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## *Oregon initiative targeted for November ballot*

# AFL-CIO, allies launch Fair Share Health Care initiative

SALEM — The Oregon AFL-CIO filed a ballot initiative Jan. 27 that would require Oregon employers with more than 4,500 workers to spend at least 9 percent of their payroll on employee health insurance.

The Fair Share Health Care initiative is modeled after a bill that passed the Maryland Legislature last month. Maryland is the first state to require large corporations to provide health care for their employees. A similar bill has been introduced in the Washington Legislature. Oregon and Washington are among nearly 40 states using the labor-backed Maryland legislation as a model to enact legislation or pass voter initiatives.

“It’s irresponsible and costly when nonunion businesses boost their profits by denying health care to their employees and then let taxpayers pick up the slack,” said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain. “The Oregon AFL-CIO filed this initiative to force large profitable employers to pay their share toward a healthy workforce and healthy Oregon economy.”

Once given clearance for a ballot title, the state labor federation will begin collecting the more than 100,000 signatures needed to qualify for the November ballot.

“The Oregon AFL-CIO has a history of successfully putting initiatives on the ballot,” said Jennifer Sargent, public relations/research director for the state labor federation. “We have the internal program in place to do that, and we’re seeing a big re-

sponse from the community for support.”

The initiative already has the backing of three of the state’s largest labor organizations: the 30,000-member Service Employees International Union Local 503, the 25,000-member Oregon Council 75 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, and the 18,000-member United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555. Locals 555 and 503 are affiliated with the new Change to Win labor federation.

If passed, the Fair Share Health Care initiative would apply to 12 Oregon employers, including Wal-Mart, Oregon Health & Science University, Providence Health System, Legacy Health System, Kaiser Permanente, Intel, Nike, Safeway Inc., Albertsons Inc. and Kroger Co.’s Fred Meyer Stores.

Most of those employers already provide health insurance for their employees, with one glaring exception: Wal-Mart, which employs more than 11,000 workers.

The State of Oregon doesn’t keep tabs on how many employees of private companies receive taxpayer-financed medical insurance, but other states do. And Wal-Mart is the leader in virtually every state.

In Washington, for example, more than 3,100 Wal-Mart employees were benefiting from state-subsidized health coverage in 2004. The cost to taxpayers: \$9.25 million. (See related article on Page 3.)

“It’s not fair that responsible employers play by the rules while some companies shift their health care costs to other employers or the taxpayer,” said Gene Pronovost, president of Local 555 and a co-sponsor of the Fair Share initiative. “UFCW supports initiatives that correct these abuses.”

Washington State’s Fair Share Health Care bill would require companies of 5,000 employees or more to spend 9 percent of payroll on employee health care. The bill passed out of the House Commerce and Labor Committee last month. The new Maryland law (the Legislature overrode a veto by Republican Gov. Robert Ehrlich) requires any private employer with more than 10,000 employees in the state to spend at least 8 percent of its payroll for workers’ health care.

Chamberlain said that by requiring large corporations to report what they are spending on health care for their employees and requiring them to pay their fair share, a Fair Share Health Care Act in Oregon would:

- Reduce the bill Oregon taxpayers pay to cover profitable employers’ labor costs;
- Help alleviate the financial pressures facing Oregon as it struggles to meet a growing need for Medicaid; and
- Level the playing field between companies providing good jobs and benefits to their workers and those that don’t.

## *Independent union trying to raid ATU #757 ambulance unit*

By DON McINTOSH  
Associate Editor

In the next month, 532 American Medical Response (AMR) ambulance workers in the Portland metro area will have a choice to make: Stay with the local union that has represented them for nearly two decades, or leave to join a startup union headquartered in Sacramento, California.

Ambulance work is changing. Thirty years ago, “ambulance drivers” picked up bodies and took them to the hospital — or the morgue. But life-saving medical technologies have evolved, and today, training requirements for “emergency medical services (EMS) professionals” include having an associates degree and 65 units of continuing education per year.

Paramedics and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are professional lifesavers who take many of the same risks as police officers and firefighters. But they feel underpaid and under-respected compared to their public sector counterparts, and compared to the hos-



**Pro-ATU emergency medical services workers Doug Weinrick and Dale Montgomery wait in their ambulance for the next call. An independent group is trying to raid their union at American Medical Response in Portland.**

pital workers who take up where they leave off.

To close this gap, some have formed

unions. Portland-area EMS workers joined Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 in 1988. Since that

time, in every union contract they have won improved pay, benefits and working conditions.

Nationally, ambulance service is mostly nonunion. A few local governments provide ambulance service directly, but most grant exclusive contracts to private companies.

At ambulance companies like AMR, unionized units are few and far between, and are divided among at least a half-dozen national unions. The largest of those is the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics (IAEP), which is a subdivision of the 1.8-million-member Service Employees International Union.

Just under two years ago, a pair of SEIU staffers serving an IAEP unit in Northern California came up with a plan to leave SEIU — and take their unit with them as a new stand-alone union for workers. While still employed by SEIU, they called the unit’s stewards and elected officers to a meeting in Livermore, Calif., where they pitched their proposal in a 30-page PowerPoint presentation. The group quickly gathered

member signatures and filed for an election to determine which union had the most support in the unit.

SEIU, stung by the betrayal, fought tooth and nail, but lost the election. It also sued the two staffers — Torren Colcord and Tim Bonifay — for fraudulent concealment, misappropriation of trade secrets and breach of fiduciary duty. The case goes to trial Feb. 24 in Alameda County Superior Court.

Colcord and Bonifay christened their union the National Emergency Medical Services Association (NEMSA).

Since then, they’ve made a bid to go national, chiefly by “raiding” already-unionized units affiliated with other unions. Colcord, NEMSA’s president, told the NW Labor Press the union now has 3,200 members in 13 units, five of which were taken from other unions. All but about 800 of those were in the original Northern California SEIU unit.

In December, a Fort Wayne, Ind., unit of about 100 AMR employees became the latest to join NEMSA, after

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# Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



## Names from the past

**AS WAS NOTED** in the previous issue of the Northwest Labor Press, this space is giving some attention to leaders of labor organizations of bygone years who are not eligible for the Labor Hall of Fame, which honors living retirees for their contributions to their local unions and to the rest of the labor movement. The Labor Hall of Fame is sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council, which is affiliated with the Portland-based Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO. Early-day women union leaders who merit being listed on a Labor Honor Roll were mentioned in the last issue of the Labor Press. In this issue are mentioned men unionists whose names belong on a Labor Honor Roll.

In the year 1900, this newspaper began publication with the name Portland Labor Press. The Labor Press was established with a Labor Day issue with H.B. Metcalf as the editor.

Union leaders making up the paper's board of directors were J. A. Bushman of the Millworkers, E. Edwards of the Cigar Makers, J. A. Goldrainer of the Barbers, B. Hesselberg of the Typographers, George M. Orton of the Pressmen, Frank Allert of the Machinists, C. H. Weber of the Clerks, W. H. Robertson of the Letter Carriers, John Beigi of the Brewers and August Eachie of the Beer Drivers.

**MILLWORKER BUSHMAN** was president of the Portland Federated Trades Assembly, which sponsored the start-up of the Labor Press. The early-day central labor council came into being in 1883 when national labor leader Samuel Gompers traveled by train from the East Coast to Portland to meet with Rose City union leaders to establish the Federated Trades Assembly. Gompers, a Cigar Maker by trade, was president and founder of the American Federation of Labor. Gompers returned to Portland two years later to revive the assembly after it had collapsed due to a political split over whether to support Republican or Democrat candidates. A later leader of the pioneer labor council was Captain John O'Brien, a printer.

Printer Hesselberg was a member of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58, which was chartered in 1882 and took its name from the county in which much of Portland is situated. Local 58 was a descendant of the Oregon & Washington Typographical Society, which was formed in Portland in 1853.

**G.Y. HARRY**, of Portland Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, led a campaign that succeeded in creating the Oregon State Federation of Labor in 1902 as an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor. Harry, a man with a large handlebar mustache, was elected as the first president of the state federation. Others elected with him were: Secretary, William H. Barry, a Portland printer; treasurer, Charles Mickley, a Portland tailor; and these vice presidents: J.F. Welch, Astoria fisherman; George Hornby, Portland longshoreman; G. F. Johnson of Baker (now Baker City), employed in the county assessor's office; William E. Miller of Salem, a member of an AFL directly-chartered union; and Fred Langever, Pendleton painter.

Harry declined to seek a second year as president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor at its second convention in 1903 at La Grande in Eastern Oregon. Harry, active in the Democratic Party, was succeeded as president by Charles H. Gram, a member of the Teamsters who was a Republican. Gram, of Portland, served five years as labor federation president and later was elected as state labor commissioner, an office he held from 1919 to 1943.

**E.J. STACK**, a leader of Portland Cigar Makers Local 202, was secretary-treasurer of the city's labor council in the early 1900s and later was executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Federation of Labor. Stack helped guide the Labor Press as a member of the nonprofit newspaper's board of directors from 1915 until his death in 1950.

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# ...ATU points to record of successes

(From Page 1)

having belonged to the Machinists Union two years prior.

"We don't go out and solicit," Colcord said. "We just answer the phone."

That's what happened in the Portland-based ATU unit, Colcord said.

The Portland unit had formed its own independent association before, in 1996. But after 18 months in which the new association was unable to get an acceptable contract, a majority of members voted to rejoin ATU.

As NEMSA got under way in California, ATU critics within the Portland unit found out about it online, and began a drive to switch unions. On Jan. 19, they filed a request for a union election to see which union the members prefer.

AMR paramedic Carl Lemmon, a NEMSA supporter, says ATU saved his job once when he was facing termination. And while wages, benefits and working conditions have improved steadily in ATU, Lemmon thinks they could improve more. He compares Portland-area compensation to that of North-eastern California.

Lemmon is not alone. The last contract ATU negotiated contained a 30 percent wage increase over three years — and still passed by only five votes.

Will NEMSA, with a fledgling staff and fewer resources, be able to do better? Ron Heintzman, an international rep for ATU who has been assigned to bargain the unit's next contract, doesn't think so. Heintzman agrees that EMTs and paramedics are underpaid. Paramedics make \$55,000 a year after 13 years, but EMTs still start at less than \$30,000 a year under the current con-

tract, which expires in May.

Winning labor concessions from giant corporations is no picnic. As longtime president of Local 757, Heintzman developed a reputation as a skillful strategist and aggressive bargainer. ATU often resorted to the courtroom or ballot box when companies balked at the bargaining table, and amassed an enviable record. AMR wasn't paying for training; ATU won a reversal, and back pay. AMR wasn't giving adequate rest time; ATU applied political pressure and AMR changed its policy. It was a felony to assault fire or police officers, but not paramedics; ATU got a law passed in Salem to add EMS workers.

Still, Heintzman says, there was always a group within the unit that felt emergency medical services workers should have their own union.

That's NEMSA's chief selling point, repeated over and over in the new union's appeals. And it's true that most Local 757 members are bus operators.

It's a strategic debate — not over whether EMS workers need a union, but over what kind of union.

In conversations and on the unit Web site, [www.atuems.com](http://www.atuems.com), pro-ATU workers and staff say NEMSA compares unfavorably to ATU. ATU Local 757 owns its own office, has the backing of its 180,000-member parent union, and as an AFL-CIO affiliate, is part of a labor community that can offer political and economic support. NEMSA is an untested stand-alone union. It's a go-it-alone union whose national headquarters consists of a borrowed suite in a Sacramento law office. And, by raiding already unionized units rather than start-


ing with workers that don't yet have a union, NEMSA has made enemies of other unions.

NEMSA president Colcord says EMS workers need a union that understands their specialty. He says he understands EMS issues because he has worked as a paramedic.

Local 757 attorney Susan Stoner counters that the AMR unit already elects officers from among the ranks — and those EMS workers participate in bargaining their contracts, helped by Heintzman and others with full time union expertise.

"When you actually sit and look at the issues, it's always the same," Stoner said. "When you fight with management, you fight the same battle over and over. It doesn't matter what arena you're in — it's all about control, and it's all about money."

"It's the EMS professionals themselves who decide what they want in their contract," Stoner said. "What they need is an 800-pound gorilla on their side, and it doesn't really matter what the gorilla's name is."



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# 3,100 Wal-Mart employees get Washington health aid

OLYMPIA — More than 3,100 Wal-Mart employees in Washington — nearly half of them full-time workers — benefited from state-subsidized health coverage in 2004, reported the Seattle Times newspaper.

That total is much higher than previously thought. And it indicates that 22 percent of Wal-Mart's 16,000 employees in the state were getting taxpayer-funded health care.

The Center for a Changing Workforce, a nonprofit public policy organization, estimates that state taxpayers paid an estimated \$9.25 million for Wal-Mart health care subsidies in 2004. The group estimates the cost in the 2005-2006 biennium to be \$21.7 million. The center also estimates that for each additional store Wal-Mart opens in Washington State, it costs taxpayers an additional \$136,000 per year in Medicaid subsidies alone.

"I think taxpayers should be outraged," Rep. Steve Conway, D-Tacoma, told the Seattle Times. "They are subsidizing one of the wealthiest corpora-

tions in the world."

The Washington Legislature has introduced a labor-backed bill that would require companies with 5,000 or more employees to put a minimum of 9 percent of their payroll costs toward health care benefits.

Citing state and federal confidentiality rules, the state last month provided two reports to only a handful of legislators and legislative staff members. Copies of those reports were leaked to The Seattle Times.

One of the reports shows that throughout 2004 an average 3,180 Wal-Mart employees were receiving state-funded medical assistance, including Medicaid, for themselves or for a dependent. The other report shows that 456 Wal-Mart employees were on the state's Basic Health Plan that year. Nearly 1,800 employees in those programs worked full-time.

The Basic Health Plan (BHP) is funded entirely by the state and covers low-income adults — primarily families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. That would mean a family of four with an income of about \$38,000 would be eligible.

The state reports showed McDonald's restaurants second with an average 1,824 employees receiving Medicaid benefits in 2004 and Safeway third with 1,539 employees on Medicaid. Nearly all of those were part-time employees.

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# OFFICIAL NOTICES

## Asbestos Workers 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10. Meetings are at 1145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

## 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 102, Portland.

## Boilermakers 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 11, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

## Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

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

## 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.

## Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

## 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. 7 and Feb. 14, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, 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, Feb. 8, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles. Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria. EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, in the Exec-

utive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 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, Feb. 15 and March 1

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.

## Electrical Workers 280

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Joint Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at the Central Electrical Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

## Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

## Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

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

## Glass Workers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, at Holiday Inn Express, 3480 Hutton St., Springfield. Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

## Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland.

## Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle, #300, Portland

## Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at Hometown Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

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

## Linoleum Layers 1236

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

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.

## Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 2659 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

## Metal Trades Council

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

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

## Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

## Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 25, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland.

## Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, 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. Tuesday, Feb. 7. General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, preceded by 6:15 p.m. Candidate's Forum. PLEASE NOTE: The candidates' forum is replacing the stewards' meeting. Meetings are at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

## Northwest Oregon Labor Council

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

## Operating Engineers 701

PLEASE NOTE: The following meetings are Pension Education Seminars.

District 1 meets 8:00 p.m. Friday, Feb. 3, at the Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 1 meets 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, at the Longview Electrician's Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave., Longview.

District 5 meets 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 2 meets 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at the Marriott Res. Inn, 25 Club Road, Eugene (off north end of Ferry St. bridge).

District 3 meets 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash Street, North

Bend.

District 3 meets 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at the Sleep Inn, 2855 NW Edenbower Blvd., Roseburg.

District 3 meets 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at the Courtyard Marriott, 600 Airport Rd., Medford.

## Oregon Tradeswomen Network

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at 1714 NE Alberta St., Portland

## Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

SPECIAL CALL MEETING: Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Pension representatives will be attending this meeting. All members close to pension age are highly encouraged to attend. There will be no regular union business at this meeting.

## Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 24, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

## Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28. Meetings are at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

## Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26 Ave., Portland.

## Sheet Metal Workers 16

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

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

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

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 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, Feb. 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, Feb. 14, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

## 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, 517 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 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

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# 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. All retirees are welcome to attend.

## CARPENTERS

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

## ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retired Electricians of Local 48, wives and friends meet 11:15 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Steamers Restaurant, 8303 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. A brief business meeting and drawing will follow. Ample parking available.

For further information and reservations, please call Vera Larson at 503 252-2296.

## FLOOR COVERERS 1236

Retirees meet 11:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10, at JJ North's Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

## GLASS WORKERS 740

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

## NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

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

## OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, 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, Feb. 9, at Lung Fung Restaurant, 2025 N. Lombard St., Portland. (1/2 block west of Denver, next to gas station, parking in rear) RSVP - Vince 502 289-3427

## UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

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

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# Union drive at Lottery in limbo

SALEM — A group workers at the Oregon Lottery Commission has been campaigning to unionize with Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503 — the biggest of the unions representing employees of the State of Oregon. The Lottery is one of the few large state agencies that is still nonunion, and some workers are unhappy with what they see as arbitrary work rules and pay policies. Unlike other state employees, workers at the Lottery have no fixed pay steps or cost-of-living increases.

In mid-November, SEIU turned in a stack of signed union authorization cards

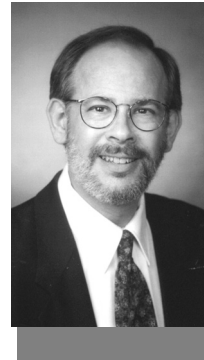
to show the union has majority support, and the Oregon Employment Relations Board, which handles union elections among state employees, certified that 156 of 303 eligible workers had signed the cards. Currently, state government rules provide for this “card-check” method of union certification as an alternative to the traditional union election.

The 156 cards represented 51.5 percent — a majority — but Lottery management is holding off on recognizing the union because 17 workers who signed the cards later changed their minds and asked for the cards back. The

state has no rules for what to do in such a situation, so the campaign entered a state of limbo.

Last month, 133 workers signed an informal petition calling for a union election to be held in order to settle the matter. The petition was signed by both pro and anti-union workers, with both sides expecting to win.

At press time, pro-union workers planned to meet to discuss their options.



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## Carpenters set toy drive record

Grand totals have been calculated, and the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters set new records for contributions to the Portland Fire Bureau’s “Toy and Joy Makers” holiday program.

Last year, Carpenter unions, members, contractors and associations collected \$4,200 in cash and 993 gifts to be distributed in the metro area. An additional 404 gifts were distributed in outlying areas.

During the last seven years, the Car-

penters have raised more than \$20,000 and collected nearly 10,000 toys, said Bruce Dennis, president of the Regional Council and coordinator of the toy drive.

“This would not be possible without our union contractors, associations and various community organizations as partners,” Dennis said.

Participants in the toy drive each receives a hardwood plaque of recognition specially made by students at the Timberlake Job Corps Center.

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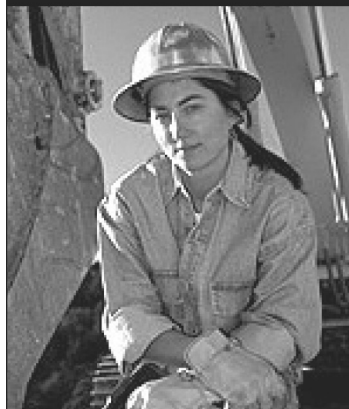
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## The Working Families Party rewrites the script for pro-worker politics

We may have found a new answer to the question, "What's the matter with Kansas?"

Author Thomas Frank posed that question in the title of his much-cited book that explores "how conservatives won the heart of America." It's a question that resonates in every state where working people continue to vote for politicians who support trade deals that trash our jobs, bail out corporations that renege on their retirement promises and let employers like Wal-Mart encourage their workers to sign up for health insurance paid by us taxpayers.

The new answer to that question comes from New York, where the Working Families Party is using old-fashioned issues organizing and an electoral system that empowers minor parties to force both Democrats and Republicans to pay attention to its pro-worker agenda.

New York may be a blue state in presidential elections, but it has a Republican governor, and Republicans control one legislative chamber. So if the Working Families Party can force a minimum wage increase through New York's Legislature and override a gubernatorial veto, as it did last year, perhaps it offers something worth copying in red states like Kansas and blue states like Oregon and Washington.

What Frank dissects in his book about Kansas is the politics of diversion. Working people might wake up worrying about the cost of health care 50 weeks out of the year. But, somehow, during the two weeks before an election, they start obsessing about their right to keep their guns or someone else's right to marry a person of the same sex — and those issues suddenly overwhelm the debate about how we can make health care more affordable.

Then those hot-button social issues start to fade the day after the election, and working people start worrying all over again about rising health care costs and their shrinking family budgets.

The antidote to the politics of diversion is the politics of focus: Stick to the issues that matter and keep talking to voters, 52 weeks a year, about what their elected officials are doing to help or hurt their jobs and their families' well-being.

I noted in this column last year how the AFL-CIO's Working America program is doing exactly that. But the Working Families Party does that and more. Because it is a political party, it has the right to nominate candidates in federal, state and local elections. And, because New York's election laws encourage major party candidates to seek and run with the endorsement of minor parties, the Working Families Party has maximized the power of its ballot line to bring wayward Democrats home on pocketbook issues and attract Republicans who support a good jobs agenda.

New York's system of voting is called "fusion." It sounds arcane, but we used to have this system in Oregon and Washington, until big-money interests forced its repeal in the early 1900s. It allows minor parties to co-endorse candidates of the major parties and present those candidates separately to the voters on the minor party's ballot line; then it combines or "fuses" the votes that candidates receive when they appear more than once on the ballot. With this system, minor parties are no longer forced to play the role of spoilers in elections. When they organize well on issues that resonate with the voters, they can bring the major party candidates to their doorstep, begging for that extra

listing on the party's ballot line that can mean the difference between winning and losing a close election.

The experience in New York also shows that working people, who may be divided over the Democratic and Republican Party platforms on social issues, are often willing to set those concerns aside and cast their votes for candidates of either party who support pro-worker positions on economic issues. When they can vote for a candidate on the ballot line of a party that represents clear solutions to their everyday concerns, they're no longer faced with the dilemma of wasting their vote in order to send a message to the top candidates.

Fusion voting gives more power to the voters, who can both send a message to a candidate and put that candidate in office with votes attached to their message.

There's a song about New York that says if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere. The Working Families Party is taking its show on the road now with the promise of focus and fusion as the means to force politicians to deliver for working families again, state by state. That show will be playing at the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Hall in Portland Friday, Feb. 3, and it could be ready for a long run.

For more information, go to [www.oregonwfp.org](http://www.oregonwfp.org).

*(Full disclosure: During the past month, I have been paid to provide consulting services to the Working Families Party in Oregon and Washington. But I was not asked to write this column, nor was I compensated for writing this column.)*

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

## Bush makes recess appointments to NLRB

WASHINGTON, D.C. — President George W. Bush last month made two recess appointments to the five-member National Labor Relations Board. On Jan. 4 he appointed Republican Peter Kirsanow, and on Jan. 17 he named Democrat Dennis Walsh to serve on the Board. Under recess appointments they can serve until the adjournment of Congress in 2007.

This marks the first time that the NLRB has been at full strength since December 2004. The current members are Republicans Robert Battista, chair, and Peter Schaumber, and Democrat

Wilma Liebman.

During the holiday recess Bush also appointed Ronald Meisburg to serve as general counsel of the NLRB. Meisburg served on the NLRB from Jan. 12, 2004 to Dec. 8, 2004, also under a recess appointment by Bush.

Walsh served as a Board member from Dec. 30, 2000 to Dec. 20, 2001 under a recess appointment by President Bill Clinton, and again from Dec. 17, 2002, to Dec. 16, 2004, after being nominated by Bush and confirmed by the Senate. During the past year Walsh has been on Liebman's legal staff.

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## ...Labor Honor Roll

(From Page 2)

Union leaders who sat with Stack on the Labor Press board in the early 1900s included Otis D. Forte of the Brewery Trades; Frank R. Raebig of the Metal Trades; W.F. Otto of the Printing Trades; and Ben T. Osborne of the Building Trades. Osborne was the leader of Iron Workers Local 29 and also served as an international union vice president. He led the Oregon State Federation of Labor as its executive secretary-treasurer from 1926 until his death in 1938.

**OTTO A. HARTWIG**, of Portland Painters Local 10, was president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor from 1916-1924 and was president of the Portland Cooperative Labor Temple Association when the Portland Labor Temple at SW Fourth Avenue and Jefferson Street was built. The cornerstone-laying ceremonies took place on Labor Day 1920. That structure was replaced in June 1966 by a new Labor Center at 201 SW Arthur St. The old Labor Temple was torn down in 1967 as part of an Urban Renewal project. The labor movement lost the Labor Center in 1978 when a bank foreclosed on the mortgage. Prior to his death in 1972, Hartwig worked as an industrial safety consultant. He was a member of Painters Local 10 for 65 years.

**TWO MEN** with long and productive years in the labor movement were Gust Anderson and Phil Brady. Anderson was one of the founders in 1917 of Portland Streetcarman's Local 757 — which later evolved into Amalgamated Transit Union Division 757. In 1923 Anderson was elected secretary-treasurer of the Portland Labor Council, which later became the Multnomah County Labor Council and now is a part of the multi-county Northwest Oregon Labor Council, based in Portland. Anderson held the labor council post until January 1958. Brady was secretary of Teamsters Local 499 for many years and was president of Teamsters Joint Council No. 37. In addition, Brady was president of the Multnomah County Labor Council. Anderson, a Republican, and Brady, a Democrat, both had distinguished careers in the Oregon Legislature at Salem. Anderson died in 1969 at age 81. Brady died at age 87 in 1974.

**CARPENTER B. W. SLEEMAN**, of Portland, was in 1925 elected president of the Oregon State Federation of Labor. He defeated C.M. Rynerson, editor of the Labor Press and a member of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58. Bert Sleeman, a member of Carpenters Local 226, held the federation office for one year but he served for a number of years as president of the State Council of Carpenters and as a business agent of the old Portland District Council of Carpenters. He died in 1966. Carpenters Local 226 and other locals of the United Brotherhood later merged to form Carpenters Local 247, which is based in its own building on North Lombard Street and Brandon Avenue.

**TWO LEADERS** of the Oregon State Federation of Labor many decades ago were D.E. Nickerson and Paul E. Gurske. Nickerson, a member of Portland Carpenters Local 226, was elected executive secretary-treasurer of the federation at its 1939 convention in Eugene. That was the organization's top job. He had served as president from 1935-1938. Gurske, also of Portland, a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, was elected president at the 1939 convention. They served together until 1944. Nickerson died that year. Later, Gurske was appointed by Governor Earl Snell to the Oregon State Industrial Accident Commission. Gurske moved to Arizona after he retired from the state board. Local 226 later became part of Carpenters Local 247.

**HAROLD PRITCHETT** was elected the first president of the International Woodworkers of America when the union was formed and joined the Congress of Industrial Organizations at meetings in 1937 at Portland and in Washington at Tacoma. Worth Lowery succeeded him, followed by Claude Ballard, J.E. Fadling and, in 1951, Al F. Hartung.

**EARL HARTLEY** was an early leader of the Lumber & Sawmill Workers Union. The union now has the name Western Council of Industrial Workers, which is based in Portland. The WCIW is affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters.

**KELLEY LOE** served on the staff of the Oregon State Federation of Labor from the 1930s into the 1950s as a lobbyist at the Oregon Legislature and as a publicist and labor historian. He had moved to the Northwest from the Midwest and was a printer and an editor. He became a member of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58 and before working for the labor federation had been employed by the Labor Press. He was succeeded at the state labor federation by Tom Scanlon, who earlier was on the staff of The Union Register, a newspaper then published by the Lumber & Sawmill Workers and now published by the Western Council of Industrial Workers.

All of the unionists mentioned in this article merit being listed on a Labor Honor Roll as do others who will be mentioned in a later column.

## Kulongoski won't cross NYU picket line

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski was prepared to cancel a scheduled appearance to speak at a New York University (NYU) School of Law forum Jan. 23 unless it was moved off-campus. The reason: he didn't want to cross a union picket line.

About 1,100 graduate teaching assistants at NYU, a private institution, walked out Nov. 9 to protest the university's refusal to recognize the union and bargain a new contract.

The union — Graduate Student Organizing Committee Local 2110, an affiliate of the United Auto Workers — made history in April 2001 as the first union for graduate teaching assistants at a private university. Their first contract was ratified in January 2002.

However, in 2004, new Bush Administration appointees to the National Labor Relations Board — on a 3-2 vote — reversed a 2000 NLRB decision that graduate assistants at private universities were "employees" and thus entitled

to union representation.

The 2004 ruling didn't bar collective bargaining outright, but it gave private universities the option not to recognize a union. Last August, NYU did just that.

In a letter to students and faculty, administrators said that collective bargaining interfered with academic decision-making and was not needed to protect the interests of graduate students. "We believe that it is of the utmost importance to respect the principle that students are students and not employees."

In a show of support for their TAs, more than 500 professors have moved their classes off campus, so as not to cross picket lines.

During the holiday break, administrators said graduate students who remained on strike when classes resumed in January would lose their stipends. Graduate assistants are primary instructors in 165 of NYU's 2,700 classes, and many more hold recitation sections and

help with grading.

Kulongoski learned of the situation about four days prior to the engagement in New York. His staff and representatives of the UAW spent a frantic weekend Jan. 21-22 looking for an off-campus venue. They found one at a nearby church.

"All my life, I have stood up for working people — from the time I was a bricklayer as a young man, through my years as a labor lawyer and now as governor," Kulongoski told the AFL-CIO's Weekly Update. "We have to stand in solidarity together to make certain that all working people have a voice in decisions that affect their lives."

"I'm proud that Oregon's governor refused to cross the picket line. The right to organize is a fundamental human right. When that right is violated, we must not look away and let that wrong go unnoticed," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain.

## Blumenauer, Baird name new labor liaisons

Oregon Congressman Earl Blumenauer and Washington U.S. Rep. Brian Baird have named new labor liaisons for 2006.

Willie Smith is taking over for Tom Markgraf in Blumenauer's office and Erin Hyppa is succeeding Harry Glaus on Baird's staff.

Glaus, a retired Teamsters official, has worked at the part-time post for the past seven years.

"I appreciate and commend Harry's distinguished work for this office and

for the people of Southwest Washington," said Baird.

Markgraf has been Blumenauer's labor liaison for seven years, as well. He will work on the congressman's campaign staff, but also has taken a position with Columbia River Crossings to build a new Interstate Bridge linking Oregon and Washington.

Smith joined Blumenauer's staff in January 2005. Prior to that he directed campaigns for Oregon Congresswoman Darlene Hooley and Secretary of State

Bill Bradbury.

Hyppa assumed labor liaison duties in Baird's Third Congressional District on Feb. 1. She has served on Baird's district staff since January 2005. Prior to that she was the Clark County labor liaison and 17th Legislative District field organizer for U.S. Senator Patty Murray's 2004 re-election campaign.

"I am confident Erin will prove excellent at maintaining our strong relationship with the labor community," Baird said.

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701 West Eighth Avenue, Suite 1200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Tel: 907.276-5152

1981 Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Suite 220  
Wasilla, Alaska 99654  
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# Union card is still a worker's best investment

Forget the lottery or stock market. Carrying a union card is still the best investment a worker can make, according to the latest figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The median weekly earnings of full-time union members in 2005 was \$801 — about 29 percent more than nonunion workers' pay (\$622). The difference was even greater among Hispanic union workers (\$713), who made 50 percent more than Hispanic nonunion workers.

And BLS figures show the increase in union members' wages last year was nearly double that of the nonunion — 2.6 percent compared to only 1.6 percent for nonunion workers.

On top of that, a March 2005 National Compensation Survey shows that union workers enjoy better pensions, health and dental insurance, with less out-of-pocket costs.

According to the government survey, 85 percent of union workers participate in pension and health plans, compared to 46 percent of nonunion workers. Seventy-three percent of union workers are offered a defined pension plan by their employers, compared to only 16 percent of the nonunion.

As for out-of-pocket expenses for family health insurance premiums, nonunion workers pay twice as much as unionized workers — 16 percent of the premium cost vs. 32 percent.

Workers are beginning to realize the value of a union card, as membership grew nationally by 213,000 last year (the first increase since 1999). Still, the percentage of union workers remained flat at 12.5 percent — or 15.7 million members. BLS said an

additional 1.5 million people were represented by a union, but were not members.

Last year, women union members' numbers grew by 222,000. The percentage of female union members rose to 11.3 percent in 2005 from 11.1 percent, while male union membership fell to 13.5 percent from 13.8 percent.

In the private-sector, unionists were 7.8 percent of the workforce, while in the public-sector, workers made up 36.8 percent.

In Oregon, union membership was 213,000, down 11,000 from 2004. Union members made up 14.5 percent of the state's workforce. BLS said an additional 18,000 workers were represented by a union, but weren't members). These numbers continue a long-term downward trend in "union density." Comparatively, union workers made up 22.3 percent (222,900) of the Oregon workforce in 1983, the first year that comparable data was available.

Nationwide, in 1983 there were 17.7 million union members (20.1 percent of the workforce).

In Washington State, the number of union members climbed 13,000 to 523,000, but overall union density dropped from 19.3 percent in 2004 to 19.1 percent in 2005. The state added more than 100,000 jobs last year.

Washington continues to rank 6th highest in the nation in terms of the unionization rate. Only New York (26.1 percent), Hawaii (25.8 percent), Alaska (22.8 percent), Michigan and New Jersey (20.5 percent each) have higher rates. Oregon ranked 14th na-

tionwide.

The least-unionized states were South Carolina (2.3 percent), North Carolina (2.9 percent), Arkansas and Virginia (3.3 percent each) and Utah (3.9 percent).

Surveys by the national AFL-CIO indicate that more than half of American workers (57 percent) say they would join a union today if they could.

But workers who try often face an array of employer tactics to suppress their efforts. According to Cornell University's Kate Brofenbrenner, 25 percent of employers illegally fire workers trying to unionize, 75 percent hire outside consultants to run anti-union campaigns, 92 percent force workers to attend closed-door anti-union meetings and, even when workers are successful in forming a union, in one-third of the instances, employers never negotiate a contract.

"In a political climate that's hostile to workers' rights, these numbers illustrate the extraordinary will of workers to gain a voice on the job despite enormous obstacles," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

At the AFL-CIO's request, members of Congress last year introduced the Employee Free Choice Act. The legislation would require employers to recognize a union after a majority of

workers sign cards authorizing union representation. It also would provide for mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes, and authorize stronger penalties for violation of the law when workers seek a union.

The bill has 208 co-sponsors in the House, including all 10 Democratic U.S. representatives in Oregon and Washington, and 42 co-sponsors in the Senate, including the three Democratic senators from Oregon and Washington.

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## BENNETT HARTMAN MORRIS & KAPLAN, LLP

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- Personal Injury • Labor
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