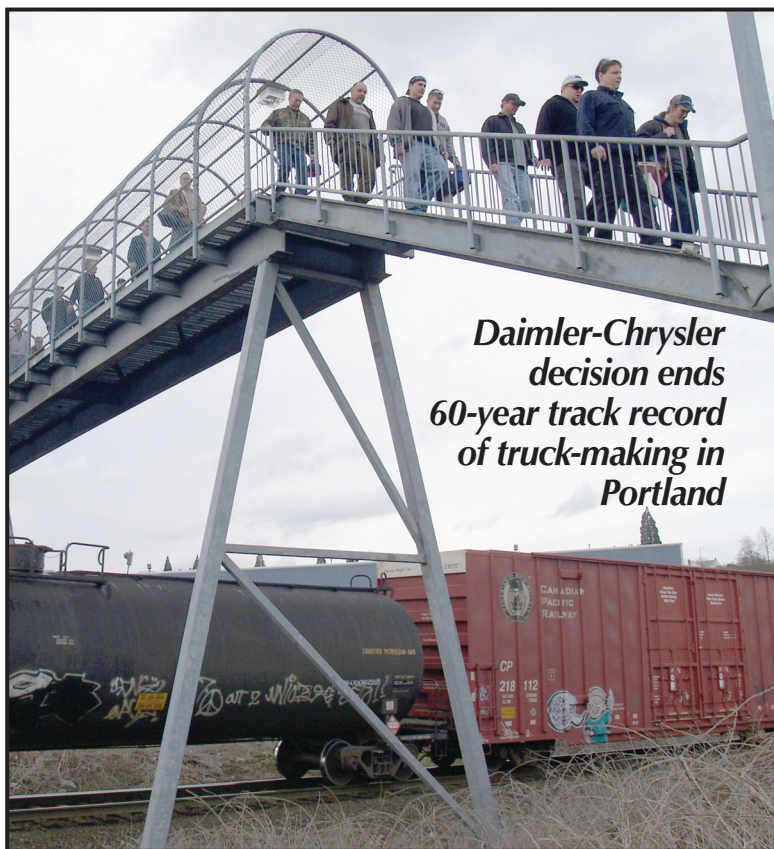
The problem is the new trucks are \$5,000 to \$10,000 more expensive, and have a modest drop in fuel economy — about 2 percent. The EPA allowed truck-makers to manufacture the old model year through the end of the first quarter of 2007.

Freightliner plants are running at capacity until then. After that, demand drops dramatically.

Joe Kear, a business agent at Machinists District Lodge 24, says the company is using that slack time to execute an unrelated business decision — shifting production to Mexico, where it's cheaper, and North Carolina, where it's closer to suppliers and customers.

Last December, Freightliner announced the construction of a new \$300 million facility in Sault Ste. Marie, Mexico which will make up to 30,000 Freightliner and Sterling trucks a year starting in early 2009. That's when the next buying spree is expected, because EPA standards on nitrogen oxide emissions ramp up the following year.

The Machinists Union saw that coming, and last year was able to get the government to certify Freightliner layoffs as "trade-related." That means any workers the company lays off through the end of 2008 will get much more generous job retraining assistance from the government. Those benefits include employment counseling, up to two years of unemployment benefits, a two-thirds health insurance subsidy through COBRA, tuition reimbursement for up to two years of trade school or technical education, a wage



Daimler-Chrysler decision ends 60-year track record of truck-making in Portland

subsidy to give employers incentive to hire them and provide on-the-job training, and job search and relocation benefits to enable workers to move to take jobs for which they're qualified.

At a recent meeting explaining these benefits, one worker asked if the relocation benefits could be used to move to Mexico. The answer: "No." Under NAFTA, only jobs can freely cross borders, not workers.

As mass layoffs go, this one isn't as bad as it could have been. Over half the workforce will remain to produce Western Star brand trucks, so union seniority rules apply to the layoff. That means the laid-off workers are a relatively young group — most in their 20s and 30s. They'll have many years of work ahead and will be better able to take advantage of retraining benefits than workers in their 50s.

And other employers are lining up to offer jobs to the laid-off workers. A "Transition Team" made up of unions, management, non-profits and government agencies is meeting weekly to sew together a safety net before the layoffs occur. Thus far, they've lined up 80 employers to take part in a massive jobs fair in late March. As of press time they were looking to rent space in the Rose Quarter for the event, which would also be open to the family members of laid off workers.

Kear said welders, painters and workers doing body repair have obvious and sellable skills, while others have hidden talents. Some assemblers are actually diesel mechanics — skills they weren't using. Meanwhile, Teamsters classified as material handlers know how to do inventory control, operate forklifts, and manage shipping and receiving, so some of their work experience may qualify them for jobs elsewhere.

However, no amount of optimism can eliminate the sting of losing a good union job with excellent fringe benefits. Wages in the Machinist contract start at \$12 an hour and top out at \$20.55 after four-and-a-half years. The maximum unemployment insurance benefit will be \$445 a week.

Adding to the sting for some is the fact that they agreed to a pay cut in 2001 in a deal to keep the plant open.

"People feel betrayed," said Frank Rouse, president of Local 1005 and a chief steward at Freightliner. "They put in all this time for the company, and now they're getting laid off."

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