Boilermakers’ first convention in 21st century begins July 23

When delegates to the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers’ 30th Consolidated Convention came to order on July 23 in Las Vegas, the meeting marked the third century in which members of our union have been represented in convention.

Boilermakers, and the other crafts we represent, held their first conventions in the 19th century. Not only the Boilermakers union, but also the Blacksmiths, the Stove Workers, and the Metal Finishers trace their roots back that far.

That we have managed to stay intact and represent our members for this long is testimony to the wisdom our founding fathers had in creating a union guided by a constitution, which is reviewed and renewed at each convention by democratically-elected delegates representing all of our lodges.

Their job is not easy. As the supreme body of our union, the consolidated convention elects International officers and revises our constitution as necessary to keep up with changes within our Brotherhood.

In order to make wise decisions regarding these changes, delegates must be ready to represent the best interests of their own lodge, their own industry, and their own area. But they must also be mindful of the needs of members from other lodges, other industries, and other areas.

The consolidated convention is the only meeting at which all areas, all industries, and all lodges are represented. In a few days’ time, delegates will discuss matters of immense importance and make decisions that will guide this International Brotherhood for another five years.

A look at past conventions

Sometimes raucous sometimes quiet, but never dull, our International’s 30 plus conventions have made a lot of Boilermaker history since 1881.

The Brotherhood has held “consolidated” conventions since two organizations consolidated (merged) to form our Brotherhood in 1883. They first met at a common convention in 1894. Just as they do today, the earliest conventions promoted solidarity and a sense of purpose among Boilermakers.

Chicago’s Local 1 was organized in January 1880, and in October of that year, with eight other locals, formed the National Boiler Makers and Helpers Protective and Benevolent Union. They held their first convention in Chicago in August 1881. This organization is the earliest direct ancestor of our union.

Not much is known about this first convention, except that 20 men attended and elected Chicago organizer Thomas P. Dwyer as the group’s first president. He immediately launched a successful organizing drive along the Great Lakes and the eastern seaboard.

In 1888, a second Boilermaker union, calling itself the National Brotherhood of Boiler Makers, was formed, headquartering itself in Atlanta. The brotherhood held a convention every year from 1889 to 1893, the year they voted to consolidate (merge) with the Chicago-based brotherhood to form the International Brotherhood of Boiler Makers and Iron Ship Builders.

On June 4, 1894, representatives of 150 lodges met in Milwaukee, Wis., for the first consolidated convention of the new brotherhood. Since then, all important questions affecting the Brotherhood have been decided at a consolidated convention.

Consolidated conventions were held every other year from 1894 through 1914. Then they were held at three-year intervals from 1914 through 1930, four-year intervals from 1930 through 1981, and every five years since. The reason for increasing the time between conventions has always been the same: conventions are expensive.

It is a daunting task, but our delegates always rise to the occasion, and when the convention is over, we find our union stronger than ever — and ready for another century of service.
CHARLES W. JONES, International President

The number of new apprentices indentured and graduated, and each year the skill and knowledge levels of graduate apprentices seem to go higher. The National Education Center has also increased the number of journeymen who have completed our course in foreman training.

Members-only benefits

Our BOILERSMAKER-Blacksmith National Pension Trust has announced 19 different improvements since the last convention. Now pensions receive benefits totaling 50 percent of their total lifetime contributions each year of their retirement. The retirement age for full benefits has been reduced to 59 1/2 years.

The Boilermakers National Health and Welfare Fund has also seen many improvements, most recently the addition of a searchable online database listing participating health care providers in every area of the country (see the article on page 11). Boilermakers whose health care needs are met by this fund can go to our web site and search for physicians, hospitals, and clinics by zip code, city, county, or state.

The Boilermakers National Annuity Trust has grown at an annualized rate of 8.8 percent since 1988, far better than well-known mutual funds. Since 1996, the annuity fund has grown from a respectable $20 million to more than half-a-billion dollars at the end of 2000.

Our Union Privilege benefit program continues to provide credit cards, mortgages, loans, legal insurance, dental plans, discounts, and many other benefits for our members. Since 1996, we have awarded more than $240,000 in college scholarships to children of Boilermakers.

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Continued from page 1

covered 76 city blocks in what is now San Francisco’s marina district. Even though World War I was raging in Europe, every state and every European nation had an exhibition. It took three years to build, and the buildings were designed to last only a year and then be torn down after the fair. Almost every one of them did get torn down, including the centerpiece building, the 43-story Tower of Jewels. The Boilermakers got to town in the summer of 1914, and there was plenty of work to be done, Boilermakers have always delighted in each other’s company. The consolidated convention is the only meeting of our Brotherhood in which every lodge sends a delegate. In addition to the work they do on the convention floor, delegates are able to speak with each other informally and compare notes on organizing, employer relations, contract negotiating, and whatever else comes to mind. No doubt this convention will create many memories for the delegates who attend, and they will accomplish much important work. We tend to think of history as events that occurred long ago, but history is merely a record of what people have done. Delegates to the 30th Consolidated Convention of the Boilermakers union will be creating the latest of many chapters in our union’s history. We can be confident that they will serve all our members well, and that future Boilermakers will look back on this convention as one where our Brotherhood was strong, our decisions wise, and our actions brought honor to the delegates who were there.

Joseph Franklin served many years as international president (36 years, from 1908 to 1944) and attended more conventions as president (ten) than any other president to date.


Women Boilermakers became an important part of our workforce and our union during World War II, particularly in the nation’s shipyards. By the 1935 convention, women were an integral part of our union and served as convention delegates.

From 1917 to 1944, all Boilermaker conventions were held in Kansas City, many of them in the Hotel Baltimore, pictured above from the 1925 convention.

http://www.iblworkingfamilies.com
http://www.boilermakers.org
Shaffer is president of the Mississippi AFL-CIO

ROBERT SHAFFER, a 32-year member of Local 903, West Pard, Miss., has been sworn in as president of the Mississippi State AFL-CIO, effective June 1, 2001.

Shaffer will finish the remaining 12-month term of retiring president, Neil Fowler. Prior to becoming president, Shaffer served since 1984 as the state AFL-CIO’s executive vice president.

Shaffer has been an employee of the Babcock & Wilcox manufacturing plant since 1969, and has served as the Local 903 president since 1984. In 1988, he took over management of the Babcock & Wilcox Employees Federal Credit Union, where assets have grown to over $6 million and the credit union has consistently earned a number one financial rating.

A staunch trade unionist, Shaffer is a firm believer in 100 percent union membership. His organizing efforts have resulted in Babcock & Wilcox becoming the largest 100 percent union shop in a right-to-work state.

Shaffer plans to use his organizing skills to increase local unionization for the state AFL-CIO. In his first official function as state AFL-CIO president, Shaffer addressed members attending a picnic sponsored by Boilermakers Local 525, Middleton, Tenn. Shaffer not only encouraged the members to organize their coworkers, but also got the local to become an affiliate of the Mississippi State AFL-CIO for its members working in Mississippi.

Shaffer’s successful efforts to keep the parent company from closing the West Point Babcock & Wilcox facility will also help him in his new role at state AFL-CIO president. An affiliate lodge has already approached him for help in keeping their plant from closing.

The Mississippi State AFL-CIO represents approximately 69,000 members. With Shaffer in the president’s seat, these numbers are already starting to grow.

Local 903 president to use his organizing and negotiating skills to benefit workers all across the state

A SLOGAN AT THE Anderson Air Force Base in Guam reads, “Where America’s Day Begins.” Now that Boilermakers have built two jet fuel tanks at the base, crew member Dick Lockyer, of Local 182, Salt Lake City, Utah, has made a slight addition to the slogan: “so does the union tank builder.”

Lockyer sent these photos of their work at the base, along with a note that Boilermaker welders are holding their own against nonunion tank outfits. Working for the Morse Construction Group, this Boilermaker crew built two 40-foot by 50-foot jet fuel tanks.

“We finished both tanks on time, without any injuries, and the client was very happy,” said Lockyer. “We had a small crew and still done good!”

Working with Lockyer on the project were former Ray Peit of Local 502, Babcock & Wilcox employees Dick Lockyer, asst. for-"mer shop steward J.J. Rhea, Int. Rep. Warren Fairley, and AFL-CIO Missis-issippi State Coordinator Jim Evans.

Metro Machine earns job creation awards

Awards also honor Local 2000 members

METRO MACHINE of Pennsylvania, Inc., has earned recognition from Penn-sylvania Governor Tim Ridge for improving the quality of life within their local community.

On October 19, 2000, Labor and Industry Secretary Johnnny Butler pre-sented one state award, one veterans’ award, and ten regional awards for out-standing accomplishments in creating jobs for Pennsylvania workers. Metro Machine received the state’s Job Creator for Veterans award and the Job Creator Award for the Southeast Region.

Metro was selected by the Pennsyl- vania Department of Labor and Indus-try, and the more than 5,000 employers of the Employer Advisory Council, for their outstanding accomplishment in job creation, human resource practices, and service to the community. In 2000, Metro hired 208 employee-owners; over 70 of these workers are veterans.

Metro works closely with both the Philadelphia and Chester Job-Centers to recruit workers for Navy ship repair and Navy ship dismantling. Local 2000, Chester, Pa., has been the exclusive agency for gaining agent for Metro Machine work-ers since September 1994.

L-667 members will help build $350 million power plant

Panda Energy to employ over 800 union workers

WEST VIRGINIA Governor Bob Wise has good news for his state and the labor movement. Panda Energy International will use local union workers to build its $350 million power plant in Cabell County.

Building the 1100-megawatt base power plant will create 800 to 1,000 construction jobs for 18 to 20 months.

This is great news for the members of Local 667, Charleston, W.Va., said BM-ST George Pinkerman. “The plant was a lot of our members to work and keep them close to home. This is an example of what ACT, the building trades, and the governor can do when they come together to create something positive.”

Gov. Wise joined Panda Energy Pres-ident Todd Carter and Steve Burton, bus. mgr. of the Tri-State Building

Look who’s promoting right-to-work-for-less laws

IF YOU WERE on a certain mailing list, late last year you’d have received an important-looking letter with Senator Bob Smith’s (R-NH) listed on the return address. Because it came in the holiday season, you might have mistaken it for a solicitation from a charity.

This letter asked for money, all right, but the cause was no charity. Bob Smith was lending his name to fund-raising efforts of the National Right-to-Work Foundation, a consortium of business men dedicated to destroying unions.

Smith isn’t the only senator working to drive down wages for American workers. On June 18, several Republic-an senators met with representatives of 60 business groups, anti-union cor-porations, and lobbyists in Washing-ton, D.C., at a reception and dinner to raise money for the so-called right-to-work initiative in Oklahoma.

Outside the posh fund-raiser, spon-sored by the U.S. Chamber of Com-merce and Sen. Don Nickles (R-OK), more than 200 working family activists picketed and protested. Protestors

showered Sen. Nickles with boos and cries of “shame, shame!” as he crossed the picket line. Nickles earned a zero on working family issues in his A-F-C-I-O voting record in 2000, and regularly campaigns against unions.

Rep. Major Owens (D-NY) showed his support for working families by marching with the activists, and when Rep. Dale Kildee (D-MI), on his way to another function, stopped to learn what was going on, he smiled and waved a protest sign over his head.

“Right to Work for Less” laws weaken unionmes and depress pay by allowing some workers to enjoy union-negotiated wages and benefits without paying their share of the costs. Accord-ing to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Sta-tistics, workers who live in states with right to work for less laws earn an average of nearly $8,000 less a year than workers elsewhere.

Learn about our efforts to stop right-to-work-for less laws at the Boilermaker’s LEAP! web site: http://capwiz.com/boilermaker/home/
Canadian members attend seminars

These members attended the first of five training seminars in Canada, at Local 146 in Edmonton, Alberta, on February 3-4, 2001.

The two-day education programs, like this one at Local 555 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, split training time between steward duties and construction jurisdiction.

Local 158 members attend steward training

Attendees of a Local 158 steward training program include, l to r., Robert Smith, Dave Turner, Jim Dolan, Mike Forme, L-158 Pres. Kevin Kocher, Dave Deline, Lanny Hate, Kevin Baldwin, Bill Gast, Ron Adamson, and Dave Guilette.

The Boilermakers' steward training programs, held at such places as Regina, Saskatchewan; February 7-8 at Local 353 in Winnipeg, Manitoba; February 9-10 at Local 359 in Vancouver, British Columbia; and February 11-12 for Local 359 members in Nanaimo.

Stop HR 877 — a sham training bill

Three representatives have realized that HR 877, the so-called Skilled Workforce Enhancement Act, is a sham. This bill purports to promote and reward excellence in training programs, but as written it would not guarantee skilled training efforts and could result in federal tax credits going to sham training programs in a wasteful and unaccountable manner.

The Boilermakers' steward training programs educate union stewards, local officers, and locals about labor-management relations, effective grievance handling, and duties of a union steward.

To find out if your representative is a co-sponsor, go to the LEAP! web site: http://capwiz.com/boilermaker/
Pension reform becomes law

Section 415 no longer unfairly limits retirees on multi-employer pensions

BOILERMAKERS CAN NOW retire confident that they will receive all of the benefits guaranteed by their multi-employer pension plan. An amendment to the 2001 tax act, S. 1990, the Bush tax cut, fixes Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code, which limits the amount a retiree can receive in benefits from a multi-employer plan, regardless of what the plan guarantees in benefits.

The new measure raises the dollar limit to $600,000 at age 62, eliminates the rule that benefits cannot exceed the average of the five highest wages for three consecutive income years, and raises the limit on annual contributions to 100 percent of wages from 25 percent.

These and other reforms will affect many construction Boilermakers. 

The Section 415 relief will take effect on January 1, 2002. For people who have already retired, the person's benefits will be recalculated, as of the date of retirement, using the new limits. The higher benefit will then go into pay status, starting January 1, 2002. It will not be retroactive.

Grassroots action gets it done

INTERNATIONAL. President Charles W. Johnson II led Boilermaker members for making passage of pension reform possible. Without their help we were able to include language reforming Section 415 in the tax bill. We are thankful that Chairman Grassley included our provision to allow workers to receive their full pension benefits," said Jones. "For too many years, workers have been deprived of the pensions that they have earned because Section 415 unfairly overrode the benefit rates defined by their multi-employer plans, often decreasing the amount of attention that benefits well below what was negotiated."

We struggled for five years to raise this issue’s profile on Capitol Hill. Now workers will no longer be subject to unfair Section 415 restrictions when receiving their pensions. This is an enormous victory. Our ability to work with members of Congress on both sides of the aisle was key. Workers will now get the full pension they have been counting on for retirement."

Wall Street will spend $20 million to sell privatization

A GROUP OF financial-service firms has created the Coalition for American Financial Security, which plans to launch a $20 million advertising campaign promoting Bush’s privatization plan, according to the Wall Street Journal. 

The financial service industry has a lot to gain from privatization. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities estimated that if only two years ago, points of Social Security’s 12.4 percent payroll tax would be diverted into private accounts. That would give Wall Street $86 billion to play with, generating even more high commissions.

The coalition will aim their pitch mainly to blacks and minorities, groups they believe will be vulnerable to exaggerated claims of returns from stock ownership because historically they have not invested in the market. For at least six years, the American public has been bombarded with disinformation about the Social Security system. Many other responsible newspapers and magazines now print, or once printed, statements about Social Security that are politically motivated and not supported by economic analysis or history.

For example, many make reference to Social Security’s crisis, even though the projections of exactly the way the Greenspan Commission anticipated in 1986, and has enough money to pay all benefits until about 2038. Others speak about the huge burden placing on the funds by our own population in the future, even though costs (as a percentage of GDP) are projected to rise more slowly over the next 20 years than they did from 1970 to 1990. If you believe these misleading claims, privatization looks good, even though every privatization plan guarantees reduced retirement benefits.

Bush energy plan misses target

CITING HIGH gasoline prices and outages in California, President Bush has declared the nation to be in an “energy crisis,” and says the only remedy is immediate government action to stimulate oil production by rolling back environmental regulations and increasing subsidies to energy producers.

If you believe these misleading claims, privatization looks good, even though every privatization plan guarantees reduced retirement benefits.

Meanwhile, the shortages that are causing these price hikes are already disappearing without government action because of a basic premise of economics that the Bush Administration seems to have forgotten: nobody makes a product up to chance to make a loss.

As one oil executive put it, “Prices go up, and we start drilling.”

Joy Hakes, before recently the director of the Energy Information Administration in Washington, says the only reason prices rose in the first place was deregulation.


As one oil executive put it, “Prices go up, and we start drilling.”

There are no guaranteed sales, energy companies did not want to risk the expense of expanding production. By the time that price is back up, they’re expanding with a vengeance.

Power companies plan to add 92,000 megawatts of electricity generating capacity in the next 18 months, enough to power 90 million homes — and enough to drive prices back down."

Sweatshops are all over

Your favorite brands may be made with child labor

THE NEXT TIME you buy a blouse made in Bangladesh, or pants made in China, ask yourself how much money you would be willing to pay to ensure that the people working in the factories where purchasing received a livable wage.

Ten cents? A quarter? Fifty cents?

That’s how much a textile worker makes per hour in each of those countries, respectively.

Workers can sell out for as little as one item per hour, so the companies selling these items could easily double or triple their workers’ wages simply by adding a dime, a quarter, or a half-dollar to the price you pay — and still have change left over to stuff in their own pockets.

Yet when multinational corporations are shown the door at the FTAA in Quebec in March, they said they couldn’t promise to abide by minimum wage standards, after all, that would make doing business in third-world countries too expensive.

Requiring countries to pass laws that protect children from oppressive work conditions is too expensive.

Asking supervisors at Wall-Mart’s Qin Shi Flanbag factory to stop the practice of breaking young girls who arrive late is too expensive. Compelling Stride-Rite to use a non-toxic glue at the Hwa Footwear plant so the 16-year-old girls who apply it by hand won’t be poisoned is too expensive.

Companies that raise their standards still show a profit

THE TOKYO YANG Indonesia shoe factory made the same argument a few years ago when confronted with complaints about the working conditions at the factory that makes Reebok shoes.

But in order to keep Reebok’s business, they spent $2 million to move $100 million annual income to move from a toluene-based glue to a water-based glue and add ventilation equipment.

The owner, Jung Moo Young, was surprised to learn that it made the company more productive when they didn’t breathe toluene all day. The change paid off for him and for the workers.

Yet Young still keeps wages low. The labor involved in making a Reebok shoe amounts to about a dollar, but Jung refuses to raise wages, saying that if he does so, some other company will get Reebok’s business.

He’s probably right. Despite highly-publicized policies requiring their suppliers to meet minimum standards for treatment of workers, most corporations turn a blind eye to abuses that they can’t see for themselves.

In a recent court case in American Samoa, 250 Vietnamese women garment workers sued their company, the Daewoosa Samoa, a garment supplier to J.C. Penney, Sears, MV Sport, and other retailers, for operating a sweatshop and abusing the women.

The women had paid up to $5,000 each for a spot in a $3,500-a-month sweatshop in an American factory, but Daewoosa treated them like slaves, keeping them in their dormitories and beating them when they objected.

Only after their case got worldwide media attention did these companies offer to help them out.
FTAA: Another road to the bottom

Bush wants us to roll out the fast track for FTAA — and roll over workers in the process

NAFTA ON STEROIDS That’s how people described the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). The FTAA is a plan to expand the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) throughout South America, binding 34 nations in North, Central, and South America into one free trade agreement.

This trade bloc would be larger than the European Union or the Asian blocs, with 800 million people and a combined gross domestic product of $30 trillion.

And if President Bush gets his way, his trade negotiators will be able to go behind closed doors to strike a deal for America’s inclusion in the FTAA — a deal that Congress won’t be allowed to alter.

FTAA grew out of a proposal the Clinton Administration made in 1994, at a Summit of the Americas in Miami. Trade ministers from all of Latin America, except Cuba, committed to creating the FTAA.

Formal negotiations began in 1998, at another Summit of the Americas in Santiago, Chile. At a press conference during the 2001 Summit of the Americans in Quebec City, Quebec, Bush asked Congress for fast-track authority to negotiate the FTAA, claiming that removal of tariffs is “a moral imperative.”

Tariffs are not the problem

But EVEN AS Bush spoke, 61 senators sent him a letter warning that they would oppose any new trade agreement that did not allow the United States to protect its companies against unfair trade practices by foreign governments.

These senators seem to understand what the White House cannot: that tariffs are only a very small part of the problem with FTAA.

As with NAFTA, the FTAA poses serious threats to the environments, labor rights, and social services of the countries involved. Although NAFTA and FTAA are usually called “trade agreements,” their most significant feature is the liberalization of investment. FTAA would allow speculators and multinational corporations free reign over the huge new markets created by expansion into South America.

To an extent never seen before, FTAA would limit the ability of governments in host countries to enact laws protecting their citizens. Three key provisions of the trade pact would allow corporations to dictate which laws are acceptable and which ones must be struck down or amended.

“National treatment” requires all signatory countries to treat businesses from the other signatory countries as though they were local businesses. The “regulatory takings” provision requires governments to compensate businesses for revenue lost because of any law that impedes investment. A third provision allows investors to sue governments for compensation when they believe the country’s laws have impeded their production.

Combined, these provisions can be used by manufacturers to bully governments into weakening their environmental, health, safety, and worker rights laws. Similar provisions in NAFTA have already generated a host of problems for the three countries that agreement covers: Canada, Mexico, and the U.S.

Whose country is it, anyway?

MOST AMERICANS believe that U.S. legislatures should make our laws, and U.S. courts should decide how they are interpreted. Canadians feel the same way about Canadian laws. But NAFTA (and FTAA) are changing the game.

When the state of California issued an executive order phasing out the sale of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE), a gasoline additive, they believed they were protecting California residents. MTBE has been found to be an animal carcinogen with the potential to cause human cancer, and because of its use in fuel, it began showing up in ground water and drinking wells.

But Methanes, the Canadian corporation that makes MTBE, saw it differently. They sued the U.S. government for $90 million, claiming that Califorina’s phase-out violates the company’s special investor rights granted under NAFTA by limiting the corporation’s ability to sell MTBE.

Companies sue all sorts of people in order to protect their profit base. The difference this time is that the suit will not be heard in a court, but in a NAFTA tribunal made up of government-appointed trade experts. If they decide that California’s environmental policy violates NAFTA’s investor protections, the U.S. government can be held liable for the corporation’s lost profits from not selling MTBE. The tribunal might even ask California to lift the ban.

A similar lawsuit was brought by the U.S.-based Ethyl Corporation against the Canadian government in 1998. Ethyl asked for $251 million because Canada banned the import of the gaso line additive methyl cyclopentadienyl manganese tricarbonyl (MMT) because of health risks.

Even though the state of California had banned MMT and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was working on a similar regulation, Ethyl claimed the Canadian ban violated NAFTA because it “expropriated” future profits and damaged Ethyl’s reputation. After learning that the NAFTA tribunal was likely to rule against its position, the Canadian government revoked the ban, paid Ethyl $13 million for lost profits, and agreed to issue a public statement declaring that there was no evidence that MMT posed health or environmental risks.

Now UPS is using the Canadian government’s revocation as a tactic in the FTAA. UPS has an unfair advantage over private delivery businesses. For UPS, what is at stake is access to more business, but for the Canadian government, what is at stake is their right to provide essential services to Canadian citizens.

As Canadian trade attorney Steve Shrybman has pointed out, “In an era when monopoly and commercial serv aces … is commingled, few public services, including health care and education, would be immune from similar corporate challenges.”

As with all decisions regarding international trade agreements, the people who decide will not be Canadian judges or judges, but an international tribunal that meets behind closed doors.

What NAFTA did to Mexico

BUSH AND OTHER FTAA supporters try to justify this agreement as a way for poverty-stricken South Americans to increase their income by increasing trade. But NAFTA did not improve wages or working conditions for Mex ican workers — it made them much worse.

Mexico’s economy has crumbled since the passage of NAFTA, sending nearly eight million people into poverty. Although NAFTA advocates point to increased industrialization along the border as a sign of prosperity, the 7.7 million more workers in Mexico earn less than before NAFTA, earning less than the minimum wage of $3.40 a day.

The growth of maquiladoras (foreign-owned plants that import goods duty free for assembly and export) in Mexico has been detrimental not only to workers, but also to Mexico’s domestic ally, U.S., and the U.S.

Foreign-owned factories grew from 11.7 percent before NAFTA to 73.1 percent by 1995, and manufacturing wages have decreased by 25 percent.

Because of the economic crisis in Mexico, floods of people have left their communities in search of better oppor tunities in the urban centers of Mexico or the U.S. Many emigrants have died crossing the border at the hands of the border patrol, because of exposure to the elements, or at the hands of bandits who prey on the vulnerability of people trying to hide from government agents.

What we can expect

WITH THE PASSAGE of the FTAA, rural and indigenous peoples of Central and South America will likely be forced into migration seeking employment in new maquiladoras across the border. Like their Mexican counterparts seeking work in urban areas, they, too, will face tremendous risks.

The environmental and public health problems of the Mexico’s maquiladoras will spread throughout all of Central and South America. As with NAFTA, the failure to include a strong agreement on environmental issues in the FTAA would be used as an added incentive for investors.

By reserving the authority of government to regulate services — even public services — FTAA will lead to more deregulation and privatization, raising the cost of health care, education, and social services. If companies like UPS succeed in challenging the right of a government to provide certain services because they unfairly compete with private enterprise, we might even see an end to public schools, public hospitals, and public transportation.

Loss of jobs is the most visible problem American and Canadian workers face from FTAA. Manufacturing work ers laid off by companies that move their facilities offshore are often unable to find employment at the same level of income, so they end up working in the service sector do not pay well.

Companies don’t actually have to leave the country to reap the benefits of lower wages. By threatening to leave, they can pit U.S. and Canadian workers against exploited workers throughout Latin America, winning concessions at the bargaining table.

And FTAA opens the door to laws suits arguing that worker protections obstruct trade. If an international tribun al agrees to hear such an argument, the labor laws of all countries might be made to mirror the weakest laws in the hemisphere. Under different circumstance, that could lead to the virtual elimination of laws protecting workers, even the right to form a union.

Bull market of the 1990s continues to transfer wealth to the already wealthy

The top one percent doubled the size of their piece of the economic pie to nearly 40% of all wealth

While corporate CEOs were enjoying massive pay and perks, including those published by the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University, have shown this inequality hurts employee morale and productivity and boosts turnover.

Shareholders foot the bill for excessive executive compensation packages. Almost two-thirds of CEO pay is in the form of stock options. Stock options now represent the equivalent of 13 percent of the average company — a level that defies common sense.

Corporations are allowed a deduction for CEO pay of up to $1 million, so this has become the base CEO salary. Boards of directors determine pay, and since directors are all executives of other corporations, they tend to pass out high salaries hoping you'll do the same when you sit on their board. Companies must keep their CEO pay competitive, so they raise it when other companies raise theirs, regardless of whether the boss deserves it.

For more information on CEO pay, visit the AFL-CIO's Executive Pay Watch page.

The share of the poor leaving poverty each year ranges from 29.1 percent in the Netherlands, to 43.7 percent in Canada, to 42 percent in the U.S. In 1990, there were 99 of them. By 2000, there were 274.

On average, about 28.6 percent of the poor in the U.S. escape poverty each year. The share of the poor leaving poverty in other industrialized countries ranges from 29.1 percent in the United Kingdom, to 43.7 percent in the Netherlands.

The poor in the U.S. are also more likely to fall back into poverty once they make it out. American poor are still better off than those in third-world countries, but most industrialized nations have universal medical care, better unemployment benefits, and free education.

CEO pay defies sense

Raises grow as profits and stock prices decline

YOUR RETIREMENT savings, the kids’ college funds, and other family finances may be victims of runaway CEO pay. Corporations routinely reward poor CEO performance with massive pay and perks, including those published by the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University, have shown this inequality hurts employee morale and productivity and boosts turnover.

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In 1980, the average CEO made 42 times what the average worker made. By 2000, that multiple had grown to 531.

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THE STOCK MARKET expanded at an unprecedented rate during the 1990s. All major to stock indexes had gains in every year except 1994. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, the best known index, climbed from just over $2,200 to nearly $12,000. Fueled by the public’s appetite for technology stocks, the NASDAQ index rose from under $500 to over $4,000, scoring an amazing 96 percent gain in 1999 alone.

Although the bubble burst in 2000, and the highest flying stocks have plummeted, the Wall Street boom of the 1990s made many people rich. The executives of dozens of startup internet corporations, many of them only in their 20s, became millionaires almost overnight. A sign of how much wealth changed hands in the 1990s because of the stock market boom is the growth in the number of billionaires in the U.S. In 1990, there were 99 of them. By 2000, there were 274.

New venues for stock trading, such as internet-based brokerages that charged very low fees, encouraged people who had never traded before to try their hand at investing — or, more often, speculating — in the stock market. People began talking of a new era, in which everyone would own stocks. But the market rally ended in 2000, bankrupting many companies and discouraging many beginning investors from continuing. And as the dust settled, it became apparent that most workers gained little or nothing from the record-breaking bull market.

In fact, they lost ground. The richest one percent owned less than 120 percent of all wealth in 1990. By 1998, they had nearly doubled their piece of the pie, to 38.1 percent. When the figures are available, most analysts expect that portion to have grown even more in 1999 and 2000.

Workers did not do well because most workers don’t own much stock. The richest ten percent of Americans own nearly 80 percent of all equities. The share for the top one percent alone is over 42 percent.

George Bush says he would like to change that by allowing workers to invest their Social Security money in the stock market. But considering the past performance of the stock market and people in the top income brackets, his plan seems more like an opportunity to make himself and his friends a great deal of money with little work.

THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY is disappearing. Poor people in the United States are less likely than the poor in most other industrialized countries to leave poverty from one year to the next. On average, about 28.6 percent of the poor in the U.S. escape poverty each year. The share of the poor leaving poverty in other industrialized countries ranges from 29.1 percent in the United Kingdom, to 43.7 percent in the Netherlands.

The poor in the U.S. are also more likely to fall back into poverty once they make it out. American poor are still better off than those in third-world countries, but most industrialized nations have universal medical care, better unemployment benefits, and free education.

Poor tend to stay poor in U.S.

Average annual exit rate from poverty

Netherlands 43.7%
Germany 24%
Sweden 38%
UK 29.1%
United States 28.5%

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FOR 30 YEARS all Americans were
Rising together
Rising together
drifting further and further apart

INCOME GAINS for the wealthiest households over the past two decades far outweighed those of households at the other end of the spectrum, as well as middle income households, according to a new government study.

In a comprehensive look at incomes and taxation, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) found that the average pretax income among the top one percent of households (approximately one million households total) increased 142 percent between 1979 and 1997, to $167,500 from $109,500. The 60 percent of Americans in the middle income brackets saw very little increase in their income — from an average of only one percent in the second quintile to an average of 14 percent in the fourth. Americans in the bottom 20 percent actually lost nine percent of their income over that period.

What changed? Many things changed from the 1960s to the 1980s, from attitudes and expectations, to education and demographics. But one profound change was a slow but steady decrease in the percentage of workers who belonged to unions. In 1953, unions represented one-third of workers. Although this percentage is far below the union representation in such worker-friendly countries as Denmark (95 percent) and Germany (90 percent), it was enough to effectively control the labor market in many industries, including many of the industries the Boilermakers represent.

Union membership remained fairly strong through the 1960s, but in the 1980s they began losing strength rapidly for a variety of reasons, including loss of jobs to overseas manufacturers and the disappearance of many industries that had been union strongholds. By 1999, unions represented only 14 percent of all workers. Although many factors have influenced wage trends over the past three decades, few economists doubt that the declining influence of unions contributed significantly to the unequal growth of incomes in the 1980s and 1990s.

The CBO released its study the last week of May. Their findings were similar to the conclusions drawn by other groups that study income trends. The distribution of income among households grew substantially more unequal during the 1979-1997 period,” the budget office said.

An analysis of the CBO study released on May 31 by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, a liberal research group, reached a similar conclusion. The group said that “income gaps between rich and poor and between the rich and middle widened in the 1980s and 1990s alike and reached their widest point on record in 1997.”

Conservative economists immediately attacked the CBO study, saying that income inequality is not necessarily bad. Some economists say that income distribution figures exaggerate the problem because they do not consider mobility, the fact that many people who have low incomes at one point in their lives earn substantially more and move up the income ladder.

However, a Swedish study concluded that “Sweden offers more upward mobility for workers than the U.S. offers. A study of 13 European nations conducted by the OECD came to a similar conclusion — workers in Europe are more likely to move up the economic ladder than those in the U.S.”

One family in five lost income
CONSERVATIVES also say that the real issue is not the distribution of income but whether people at all levels are better off. They maintain that most of the country’s 315 million households have benefited from the strong economy of the past 20 years, with four out of five seeing income gains.

The other side of that coin is that four out of five households lost income, and a majority of income losers were in the lowest 20 percent — the group least able to afford a cut in pay.

In addition, gains for the middle 60 percent were very modest. The second quintile gained only one percent after adjustments for inflation. The middle 20 percent gained 8.9 percent after inflation, that amounts to an average gain of about a half a percent a year.

Fortunately, the poorest households benefited from changes in tax policy implemented under Clinton. After-tax income in this group rebounded slightly in the 1990s, but they still ended the 20-year period with lower incomes because of severe losses under Presidents Reagan and Bush.

Income tax rates fell for all income groups over the 18 years studied, with the top one percent getting the biggest break, thanks mainly to tax cuts Ronald Reagan gave them in the 1980s.

For workers, tax records are mixed. Income tax rates for most workers went down during the period studied, but payroll taxes — Social Security and Medicare — went up as part of Reagan’s reform. Since payroll taxes are paid only by wage earners, most workers saw no real decrease in taxes.

State and local taxes, which in most states fell more heavily on workers than on the wealthy, also went up during this period owing to federal budget cuts that shifted the cost of many programs from Washington to the states.

http://www.ibw.workingfamilies.com
http://www.boilermakers.org
Lightning Safety Awareness

WHEN SOMEONE WANTS to make a point of how unlikely your chances are, they often say: “You have a better chance of being struck by lightning.” But, according to the National Lightning Institute, more people are killed by lightning than by tornado, flood, or hurricane. The number of deaths by natural hazards, 1940-1981, include:

- Lightning: 7,741
- Tornado: 5,266
- Flood: 4,481
- Hurricane: 1,925

So you should take precaution around lightning. When you first see lightning or hear thunder, suspend activities and go to shelter. A metal vehicle or substantial building is a safe place. Wait until 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder before resuming activities.

Lightning safety tips:

- Avoid: Avoid water. Avoid all metallic objects. Avoid the high ground. Avoid solitary tall trees. Avoid close contact with others—spread out 15-20 ft. apart. Avoid contact with dissimilar objects (water & land; boat & land; rock & ground; tree & ground). Avoid open spaces.
- Seek: Seek clumps of shrubs or trees of uniform height. Seek ditches, trenches, or the low ground. Seek a low, crouching position with feet together with hands on ears to minimize acoustic shock from thunder.
- Keep: Keep a high level of safety awareness for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder.

Some personal lightning safety tips:

1. Plan in advance your evacuation and safety measures. When you first see lightning or hear thunder, activate your emergency plan. Now is the time to go to a building or a vehicle. Lightning often precedes rain, so don’t wait for the rain to begin before suspending activities.
2. If outdoors, avoid water. Avoid the high ground. Avoid open spaces. Avoid all wires, fences, machinery, motors, power tools, etc. Unsafe places include underneaths canopies, small picnic or rain shelters, or near trees. Where possible, find shelter in a substantial building or in a fully enclosed metal vehicle such as a car, truck, or a van with the windows completely shut. If lightning is striking nearby when you are outside, you should:
   A. Crouch down. Put feet together. Place hands over ears to minimize hearing damage from thunder.
   B. If avoiding, avoid water. Stay away from doors and windows. Do not use the telephone. Take off head sets. Turn off, unplug, and stay away from appliances, computers, power tools, & TV sets. Lightning may strike exterior electric and phone lines, inducing shocks to inside equipment.
3. Suspend activities for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder.
4. If indoors, avoid water. Stay away from doors and windows. Do not use the telephone. Take off head sets. Turn off, unplug, and stay away from appliances, computers, power tools, & TV sets. Lightning may strike exterior electric and phone lines, inducing shocks to inside equipment.
5. Keep: Keep a high level of safety awareness for 30 minutes after the last observed lightning or thunder.

Some myths about lightning persist:

- Myth: Rubber tires will insulate me from lightning. Reality: Lightning has traveled miles through space…a few inches of rubber means nothing at all.
- Myth: Lightning can be prevented. Reality: Unconfirmed/sheer advertising.
- Myth: First strikes from lightning can be predicted. Reality: Unconfirmed/sheer advertising.
- Source: National Lightning Safety Institute

Cancer Prevention Tips

MOST BOILERMAKERS are now aware of the role smoking plays in causing cancer as well as in exacerbating asbestos exposure. Smokers are seven times more likely to die from asbestos than nonsmokers.

The following tips can also help prevent cancer:
- Eat foods high in fiber and low in fat, especially fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid unnecessary X-rays.
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so only in moderation.
- Avoid too much sunlight; wear protective clothing and/or sunscreen.
- Know the health and safety rules of your workplace and follow them.

Exercising and eating right become even more important as you age

AS A BODY AGES, it becomes less able to correct diet imbalances, so eating healthy becomes more important than ever. A variety of factors places older adults at an increased risk for developing nutritional deficiencies:
- Less saliva — The aging body produces less saliva which can cause changes in the sense of taste and smell affecting the appetite.
- Less hunger contractions — The stomach has fewer hunger contractions and dental problems, including gum disease, can affect one’s ability to chew and swallow.
- Less digestive enzymes — A reduction in the number of digestive enzymes produced and a decline in organ functions may also impair nutrient digestion and absorption.
- Less intestinal motion — A decrease in intestinal motility in older adults adds to the possibility of constipation and gas, which may lead to misuse of laxatives and self remedies which can cause malabsorption of nutrients and deplete the body of water and important minerals.
- Less calcium — Because older adults often have trouble digesting milk, an important source of calcium, a national household survey found that more than 90 percent of older adults consumed too little calcium, increasing their risk for developing osteoporosis.
- Less tolerance — As people age, they often have less tolerance to drugs and experience reactions to drugs and interactions between drugs. The more medications interacting in the body, the greater chance of problems. Some medications — prescription, over-the-counter, and home remedies — interfere with nutrient absorption.
- It’s not all bad news — This list doesn’t make the aging process very appealing, but if you follow the advice of your doctor or nutritionist, you can make your golden years even more golden.

Job stress tied to heart disease

If you’ve been complaining that your job is killing you, you might want to tell it to your doctor. A British study has confirmed what many physicians have suspected for a long time: job stress is related to an increased probability of heart disease.

The journal Psychological Medicine has published results of a study showing that men in high-stress jobs were twice as likely to report poor health as men in low-stress positions, and about five times more likely to report having chest pains severe enough to require rest. These results were found even after other factors known to affect cardiac vascular health, such as smoking, diet, and exercise, were accounted for.

Past studies have found a direct relationship between socioeconomic status and health status, while smoking, a lack of exercise, and poor diets have also been linked with poor heart health.

In all, 4,350 fully employed British men aged 20-64 years were studied.
Chavez brothers retire

TIRED OF VANDALS destroying his mailboxes, Vincent Parise, a 32-year member of Local 154, Pittsburgh, Pa., decided he would make one that would stand up to abuse. Not only is it still standing after 22 years, but serves as a monument to his skill and ingenuity.

Parise built his mailbox to resemble a train engine, using scrap iron he picked up at job sites. The body of the engine is made from a large pipe; the train’s smokestack is a smaller pipe with a flared end. Parise used various plate stock for the engine house framing, standing support, and ground support. And the mailbox’s front door is an inspection door from an old B&W boiler, with its glass peephole providing an inside view of the mailbox.

Parise has been making metal sculptures for about 27 years. He is always bringing home scrap parts, never knowing what he’ll need for his next artistic attempt. One day he hopes to make something really big, that can be artistic attempt. One day he hopes to make something somewhere where people can see it—something that would give me a little recognition,” said Parise.

Boilermaker makes good use of scrap parts

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Parise has been making metal sculptures for about 27 years. He is always bringing home scrap parts, never knowing what he’ll need for his next artistic attempt. One day he hopes to make something really big, that can be displayed in the lobby of a building like that of U.S. Steel. “I want to put it somewhere where people can see it—something that would give me a little recognition,” said Parise.

L-110 dedicates facility to honor Truman Havard

Three generations of Jacksons belong to L-502

Boilermakers make good use of scrap parts

Congratulations!

Boilermakers make good use of scrap parts

Members Earn Pins for Continuous Years of Service

Lodges present membership pins

Local 1 — Chicago, Ill.

JOHN SKERMOND, business manager and secretary-treasurer of Local 1, Chicago, Ill., reports presentation of pins for continuous years of membership to the following Local 1 members: 40 Years — David Ackmann and Robert Finley; 35 Years — Patrick H. Jozefowicz; 30 Years — Jerry Davis, Charles Lyles, and Merrill Lynn; 25 Years — Guy Nelson.

Local 374 — Hammond, Ind.


Local 531 — Amarillo, Texas

GARY ADAMS, business manager and secretary-treasurer of Local 531, Amarillo, Texas, reports presentation of pins for continuous years of membership to the following Local 531 members: 50 Years — Gene Carney; 45 Years — Hollis Albin; 35 Years — Ronnie Halen and Earl Mariett; 25 Years — Ronny Chandler; 20 Years — Bobbie Alexander, Bill Brown, Tom Kears, and Johnnie Toler.

Local 154 — member Vincent Parise built this mailbox using scrap parts from job sites.

L-110 dedicates facility to honor Truman Havard

The Members of Local 110, Hattiesburg, Miss., have dedicated their training facility in honor of retired Local 110 business manager, B. Truman Havard, in appreciation of his years of dedication and service.

A 36-year union member, Havard retired on September 1, 2000. He served the Local 110 construction lodge members as president, and five years as business manager and secretary-treasurer.

Three generations of Jacksons family attended a retiree’s picnic for members of Local 532, Tacoma, Wash. All three are Local 532 members. Pictured, l. to r., are Andrew, Dan, and Billy Jackson. Billy joined Local 532 in 1957, and retired out of Local 532 in 1995. Dan joined Local 532 in 1981, and is now a member of Local 502. Andrew was indentured into the Western States Boilermaker apprenticeship program in October 2000, and joined Local 502 in December.

Health & Welfare provider information is now online

Letter from member leads to improvement in service

Boilermakers whose health care needs are covered by the National Health & Welfare Fund can now locate health care providers who participate in the First Health network by visiting our web site, www.boilermakers.org.

First Health is providing an online directory with which you can find physicians, hospitals, and other health care facilities by name, address, zip code, city, or state.

This new service will make it a lot easier for construction Boilermakers to find the health care providers they need, especially when booming or travelling in another part of the country.

A link from the Boilermaker web site leads to the First Health Electronic Medical Directory page. Enter the information asked for by the search form, and in a few seconds, you’ll have a list of providers near you, complete with addresses and phone numbers. You can select a provider from the list or print it out for later use.

But that doesn’t mean you have to run out and buy a computer. Boilermaker lodges will be able to download information for members who do not have computers or internet access, and provider information will continue to be available by phone.

For Boilermakers who do have access to the internet, this online directory is much more convenient than phoning. If you’re travelling, remember that many hotels, motels, and other businesses now provide internet access for a fee, and most public libraries provide internet access with printing capability at no charge.

This improvement in service came about because Bill Sweiderk, a construction Boilermaker from Local 28, wrote a letter to the International claiming that the phone-in service was inconvenient and difficult to use.

When International President Charles W. Jones investigated, he agreed. Officers and staff are covered by a different program, so until he looked into it, President Jones had no idea how cumbersome the phone-in system was. When he learned, he immediately began looking for a better way.

Because the plan covers all 50 states, the number of physicians and facilities included make publishing a print directory for every Health & Welfare participant unfeasible. The online, searchable database, which can be easily updated as providers enter or leave the program, is the best way to make sure all participants have easy access to reliable, accurate information.

The International is now working on establishing a similar online database for the prescription drug program.

Waste not, want not

VICE PRESIDENT Dick Cheney favors increasing oil production because, he says, conservation has little effect on shortages.

● Projected daily output of oil from the drilling of Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge: 42,000,000 gallons

● Projected daily oil savings if all SUVs got three more miles per gallon of gasoline: 49,000,000 gallons

Source: Harper’s Index, April, 2001
New contract summaries
A brief listing of recent agreements signed and ratified by Boilermaker local lodges

A summary analysis of these contract settlements

Prepared by the Research and Collective Bargaining Department of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers.

THIS ANALYSIS of the 27 agreements outlined below is based on information provided in the Contract Summary and Transmittal Reports covering approximately 3,500 members and facilities.

Wage Increases
TWENTY-THREE facilities report wage increases, effective May 31, 2002, averaging $0.37 per hour or 3.1 percent, and $0.54 per hour or 5.0 percent in 2001. Twenty-two facilities will receive pay increases in 2002, averaging $0.53 per hour or 5.0 percent. Fifteen facilities will receive pay increases in 2003, averaging $0.59 per hour or 5.0 percent. Seven facilities will receive pay increases in 2004, averaging $0.53 per hour or 5.0 percent. Two facilities will receive pay increases in 2005, averaging $0.43 per hour or 2.7 percent. For an average.

Pension
ALL OF THE facilities participate in some type of pension program. Seven facilities participate in the Boilermaker-Black and Decker Pension Trust. Their contributions range from $0.25 to $1.25 per hour for the first year.

Paid Holidays
ALL OF THE agreements provide for paid holidays. The number of paid holidays ranges from five to 13 days. The average is seven days.

Accidental Death and Dismemberment (A.D.D.) Insurance
In 14 of the agreements there is a set dollar amount ranging from $10,000 to $46,500. The average amount is $23,456. The remaining agreements use the annual wage as the benefit, or multiply wages by 200 for the benefit amount.

Vacation
NINETEEN agreements provide for a one-week paid vacation. All 27 agreements provide two-, three-, and four-week paid vacations. Eighteen agreements provide a five-week paid vacation, and four provide a six-week paid vacation. Seven agreements provide vacation pay based on a percentage of earnings.

National Cement Lodge INTL. VP. PRES. J.M. HICKENSFORTH reports contract ratification, effective June 30, 2000, for members of Local M67, members who make concrete and related products at National Cement, CLEVELAND, OH. The average rate for the first year is $271.56. The remaining agreements provide a percentage of the employees’ weekly earnings. The average is 62 percent. Time off ranges from eight to five weeks. The most common vacation is 52 weeks found in 12 agreements.

The Canadian facility provides short term disability (STD) and STD/DAD. The remaining agreements provide Accidental Death and Dismemberment (A.D.D.) insurance. For the first year is $7,285.71. The remaining agreements use the annual wage as the benefit, or multiply wages by 200 for the benefit amount.

Vacation
NINETEEN agreements provide for a one-week paid vacation. All 27 agreements provide two-, three-, and four-week paid vacations. Eighteen agreements provide a five-week paid vacation, and four provide a six-week paid vacation. Seven agreements provide vacation pay based on a percentage of earnings.

Paid Holidays
ALL OF THE agreements provide for paid holidays. The number of paid holidays ranges from five to 13 days. The average is seven days.

Other Provisions
TWENTY-FIVE agreements provide funeral leave. Twenty-two agreements provide paid leave for jury duty, union leave language, and all or partial reimbursement for the purchase of safety shoes and prescription safety glasses.

Four provide a severance payment package, and 12 agreements provide paid leave for those persons who spend two weeks at military encampment each year.

Local 1086—Cleveland, OH, at Drop Die Wyman- Gordon, and effective Dec. 13, 2000 to Dec. 11, 2006, for 75 members of Local 1086 who make crankshafts at Park Dough Forge.

Local 1252—Wabash, IN
PRESTON MACE, president of Local 1252, Wabash, Ind., reports contract ratification, effective March 15, 2003 to March 12, 2005, for 128 members who make crankshafts at Park Dough Forge.

Local 1252—Chicago Heights, IL
EDWARD EISNER, president of Local 1252, Chicago Heights, IL, reports contract ratification, effective Sept. 30, 1998 to Nov. 22, 2001, for 103 Local 1252 members who make rail cars at Thall Car.

Local 1256—Cleveland, OH
AT Drop Die Wyman- Gordon, and effective Dec. 13, 2000 to Dec. 11, 2006, for 75 members of Local 1086 who make crankshafts at Park Dough Forge.

Local 1256—Moran, KS
AT Drop Die Wyman- Gordon, and effective Dec. 13, 2000 to Dec. 11, 2006, for 75 members of Local 1086 who make crankshafts at Park Dough Forge.

Local 1258—Kensho, WA, who forge hand tools at Imasco Minerals.

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Trade unionists nationwide mourn loss of Bob Dameron

Dameron’s expertise as labor lawyer led to success of Boilermakers’ Fight Back and Solidarity programs

ROBERT “BUDDY” DAMERON, 50, passed away on April 3, 2001, following a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Dameron was a senior member of the Blake & Uhlig Law Firm, where he represented the Boilermakers union, becoming instrumental to the success of both their Fight Back and Solidarity programs.

In 2001, Vice President Jim Hickenbotham said, “Dameron played a significant role in saving local lodges that were raised by an independent union in the mid 1980s. He devoted many hours to the Cement Division, filing unfair labor practice charges and advising local members and International staff on tactics and strategy that resulted in many satisfactory collective bargaining agreements. He will always be remembered for his dedication to the labor movement.”

Bill Creeden, director of the Boilermakers’ organizing department, often consulted with Dameron regarding our Fight Back strategy. “We started the Brotherhood’s Fight Back Construction Organizing Program as an organizing experiment in 1979. No one had tried to organize the construction industry in the last 40-plus years, so there were no established procedures to follow. Dameron helped us deal with an NLRB that didn’t understand the difference between the construction industry and manufacturing and service industries. It was due to his expertise, and that of other members of the Blake & Uhlig Law Firm, that a vast majority of the favorable law changes were made in the last 22 years.”

Born in Moberly, Mo., in 1951, Dameron played high school football and was a Missouri state wrestling champion. He supported his family while attending the UNMC School of Law by working nights at the Phillips Petroleum Refinery, where he was a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers International Union. Dameron is survived by his wife of 29 years, Virginia, and daughters, Rachael, Vannessa, and Lauren.

Contributions can be sent to the Robert L. Dameron Memorial Fund, c/o the Brotherhood Bank, 756 Minnesota Ave., Kansas City, KS 66101.

Boilermaker Archives offers watches, clocks in fundraiser

With a minimum donation of $15, you can support the Boilermakers’ history museum and receive a free man’s or woman’s style souvenir watch

PAGE GROTON, 82, who served the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers as International vice president of the Northeast section until his retirement in 1990, passed away on May 3, 2001.

In his 1990 farewell address to the delegates at the Boilermakers’ 22nd annual legislative conference, Groton shared his views, providing tips on what to expect when going to Capitol Hill. In his well known, “tell it like it is” way, Groton reminded the delegates that the legislators work for you. He said, “You are paying them. They are here to represent you and you should have any qualms about telling them that. You should tell every [representative] you visit, ‘Look, if you guys don’t get your act together, we’re going to get somebody down here that will.’

International President Charles W. Jones said Groton “was outstanding in every way during his career. We’ll certainly miss him.”

In 1964, Groton joined the Boilermakers’ union in 1949, as a member of Local 802 in Chester, Pa. On February 1, 1962, he was appointed a staff representative. In 1964, Groton was promoted to International representative at the National Labor Relations Board. Groton was named director of the Iron Shipbuilders International Marine Council in September 1970, and was appointed its director.

In 1971, Groton was appointed to the Screening Committee to review cases submitted to the Building and Construction Trades Department under the AFL/CIO Internal Disputes Settlement Plan. In July 1973, Groton became a member of the Executive Board of the Maritime Trades Department.

In the Hood

When asked to take a supervision job, I said, “I would.”

Knowing it would be different From being under my hood.

But I said I would do.

“Go ahead Kenny, put away your hood.”

J.R. said, “If you can’t handle the responsibility, Don’t take the job.”

I said, “I could,” as I put away my hood.

This supervision job wasn’t all that clear As I soon found out I was wet behind the ear.

Through trial and error, I did the best I could, I knew if things didn’t work out there was always the hood.

The rest of this may not rhyme But I leave this job Better educated this time.

Let me tell you what I did learn And next time you can take a turn.

I’ll have a license to teach kindergarten school. Also be qualified to baby sit from my stool. I’ll have a certificate to be a WFP referee, Also a Ph. D. in Psychology.

You can catch me in the Houston News. As I’ll be in competition with Ann Landers and Abigail, too.

So thanks again to all my peers For considering me after all these years. And if asked again if I would, I’ll take a good hard look at my hood.
The Death Benefit Plan under the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust has extended its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families.

...since the last issue of our publication.

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...since the last issue of our publication.
Boilermakers: Turn your dream into a home

Save money when you buy, sell or refinance your home

Four Mortgage Myths

1. Twenty percent of the price of a new home is required as a down payment
   Fact — There is no set amount that you must put down. You might be surprised to learn that some home buyer programs require as little as three percent down.

2. Monthly home payments are more expensive than rent
   Fact — The average monthly mortgage payment in 1998 was only $688.

3. One late payment or loan default will disqualify me from getting a mortgage
   Fact — Late payments will not necessarily keep a mortgage application from being approved. Those whose past credit problems have been resolved may also qualify.

4. The average person does not have the minimum income to qualify for a mortgage
   Fact — The average qualifying income for starter houses during the first quarter of 1999, was only $32,696. (Varies depending on geographical area housing costs.)

Where to Begin

Mortgage Affordability Estimate

As soon as you think about buying a home you should first get an estimate of the mortgage amount you can afford based on your income and debts.

Preapproval. Chase’s Passport-To-Purchase® Program allows you to choose a mortgage and either float or lock in a rate for 60-90 days, with the ability to shop for a home up to 45 days. Then you can shop with confidence knowing you have “cash in hand,” which can make your offer more attractive to sellers.

Here, we’ve covered only the basics. The key to finding the right mortgage for you is to work closely with a reputable mortgage lender. Your mortgage professional will work with you to determine how much house you can afford, how large of a mortgage you may qualify for, help you understand special mortgages for first-time home buyers, and make suggestions that will help you get the best mortgage for you and make your life easier.

Moving? Tell us where...

UNION MEMBER MORTGAGE & REAL ESTATE
1-800-848-6466

TO BE ELIGIBLE, you must first call this toll free number to register. This program is available only to union members in the U.S. and some territories. The five percent and three percent down payment option are not available in all geographic areas. Your union has no involvement in loan decisions.

MEMBER SAVINGS: Down payments as low as five percent, competitive interest rates, and expert guidance through the mortgage or refinancing process. REAL ESTATE SERVICES: Money-saving options for buyers and sellers.

HELP FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS: Down payments as low as three percent plus special affordability program options.
Trade pacts threaten sovereignty

NAFTA, FTA, and the WTO may force Canada and the U.S. to lower our standards to match third-world countries

On the past five years, a quiet revolution has been occurring in the world of international trade. You either call it a silent coup, because in a sense a small group of people is seizing the reins of governments almost all over the world.

No government leaders have been assassinated, and the media and ordinary voters have not even noticed that it is occurring, but the World Trade Organization (WTO) has been helping that does not even mention the trade agreements that may threaten those nations’ ability to enact and enforce laws that protect their citizens.

Agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) feed this internationalization of the economy, but the World Trade Organization (WTO) is even more comprehensive in its promotion of international trade agreements that promote unrestricted investment and trade across borders.

A country’s laws restrict trade, the WTO places sanctions on that country until it changes the law. The pursuit of unrestricted trade threatens the sovereignty of all nations in the WTO.

For example, in 1991, Mexico sued the United States, saying that the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) unfairly limited their ability to export tuna to the U.S. The MMPA sets standards for catching tuna. Mexico didn’t meet those standards, so the U.S. would not let them export tuna into our country.

Mexico took their complaint to an international panel. The panel found in the WTO’s favor, finding the U.S. could not enforce this law because the law dealt with process, not product.

That is, there was nothing wrong with the product, but the tuna met international standards. The problem was in how the tuna was produced.

The World Trade Organization is trying to establish a corporate dictatorship over the entire world.

This ruling set two troubling precedents.

First, an international panel of government appointees (with no Americans) decided whether the U.S. can enforce a law enacted legally under the U.S. Constitution.

Second, the reasoning behind their ruling paves the way for other countries to use lawsuits to revive U.S. laws. And although these countries do not have the suing (per international agreements), they do so on behalf of the corporations producing the goods.

In other words, multinational corporations can use international trade agreements to strike down laws if the law pertains to the process of production, and not the product.

The World Trade Organization is trying to establish a corporate dictatorship over the entire world.

Corporations rule the WTO

The problem is that multinational corporations decide trade policy, not citizens. Corporations rule the WTO.

In theory, each country’s trade representatives present their interests at the WTO, but in practice, they represent the corporations of that country.

Every person in the U.S. trade representative’s office has a corporate background. No labor leaders are included. No environmentalists. No consumer advocates.

The only people at the table are corporate representatives. Corporations always profit from lowering trade restrictions; the rest of us profit sometimes, but often we do not. Our representatives should be at the table, too.

And trade agreements should be negotiated in full view of the people affected by them. Trade agreements have the force of law, so they should be enacted just as laws are. The WTO operates sub rosa, behind closed doors in absolute secrecy. We can’t review their decisions. We don’t hear their arguments. We don’t even know who is in that room.

Trade agreements brokered behind closed doors benefit corporations at the expense of workers — especially in the third-world countries that these agreements are supposed to help. Just look at NAFTA. Mexican workers are worse off than ever, while the multinational corporations that employ them are reaping huge profits.

The World Trade Organization is nothing more than an attempt by multinational corporations to establish a corporate dictatorship over every nation on earth. If they succeed, our laws will mean nothing, our constitution will mean nothing, and the will of the people will mean nothing.

We will be able to use international agreements to drive wages, working conditions, environmental laws, and health standards down to the level of the most impoverished countries.

Our courts and legislatures will be powerless to stop them.

Spouse thanks members for their support

John Outlaw (a member of Local 199, Jacksonville, Fla.) was injured in a head-on collision, Saturday, February 10th. He was flown to St. Joseph Health Center in critical condition, with a very slim chance of survival.

When he didn’t show up for work on Monday, his coworkers in Lacygne, Kan., assumed he had quit, until they read of his accident in a local newspaper. They then collected $1,000, which states a retiree has no voice.

Local 7 retiree is having a wonderful retirement

This is just a note from Florida, from a very happy retiree of the Brotherhood. Our retirement village, Coral Ridge, is located in Fort Lauderdale, Fla. I received a “home of the month” award for our holiday decorations. In August, I plan to attend the 14th reunion of the WW II 345th Bombardment Group in Fort Lauderdale.

I want to thank the International for a wonderful retirement, and in particular, Local Lodge 7 of Buffalo, N.Y.

George W. Hanson, L-7 retiree
Leesburg, Fla.

L-549 retiree wants a voice and vote at union meetings

There’s something wrong with the Brotherhood’s Constitution, Article 356, which states a retiree has no vote or voice at a local union meeting.

I started out in the 1950s, when employers on the West Coast treated Boilermakers like dirt. I’m talking 48-hour weeks, no eye protection, no ear protection, no asbestos protection, no coffee breaks, and hardly any safety. If you complained, you were gone.

We fought hard, walked-off jobs, and can respond by blinking his eyes until they read of his accident in a local newspaper. They then collected $1,000, which states a retiree has no voice.

The Boilermaker Reporter
573 State Ave, Suite 570
Kansas City KS 66101
FAX (913) 281-8104
E-mail: caswell@boilermakers.org

The constitution needs to be revised so retirees have a voice.

Edward Tedder, L-549 retiree
Paso Robles, Calif.

Editor’s Note: Article 352.1.3 states that retirees do not have a vote, but it says that “they may, by the consent of the Local Lodge, speak on the welfare of the Union.” The lodge decides what issues retirees may address.

Letters to the Editors

L-28’s Sweidker wants to revitalize health care

LAST YEAR WAS the first time I have ever really needed to use our (Health & Welfare) health benefits; I injured my spine and have not been able to work since.

I have discovered we have a system that promotes the use of up-to-date technologies to speed up processing of documents and information; i.e., faxes, online access, a 1-800 telephone number, current health plan books, a way to match a doctor with a hospital that is “in the system” without lengthy phone calls, and a printed directory of system doctors listing their credentials.

Why can’t we be the innovators of health care coverage for unions and revolutionize the system for all?

Bill Sweidker, L-28
Newark, N.J.

Editor’s Note: Thanks in part to this letter, the Boilermakers National Health & Welfare Care Plan now has provider information online. See story on page 11.

Spouse thanks members for their support

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My husband, Philip Fack, a member of Local 592, Tulsa, Okla., was working out of Local 592 (Kans City, Mo.) when he was injured on May 1, 2001. He was taken to the hospital, where he had surgery on his left hand and foot.

We want to thank the members of Locals 83 and 592 for their cards and donations and wish we could personally tell each of them how much we appreciate all that they did.

Philip Fack and Family
Skiatook, Okla.