

the Boilermaker Reporter

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Health care costs demand attention

Rapid rises threaten Medicare

A NEW STUDY from Boston University's School of Public Health suggests the U.S. health care system is fragile and that current rates of spending growth are unsustainable.

By the end of this year, health-care spending is projected to have absorbed 25 percent of all economic growth in the last five years, the study shows. Health-related expenditures will consume 15.5 percent of the total U.S. economy in 2005, up from 13.2 percent in 2000. Each person in the United States spends on average twice the amount on health care compared with other industrialized countries.

Rapid increases in health spending cause people to lose coverage and destabilize caregivers, according to Alan Sager, co-author of the report and a professor of health services at Boston University. All providers, including hospitals, doctors, nursing homes, and even drugmakers, are vulnerable, he said. The number of uninsured Americans rose to 45 million in 2003 from under 40 million in 2000.

Rising costs also threaten Medicare's long-term financial stability, according to a new report from the Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI.) Over the next 75 years, Medicare faces a shortfall of nearly \$28 trillion, more than seven times Social Security's. Medicare spending is on pace to surpass Social Security in 2024.

"Medicare's financial problems are much more immediate — and more difficult to solve — than what the Social Security program will face in several decades," EBRI President Dallas Salisbury said in a prepared statement.

Who will pay the bill?



Ignoring Social Security's problem creates a huge bill for the youngest people in this photo. Privatizing it costs them even more.

JACKSON ROUSE (that little fellow in the front of this photo) could easily be the poster child for President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security. He could just as easily be the poster child for those who oppose all plans to privatize what has become one of the world's most successful old-age insurance programs.

One-year-old Jackson, and his parents, Steve (28) and Chrystal (26), are in the first two generations that

could be significantly affected by the shortfall that Social Security actuaries say will start in 2042.

In 2042, Jackson's parents will be 65 and 63 — just a few years away from Social Security retirement with full benefits. But unless Congress makes some changes, Social Security will only be able to pay them about 73 percent of their promised benefits.

Those basic facts are undisputed. The exact year is not certain, nor the exact size of the shortfall. But it is coming. If we do not plan for it now, today's children will need to take care of it.

And that's where politics enters the picture.

See *WHO WILL PAY* page 8

Workers at Washington Marine join Boilermakers union

Local 104 to represent new Metal Trades group at ship repair company

AN ORGANIZING CAMPAIGN that began in 2002, ended with the company recognizing the union and signing a collective bargaining contract with the Pacific Coast Metal Trades District Council. Now Local 104, Seattle, Wash., is representing 80 percent of the employees of Washington Marine, a ship repair company in Port Angeles, Wash.

Intl. Rep. and General Organizer David Bunch worked on the campaign. He was assisted by retired Intl. Rep. John Yeatts and a Laborer organizer, Clarence Bob.

"I went to Port Angeles to check out Cascade General," Bunch explained. "Cascade bought Prime Marine, and then opened up Washington Marine. I started making calls to Local 104 members who were

working at the site and was able to meet with Local 104 member Noel Bullock, and later with several of the ship repair employees.

"The workers wanted an even pay scale, job security, and a grievance procedure. I was working with the Metal Trades at the time. Since jurisdiction of this yard went to several crafts, we decided to organize it as a Metal Trades unit," Bunch said.

About 130 employees are at the yard with 80 percent of them falling under Boilermaker jurisdiction. The company has been in business since mid-2002. The organizing campaign began that same year; however, no election was necessary as the company decided to recognize the union in 2003.

Bunch, along with Puget Sound Metal Trades Exec. Sec. Mike Grabowski of Local 6, Oakland, and UA Rep. Al Tremlett, negotiated the first collective bargaining contract for the group, a two-year agreement effective Sept. 1, 2003 to Aug. 31, 2005. □

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Kvaerner pays Local 19 members \$280,000

Determined action by lodge officers wins settlement for overtime contract violation

LOCAL LODGE OFFICERS brought Christmas early to 166 members of Local 19, Philadelphia when they settled an overtime dispute with Kvaerner Philadelphia Shipyard, Inc., (KPSI). Alert lodge leaders had documented that the company was assigning overtime to foreign contractors — in violation of the contract — and successfully used the grievance process to make the company pay up.

The company agreed to pay \$280,000 to the members, with some individual checks as high as \$6,500. Members received their checks on Nov. 19. The Boilermakers union was the only union of the Philadelphia Metal Trades Council to file and pursue the grievance.

Stephen Lalumera, president of Local 19, credits his team of three officers and four shop stewards for their watchdog diligence. "Without all of their help, this settlement wouldn't have been possible," he said. "It was definitely a joint effort."

Their investigation revealed that KPSI had used lower-wage, foreign

subcontractors for overtime work, a violation of the collective bargaining agreement mandating that any overtime must be offered to the core team first. KPSI had a similar violation in 2003, when lack of sufficient documentation caused Local 19 to settle for only \$80,000.

"At the signing of that settlement, I told the company that we would keep records and a close eye on all overtime," Lalumera said. "And if they did it again, the next time they would not get off so lucky because we would be right on top of it."

Lalumera was right on the money. The next time, the violation turned out to be a costly one for KPSI.

Persistence pays off

BECAUSE DOCUMENTATION is crucial to winning grievances, Lalumera began encouraging members to keep meticulous records.

"I notified them at every monthly union meeting, along with having all of my officers and stewards talking with members on the job and instructing them to sign the overtime sheets. I had a feeling the company would try to get away with it again," he said.

Lalumera's suspicions were confirmed when he and the chief shop

steward soon discovered that the company had once again violated its agreement with the Boilermakers by using subcontractors for overtime work.

"We got burned before and we weren't going to get burned again," declared Phil Evans, International rep. and general organizer for Local 19. "It's very hard to police it, but the lodge was able to do so."

This time, officers had all of the paperwork to calculate how much overtime members had been deprived of. They sorted through hundreds of work logs to calculate each employee's hours. The team repeated this process six times to ensure the accurate amount.

Six months later, their figures proved that 166 members had been denied a total of \$364,000 in overtime. While KPSI refused to cooperate during the grievance process, the Boilermakers stood their ground.

"I think the key factor for us was that we were relentless in our investigations and we had copies of everything," Lalumera said. "I also believe that sending the CEO constant e-mails finally made him sit with me. I refused to take no for an answer."

Shortly before the arbitration hearing, KPSI offered the Boilermakers a

\$150,000 settlement. Lalumera rejected it as "an insult" and prepared for arbitration. One month later, KPSI agreed to pay \$280,000.

Unity brings strength

LALUMERA RECOGNIZES ALL of the officers and stewards of Local 19, especially Nick Gabriele, chief shop steward, and Kevin Carpenter, secretary-treasurer. "It just goes to show you what can be done when you fight for what you know is right. In unity there is strength."

Sean Murphy, International vice president of the Boilermakers union, commends everyone who was involved for their efforts. "It is a great day for the organization when a lodge president has the know-how and education to file and prepare a grievance that reaches such a phenomenal result in settlement for the hard-working individuals of Local 19," he said.

Many companies add to their profits by maneuvering around overtime pay. Local 19's response tells them that such violations simply won't be tolerated.

"I can't stress enough how important it is to be part of a union, to know that there are people out there fighting for you," Lalumera concluded. □

Shipyard Workers sue NASSCO for \$39 million

Lawsuit seeks damages for denying breaks, meals

BOILERMAKERS LODGE 1998, San Diego, formerly known as the Shipyard Workers Union (SWU), filed a \$39 million lawsuit December 27 against the National Steel and Shipbuilding Company (NASSCO). They charged the firm with violating the state's meal and break time laws. NASSCO is a General Dynamics' subsidiary that builds and repairs commercial oil tankers and U.S. Navy supply ships.

Lodge 1998 President Bobby Godinez said the union documented meal and break time violations over a four-year period. Union workers filed about 1,000 claims with the California Division of Labor Standards Enforcement over the meal period violations last spring. The employer requested time to audit each case, and that process is ongoing.

California labor law requires employers to provide a meal period before the fifth hour of work and a 10-minute rest period for each four hours of work. Godinez said NASSCO regularly ignored these requirements and refused the union's request to post worker rights under the law on the job site. "We are seeking compensation for all 2,600 members who worked at any time during the four-year period covered by the lawsuit," Godinez said.

International Representative John Chapman noted that, unlike typical lawsuits that may take years to resolve, the union's case qualifies under California's Unfair Competition Act and therefore will be expedited. "The award could go much higher than the \$39 million figure," said Chapman,

because interest, penalties, and legal fees still have to be calculated.

The lawsuit comes amid contract negotiations with NASSCO.

In addition to the lawsuit, there are ongoing efforts by the union to make the shipyard a safe place for its members. "NASSCO has the worst safety record of any shipyard in the country," noted Amanda Stinger, a Boilermaker organizer. "The company has an agreement with Fed-OSHA and Cal-OSHA in which NASSCO agreed to abide by safety and health laws and develop a comprehensive program," she said. "The program is excellent — on paper. But if you step inside the shipyard, you see it's completely ineffective."

The union has filed over 100 serious complaints with Fed-OSHA and Cal-OSHA in recent months. Some of the complaints stem from the employer forcing employees to work under suspended loads weighing more than 200 tons. Fed-OSHA and Cal-OSHA are investigating the complaints. To date they have issued 20 citations totaling \$41,000.

Godinez said the lawsuit and OSHA complaints are part of the union's overall strategy to ensure worker protection in a construction environment that is "heavy and dangerous." NASSCO has a reputation for high-quality, advanced shipbuilding, and was recently awarded a \$586 million order for two additional U.S. Navy T-AKE ammunition and dry goods supply ships.

"The company prides itself on making deliveries ahead of schedule," said Godinez. "But that's nothing to boast about if you're consistently violating the workers' rights to a safe workplace and denying them a meal and rest period." □

Local 502 sponsors a seminar in jurisdiction

TO BE AN EFFECTIVE steward at a construction worksite, it pays to know Boilermaker jurisdiction.

That's why Randy Robbins, BM-ST for Local 502, Tacoma, Wash., called the International for help.

And help is just what he got in the form of a two-day training seminar designed specifically for the construction steward.

Dale Branscum and Clay Herford, director and asst. for the Boilermakers Construction Division, joined AIP Tony Gallo, Nov. 17-18, 2004, to present a historical overview and evolution of the Boilermaker craft. They discussed Boilermaker jurisdiction for the boiler water and steam cycle, the heat recovery steam generator, the

combustion turbine and combined cycle unit, emission controls, air-cooled condensers, tanks, platforms, catwalks, ladders, and stairs.

They even reviewed the collective bargaining agreements that Local 502 members work under so the stewards would be familiar with the language that covers their members under these contracts.

Robbins was impressed by the seminar. "This was a very effective program. The members attending all agreed that it was a valuable class," Robbins said. "And they left with a greater understanding of what they need to know to be effective job stewards."

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A prize-winning newspaper



L. to r., IP Newton Jones and Director Skip Branscum tour Local 146 training facilities with instructors JAmey Holroyd, Jason Carroll, and BM-ST Warren Fraleigh.



IP Newton Jones with Local 146 officers, l. to r., Darwin Leitch, Robert van den Elst, Warren Fraleigh, Jones, Richard Vanderveen, Brent Clouthier, and Gerry Donnelly.

Local Lodge 146 receives an honored guest

IP Newton Jones attends meeting, tours hall, training center, and oil sands development

OVER 300 MEMBERS of Local Lodge 146 attended their annual general meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, on Nov. 13. Attendance gave them a chance to speak with International President Newton B. Jones, who was visiting the lodge with International staff members.

The lodge conducts monthly meetings, but this was the second time it had held an annual general meeting in which members meet to prepare for the year ahead, discussing lodge plans, finances, and other business.

Jones told the meeting, "You are an example of what pride in your craft can accomplish. You have an outstanding market share that had to be earned and your learning center is absolutely magnificent. I've never seen anything like it. It is obvious to me that Local 146 has a very promising future and I congratulate all of you for what you have accomplished."

Jones also answered questions from Local Lodge 146 members, providing an inside look at what the International hopes to accomplish over the next five years.

Chartered in 1948, Local 146 is the largest Boilermaker local. It represents over 3,600 members in the shop and construction industries. Members work in power genera-

tion, pulp and paper, cement, fertilizer, and gas plants, and refineries. Local 146 members also work year round in oil sand development, maintenance, and repair work.

And their future looks good. Canada's oil sands in northern Alberta contain the world's second-largest energy reserves (second only to Saudi Arabia). Jones learned just how much the projected \$60 billion in expansion and new work on the oil sands project means to Local 146 when he took an aerial tour of the operating plants.

"It took us an hour-and-a-half to fly over the existing Fort McMurray oil sands developments and surrounding area," said Local 146 BM-ST Warren Fraleigh. "This is the largest oil sands development in the world, and it was the first time I had ever seen them from above. The view and its potential for our members' future are just unbelievable."

While in town, Jones also toured the local hall and training facilities, where he met with officers, staff, and training instructors.

Jones praised Local 146 members for their work ethic and commitment to the Boilermaker Advantage — doing the job right the first time, on time or ahead of schedule, safely, on or under budget, with high quality work, and without any trouble. □

Organizing efforts earn White recognition

DAVE WHITE, AN EIGHT-YEAR member of Local D381, Las Vegas, is a Star Steward for his successful efforts to increase his local's membership from 60 to 99 percent at the Apex facility. All but one employee are now members of Local D381.

"White is a true labor leader," said Intl. Rep. Michael Atchison. "He is also a committed father and an involved member of his community."

Not only does White excel as a recruiter, but he also shines as a negotiator.

In 2004, he helped finalize a four-year, six-month labor agreement at Apex.

"Brother White will tell you negotiating is a team effort, but he held strong throughout the negotiation process and would not give any contract language to the company," Atchison said.

During negotiations, White and the other members of the collective bargaining committee also participated in the Nevada Kerry Campaign.

For all of these efforts, Atchison wants White recognized as a Star Steward.



Local D381's Dave White is a Star Steward.

STAR STEWARDS

Negotiating skills earn Baumstark nomination

Industrial Council Training seminar pays off

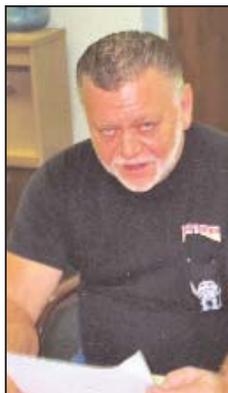
WENDEL J. BAUMSTARK, A 32-YEAR member and president of Local 1247, Chicago, is a Star Steward for using knowledge he gained at a training seminar as a bargaining tool at Finkl Forge.

"While attending training classes sponsored by the Great Lakes Area Industrial Council #1, Wendel learned the value of examining past negotiation economic information provided by the company and comparing it to current information," said Intl. Rep. Howard Cole.

"He examined old and new records, did an analysis, and alerted the negotiating committee that health insurance costs had actually decreased slightly," Cole said. "This information was of great value during the negotiations."

As a result of Baumstark's efforts, Local 1247 ratified a three-year agreement that grants members a signing bonus in 2004, and wage increases in the second and third years of the contract.

His efforts also earned him Cole's recommendation as a Star Steward.



Local 1247 President Wendel Baumstark is a Star Steward.



Do you have a Star Steward?

Send nominations to the Boilermaker Reporter at the address on page two, or e-mail Nicole Stinger at nstinger@boilermakers.org.

Local 128 and 555 members do the job right



L. to r., Mark Willie, "Big Tony" Jose, and Greg Slota are part of the Boilermaker crew who changed out tube walls at a Thunder Bay pulp mill.

ONE HUNDRED MEMBERS of Locals 128, Toronto, Ontario, and 555, Winnipeg, Manitoba, have completed projects for Babcock & Wilcox Canada (B&W) and Venshore Mechanical at the Bowater Paper Mill in Thunder Bay, Ont., earning praise for their welding.

"This is the best stick welding I have ever seen," said one x-ray technician who prefers to remain anonymous. "We are very proud of the tradesmen in northwestern Ontario."

The B&W crew changed out an entire front wall of primary air port openings plus three openings on two side walls. They completed over 200 butt welds on time. All of the welds were x-rayed, and their repair rate was only 0.69 percent (that's just three repairs).

The Venshore crew worked on the air openings and duct work above the B&W crew. At first, this made Darrell Bray, the Boilermaker business representative in the Thunder Bay area, apprehensive. "I was concerned at having two contractors working on one floor level together; however, when I visited the jobsite, I soon realized my concerns were unfounded," Bray said.

"All of the men were working very well together, and I could see how well organized this shutdown was. I was told on a few occasions that this was one of the best shutdowns they had been on. In this day and age of tighter bids and high competition with the nonunion, this job was like a breath of fresh air." □



Local 667 members earn praise from MC Mechanical

THE OUTAGE AT Allegheny Energy's Fort Martin station is now complete and is deemed a huge success by MC Mechanical and Allegheny Energy. With the help of yourself (L-667 BM-ST George Pinkerman), your staff, and the Boilermakers of Local 667 (Charleston, W.Va.), we were able to hydro the unit two days ahead of schedule.

This is a most impressive accomplishment considering the work involved over 100,000 man-hours within an aggressive schedule. All of our manpower requests were met with qualified Boilermakers from

Local 667 and other locals when needed. Over 7,400 welds were made with an extremely low rejection rate. All of this was accomplished while maintaining a high level of safety, craftsmanship, and efficiency.

The Boilermakers of Local 667 did an outstanding job during this outage. We are very proud of the work that we accomplished together, and we thank you for your support.

We look forward to continuing our relationship with Local 667 and repeating our success on future outages.

JEFFREY R. KILEY, boiler group mgr.
MC Mechanical Corp.

Ten locals earn BWCC awards

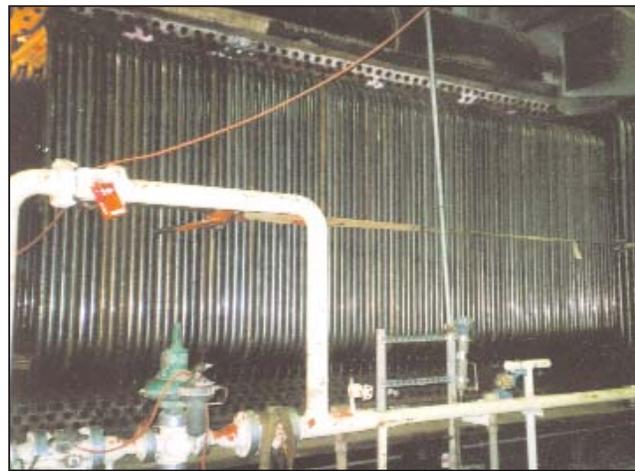
EACH YEAR, BABCOCK & Wilcox Construction Co. (BWCC) presents awards to local lodge business managers whose members performed outstanding work for BWCC the previous year.

This year's recipients all completed BWCC projects on or ahead of schedule and with no lost-time accidents.

October 2004 awards recognized the work of members from 10 local lodges at 15 BWCC job sites:

- 1. Local 26, Savannah, Ga.** – Rayonier, Jesup Mill, Units 5 & 6, recovery boiler work and superheater replacement project;
- 2. Local 30, Greensboro, N.C.** – Duke, Belews Creek, Unit 1, boiler stiffening and reheat replacement project; and at Duke, Belews Creek, Unit 2, boiler stiffening and overfire air installation project;
- 3. Local 40, Elizabethtown, Ky.** – East Kentucky Power, Cooper, Units 1 and 2, rotating classifier installation projects; and at Kentucky Power, Spurlock, rotating classifier installation project;

- 4. Local 69, Little Rock, Ark.** – AEP/SWEPCO, Gentry, extended arch installation project;
- 5. Local 74, Houston** – Texas Genco, Limestone, reheater repairs and maintenance project; and at Entergy, Lewis Creek, Unit 2, SCR installation project; and at Texas Genco, W.A. Parish, Unit 6, SCR installation project;
- 6. Local 105, Chillicothe, Ohio** – American Electric Power, W.H. Zimmer, SCR installation project;
- 7. Local 154, Pittsburgh** – First Energy, Mansfield, Unit 3, SCR installation project;
- 8. Local 263, Memphis, Tenn.** – TVA, Allen, Unit 1, reheat section and header replacement project;
- 9. Local 687, Charleston Heights, S.C.** – SCE&G, Wateree, Unit 1, reheat, screen, and convection pass replacement project;
- 10. Local 744, Cleveland** – First Energy, Eastlake, Unit 5, low NOx and pulverizer upgrade; and at Reliant, Niles, Unit 1, low NOx and floor replacement project. □



Some of the tubes Local 74 members repaired at the Johnson Space Center working for Holman Boiler Works.

Local 74 returns to space center after 32-year absence

Finishing job ahead of schedule and accident-free will help local get more work in the future

FOR THE FIRST time in 32 years, members of Local 74, Houston, are working at the Johnson Space Center. And they are working for a nonunion contractor.

In 1972, the center cut wages to 90 percent. Boilermakers walked out, and since full-wage jobs were plentiful at the time, they did not go back and the work was assigned to the Pipefitters.

In 2004, nonunion contractor Holman Boiler Works won a repair contract at the center, which is under a General Presidents Maintenance Agreement (GPMA). In order to perform the work, Holman had to go in under a job compliance and use union workers.

So they contacted the Boilermakers to get the job done. And they made the right choice, too, as the Boilermaker crew completed the project in just nine weeks with no accidents.

Better yet, officials at the space center are bragging about what a great job the Boilermakers did. After losing out on work at the center for the last 32 years, this job couldn't have gone any better.

According to Lone Star District Lodge BM-ES Ronnie Keck, he has been trying since 1984 to get Boilermakers back to work at the space center.

Contractor says they'll use Boilermakers again

"WE MAY NEVER have members working there year round again, but now we'll be doing all the boiler repair work and that says a lot after a 32-year absence," Keck said.

And this wasn't the first time that Boilermakers have worked for Holman. Local 74 members have worked on and off the past six years for the nonunion contractor when they have secured large boiler repair jobs.

And Holman says they'll be using the Boilermakers again.

Local 74 BM-ST Herman Sullivan is proud of his members for showing space center officials the quality work Boilermakers perform.

"My hat goes off to Darrell Jones, Tom Kelley Jr., Tom Kelley Sr., John Watkins, and Kerry Wilson for their outstanding work," Sullivan said. □



Local 502 crew reinforces water standpipes

MEMBERS OF LOCAL 502, Tacoma, Wash., have completed seismic upgrades to the water storage facilities for the Northshore Utility District near Seattle.

Foreman Rod Perron, John Crawford, and Jeremy Crawford brought two three-million-gallon water

standpipes up to code to withstand major earthquakes.

According to retired Local 104 member Terry Hawley, who now works as operations director for Northshore, the project involved extensive interior steel work. Boilermakers built a ten-foot by eight-foot framework grid and plating

inside the tank to support pouring of a concrete ballast. The ballast was designed to hold the tank in place in the event of an earthquake. The exterior of the tanks also received piping improvements and new access ladders for additional safety measures.

"The work the Boilermakers did ensures us that we will supply safe and reliable water to our Northshore customers," said Hawley. "This is another example of the diversity of the Boilermaker workforce and how the work of the union helps the average citizen." □

Above: John Crawford works with some of the plating that will support a concrete ballast inside the standpipe.

Local 85 hosts 2nd annual tripartite conference

REPRESENTATIVES of owners, contractors, and labor attended the second annual tripartite conference hosted by Local 85, Toledo, Ohio, July 21, 2004.

"The conference was a huge success," reported Gerald Bullock, Local 85 BM-ST. "We shared information gathered since last year's conference, which was very informative, and we decided to expand next year's conference into a two-day event to allow time to address all the issues, common goals, and relationships we share in the boilermaker industry."

Guest speakers included Larry Wargo of First Energy, who addressed the national manpower program; MOST administrator Bill Palmisano, who discussed national training programs; Local 85 training director Dennis Lark, who reported on the current state of the Local 85 joint training & educational trust fund; and Great Lakes Area Apprenticeship Program (GLABAP) representatives Larry

McManamon Jr. and Ron Horner, who talked about the GLABAP and its new training equipment and curriculum that resulted from last year's tripartite conference discussions.

Wargo, a consultant of contractor services for First Energy, was impressed by the conference and commends Local 85 for a job well done. He recommends that more owner and contractor representatives put this event on their calendars for next year.

National tripartite coordinator Jim McCormick was also impressed by the local's leadership and organization skills that he says played a major part in the success of Local 85's tripartite conference.

"Owners, contractors, and union representatives worked together to address issues that are essential for our survival in today's market," McCormick said. "This was a successful, worthwhile, and meaningful conference for all attendees." □

Below: L. to r., Rod Perron, John Crawford, and Jeremy Crawford at the Northshore Utility District near Seattle.



The Bush NLRB is rewriting the rules

If Bush is successful in his appointments, rights we take for granted may disappear

THE FIVE-MEMBER NATIONAL Labor Relations Board (NLRB) serves as a kind of Supreme Court for labor issues. Appointed by the president and approved by the Senate, board members hold five-year terms, with one member's term expiring each year. Because Senate Democrats have blocked confirmation of President Bush's appointees, the board currently has only three members.

By tradition, the board will not overturn previous board decisions with less than three votes for doing so. The current board includes two Republicans and one Democrat, making a three-vote majority unlikely until the Senate confirms another Republican.

In 2004, President Bush briefly enjoyed a three-member majority when he bypassed Senate confirmation by making Ronald Meisburg a recess appointee. Recess appointments are temporary, lasting only until Congress recesses or the Senate approves a permanent appointment.

Meisburg quickly joined forces with Chairman Robert Battista and member Peter Schaumber to pass several rulings that overturned Clinton-era, pro-worker rulings. All three have legal backgrounds representing corporations.

In June 2004, they overturned a Clinton-era ruling that allowed nonunion workers to have a co-worker accompany them when summoned to the boss's office for a disciplinary interrogation. Union members retain these rights, called "Weingarten rights," after the 1975 case ruling that established them, but Bush's board reversed the 2000 ruling that extended Weingarten to nonunion workers.

In July, they ruled that graduate students who teach classes are not workers, and thus not employees for purposes of collective bargaining. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs), as they are called, do the bulk of classroom teaching on most university campuses, for little pay and no benefits.

This decision was aimed at disarming successful union organizing drives on campuses around the country, including New York University, Columbia, and Brown. The ruling overturned a unanimous, bipartisan vote taken by the Clinton-era board in 2000, which concluded after months of study that the workforce at many large universities had changed dramatically, with adjuncts and graduate students increasingly replacing full-time faculty. In many universities, TAs teach some of the same classes taught by regular faculty, who enjoy full benefits and much larger paychecks.

And dozens of low-profile rulings have gone against workers. For example, Bush's board ruled against a group of disabled janitors in Florida who were seeking the right to join a union. The board said they were not entitled to do so because they were part of a rehabilitation program — in other words, patients, not employees. The two dissenting Democrats pointed out that the janitors report to the same supervisors as the rest of the staff and carry the same workload.

And as soon as the Senate confirms a third Republican member, the board is expected to rule on another major issue: voluntary card-check recognition. We always hear about the employers who fight union organizing drives tooth and nail, doing everything they can to keep the union out — whether their actions are legal or not. But some employers take another route. They agree to recog-

nize the unions if a majority of employees express the desire to join a particular union. Such voluntary agreements, often carried out as "card checks" — literally checking the number of union cards signed by employees — have been in labor law since the 1930s.

In recent years, unions have increasingly used them as an alternative to official NLRB-certified elections. The

sometimes warrant a renewed scrutiny." They also felt the need to point out that "the use of voluntary recognition has grown in recent years," as though voluntary card-check were a growing menace.

In November 2004, NLRB Chairman Battista told a labor law conference that the board's conclusions regarding card-check will probably be out after the two vacancies on the board are filled.

Organized labor usually tries not to antagonize the board, regardless of its political makeup, because its members carry so much clout. But in August 2004, the executive council of the AFL-CIO issued its harshest press release in years, stating that the NLRB "has entered one of the most shameful chapters in its 69-year history" and has become "perverted into a dangerous enemy of workers' rights."

They cited numerous anti-worker actions of the board that weaken remedies for unfair labor practices, limit the right to strike, and weaken workers' rights. One egregious example was the general counsel's decision to argue in federal court against state laws that prohibit the use of taxpayer money for union-busting, even though this legal case had nothing to do with the National Labor Relations Act — the board's sole area of authority.

In January, President Bush once again nominated Meisburg to the NLRB. If he is confirmed, the board will be able to resume its steamrolling of workers' rights. □

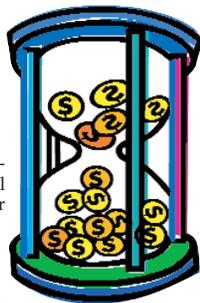
You might think that the NLRB would not want to get involved in a voluntary agreement between an employer and its employees. But you would be underestimating the union animosity of the Bush administration.

AFL-CIO estimates that some 200,000 nongovernment workers were organized last year, but only about a quarter of them through NLRB elections.

You might think that the NLRB would not want to get involved in a voluntary agreement between an employer and its employees. But you would be underestimating the union animosity of the Bush administration.

The National Right to Work Committee has challenged voluntary agreements won by the United Auto Workers at two auto-parts plants. Citing long-established precedent, regional NLRB officials brushed the challenges aside. But in a move that surprised even some Republicans, the central board agreed to review the cases, stating that "changing conditions in the labor relations environment can

White House plans another attack on overtime



IN 2004, THE BUSH administration enacted the biggest rollback of overtime pay rights since the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) created the 40-hour week in 1938. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that six million American workers lost overtime pay rights because of an administrative rule change made by the Department of Labor.

Now the White House is preparing another attack on working families' paychecks. Two proposals would force employees to work longer hours for less pay, unions and other workers' advocates say.

Rep. Judy Biggert (IL-13, R) is expected to reintroduce the Family Time Flexibility Act. This proposal would provide for an 80-hour, two-week work period. Under this scenario, employees who work 50 hours one week and 30 hours the next will lose 10 hours of premium time pay.

The administration will also push for new legislation to allow employers to substitute compensatory time off for time-and-a-half overtime pay — for those still eligible for overtime pay. A study of this legislation by the Economic Policy Institute concluded that it would allow employers to delay paying overtime wages for as long as 13 months. Essentially, workers would be loaning their overtime pay to the company for a year at no interest. Workers also risk losing as much as 160 hours of overtime pay if the business closes or declares bankruptcy.

For more information, visit www.boilermakers.org, click on LEAP, and read the legislative alerts. Or visit www.aflcio.org. □

Workers need an asbestos-disease compensation fund

No-fault fund must protect workers if it is to succeed

THOUSANDS OF BOILERMAKERS in construction, shipbuilding, manufacturing, and railroad have been exposed to asbestos on the job. Many of them have already developed or may someday develop asbestosis, mesothelioma, or other lung diseases as a result of breathing the tiny fibers.

For decades, our union has sought to ensure that these workers receive compensation for any asbestos-related illnesses they develop. A compensation fund creates a no-fault system that cuts down on costly lawsuits while ensuring that victims have access to compensation for their injuries.

Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) plans to introduce a bill providing for an asbestos disease compensation fund. The Boilermakers applaud Sen. Specter's efforts, but his bill should address all of our members' concerns.

At present, many issues are still unresolved. Adequate funding, especially in the early years of the program, is critical to ensure that all victims are compensated. In addition, the bill should not unfairly limit or lower a victim's right to just compensation.

Provisions in the current bill unfairly deny victims of other air-

borne dust diseases the right to sue for compensation and could preclude any lawsuits mentioning asbestos. For example, its overly broad definition of an asbestos claim might stop a union from suing an employer for failing to provide respirators to protect workers from asbestos.

The fund should be created so that it cannot be used to deny workers other rights, such as those they get under workers' compensation laws, or the Federal Employers' Liability Act rights our railroad members enjoy.

The Boilermakers also want the fund to provide for medical screening programs to identify conditions that are not yet showing symptoms, and for other avenues and remedies for victims if the fund runs out of money. Senator Specter warns that the stakeholders — represented by business and insurance associations, labor unions, and victims organizations — are still far apart on what they want the compensation fund to look like, and that he will not move forward on a bill until all parties are in agreement.

As a union we have a responsibility to our members exposed to asbestos. We are flexible on many aspects of the bill, but the bill should protect our members.

Workers must unite to stop CAFTA

YOU'D THINK WE would have learned from NAFTA — the North American Free Trade Agreement. NAFTA was supposed to increase U.S. exports to Mexico, create jobs in both countries, and raise wages of Mexican workers. Instead, exports to Mexico declined, U.S. workers lost nearly 900,000 jobs, and the average wage for Mexican workers has fallen over the past 10 years. NAFTA has been a disastrous failure for workers.

But that hasn't stopped the Bush administration from hammering out similar agreements with other countries. During 2004, President Bush signed so-called "free-trade" agreements with Chile, Singapore, Morocco, and Australia. Negotiations have been completed on agreements with Bahrain, the Dominican Republic, and six countries in central America.



In December 2004, trade representatives from the United States, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA). Costa Rica added their signature in January 2005.

If CAFTA is approved by Congress, it will eliminate most tariffs between these countries, paving the way for more of what NAFTA brought. Workers in Central America oppose the trade pact. Thousands of them demonstrated in Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica, but to no avail. If anyone is going to stop CAFTA, it will have to be American workers.

Just like NAFTA, CAFTA was negotiated with virtually no input from unions, environmental, human rights, or consumer groups. Only corporate representatives sat at the bargaining table. Not surprisingly, it contains no labor standards, paves the way for public services in Central America to be privatized, and allows corporations to sue governments for regulations that they believe infringe on their rights, including environmental and consumer safety laws.

But CAFTA is actually worse than NAFTA. It maintains protections for the

corporate-controlled sugar and textile industries, while leaving family farms to fend for themselves. It includes tough new patent protections, eliminating many generic drugs now sold throughout Central America and driving prices out of reach. Worst of all, it opens the door for passage of the Free Trade Area of the Americas — a NAFTA for the entire western hemisphere.

Because of a law passed last year to help get the trade pact enacted, Congress is not allowed to change the agreement. They can only vote yes or no. We encourage you to contact your congressmen and insist that they vote against CAFTA.

CAFTA is a bad deal for workers, family farmers, consumers, and the environment. Not just in the United States, but throughout the region. □

Ask Congress to preserve our manufacturing base

EVERY WEEK BRINGS news of another plant closing, with good-paying jobs leaving the United States. Nearly three million manufacturing jobs have disappeared in the past four years. Many of those jobs once belonged to Boilermakers.

Government policies are partly to blame, according to a report from the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). "Government action could put people back to work in good-paying manufacturing jobs," says Josh Bivens, author of the report.

The Boilermakers support legislation that will encourage manufacturers to keep factories — and jobs — in the United States.

One such law already exists. It requires the United States government to purchase products manufactured in the United States, so that our tax dollars stay in this country.

But Congress has granted the secretary of defense authority to waive these "Buy-American" laws and purchase defense systems and components made in 21 foreign countries. This is short-sighted. Our national defense depends not only on having combat-ready troops and state-of-the-art defense systems, but also on having a

strong industrial base that allows us to act independently to protect our interests.

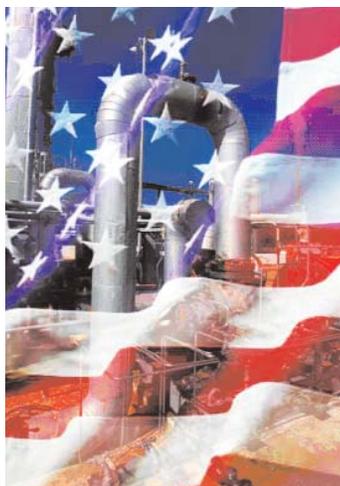
Defense systems are the kind of product we want to encourage domestic manufacturers to produce. They tend to be high-tech and require skilled labor to produce. Buying defense systems abroad weakens our industrial base and erodes our ability to preserve a skilled workforce.

End outsourcing incentives

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S intent to reform the tax code provides an opportunity for Congress to end incentives that encourage corporations to move production overseas.

Current law allows companies to defer paying taxes on their overseas income indefinitely. At the same time, they can deduct many of the expenses they incur moving offshore from their income, further reducing their taxes. Current law amounts to a double subsidy for shipping jobs overseas.

Ending the overseas tax breaks would generate an additional \$7 to \$12



billion a year in tax revenue. More important, it would give companies a financial incentive to keep jobs in the United States.

When they sit down to reform the tax code, Congress needs to enact legislation that penalizes companies for incorporating offshore to avoid paying taxes. They also need to stop giving government contracts to these companies. □

New rules for Homeland Security employees

Bush administration wants to extend them to all government employees

WHEN CONGRESS CREATED the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), they forced 170,000 employees to leave the unions that were representing them. Citing "national security," the Bush administration said they could not allow these employees to collectively bargain for wages and working conditions and convinced Congress to strip them of this basic workers' right.

Now the Bush administration has taken another step toward limiting the rights of these federal employees. In January, the DHS unveiled a new personnel system that will dramatically change the way DHS workers are paid, promoted, deployed, and disciplined. Simply put, they have rewritten all civil service employee rules — without any input from employees.

And it won't end here. The White House will propose legislation within a month to allow all agencies to revamp their personnel systems in a similar way, said Clay Johnson II, deputy direc-

tor for management at the Office of Management and Budget.

Federal employee union leaders have denounced the new Homeland Security personnel system and any plans to expand it to other government workers. They say the system would undermine employees' morale and make it harder to attract and keep talented workers.

Unions representing government workers plan to sue to block the new restrictions on collective bargaining and employee appeals. □

Bush targets rail workers

Wants rail workers to pay fees when they file grievances

RAILROAD COMPANIES HAVE proposed that the National Mediation Board (NMB) begin charging workers fees of up to \$300 for filing grievances against their employers for violating contracts. The proposal has the support of key Bush administration appointees, but has been roundly condemned by unions representing rail workers.

The NMB was established in 1934 to hear and resolve labor-management disputes in the rail industry, including grievances on such critical issues as working conditions, safety, and pay. By requiring workers to pay filing fees, the NMB will silence many workers' legitimate complaints against their employers.

Companies do not have to pay the filing fee.

In December, 120 U.S. representatives wrote the NMB to oppose the filing fee plan. Senators Arlen Specter, Tom Harkin, and Edward Kennedy, all senior members of congressional panels overseeing the NMB, also sent letters in opposition to this proposal.

At the direction of Congress, the NMB held hearings in January to "examine any potential negative impact of the proposed fees." Several union representatives testified at these hearings, explaining how these fees will deprive workers of their right to hold their employer to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement.

For example, many grievances involve short-term or one-time violations of the contract that result in a worker losing less than \$300. If he must pay \$300 just to get a hearing, the worker is likely to let the matter drop.

Other grievances involve health and safety issues that do not call for a financial remedy. For example, if an employer required workers to use outdoor port-a-lets in 30-degree weather, those workers would need to pay as much as \$300 to get a hearing on the matter. □

Who will pay?

(Continued from page 1)

The push for privatization

THE DAY AFTER he won re-election in 2004, President Bush announced that privatizing Social Security would be the "highest priority" of his second term. It was a curious choice. The war in Iraq was still dominating the news, as the number of Americans killed increased daily, and no major part of the electorate seemed to be clamoring for Social Security reform.

In fact, for the past four years, support for privatizing the world's most successful old-age insurance program was declining. In May 2000, 64 percent of the electorate thought that was a good idea. By January 2005, less than half (49 percent) thought so.

Voters oppose Bush's privatization plan for many reasons. The four most often cited by critics are these:

- It doesn't solve the problem
- It requires cuts in guaranteed benefits
- It adds unnecessary expenses
- It provides a profit motive for political manipulation of Social Security funds.

Why Americans love Social Security

FOR DECADES, Social Security has been known as the "third rail" in politics. Touching the third rail on an electric train gets you electrocuted. For politicians, the conventional wisdom goes, messing with Social Security gets you voted out of office.

The reality is not quite so harsh. Social Security has been changed many times in its 70-year history. In 1983, Ronald Reagan spearheaded reforms that raised both the payroll tax and the retirement age.

Reagan was re-elected by a landslide. Nonetheless, Social Security is still called the third rail, because the American people love it. And they love it for good reason.

Social Security provides a core layer of financial security during particular times of need.

It helps families with young children when a wage-earning parent dies. Social Security's survivor insurance provides a monthly check to such families and to non-wage-earning spouses of wage-earners who die.

It also provides guaranteed monthly income to people who are or become disabled and unable to earn a living or care for themselves.

But the most widely-known and appreciated benefit of Social Security is its old-age insurance, which provides a monthly check to retirees. The original purpose for Social Security was to keep senior citizens out of poverty, and it still does that for millions of retirees who reach retirement age with little or no savings or pensions.

Social Security is not a handout; it is an earned benefit. Workers earn their Social Security benefits by paying into Social Security during their working years. Social Security benefits are based on what the individual worker's account has accumulated.

Social Security benefits are guaranteed for life

PEOPLE WHO TALK about privatizing Social Security often minimize some of its most important features.

Social Security benefits are protected against stock market collapses, inflation, and the risk of outliving your assets. Very few other sources of retirement income can make those claims.

Even the least risky private investments are subject to stock and bond market fluctuations. Certificates of deposit (CDs), for example, are very low risk, yet the interest rates they pay vary over time. Any retiree living on the 6.75 percent interest his CDs earned in 2000 had to make significant adjustments to live on the 2.25 percent interest they were earning a year later.

Social Security payments, on the other hand, are guaranteed not only to never drop, but actually to rise each year to keep up with inflation. Very few pension plans offer a cost-of-living feature like Social Security's.

Likewise, Social Security payments continue throughout your lifetime, no matter how long you live. Your life savings may seem like a lot of money when you retire at 65, but you may exhaust those savings if you live to be 95.

Combined, these features provide a level of financial security for retirees that they do not get anywhere else. Bush's proposed private investment accounts will not have these features, reducing financial security for retirees.

Pension trends argue against private accounts

MOST BOILERMAKER members enjoy a benefit that less than half of nonunion workers enjoy — pensions provided by their employers. Only 44 percent of nonunion workers get this benefit. All Construction Division Boilermakers, and more than 80 percent of our other members, enjoy some form of employer-paid pension.

And nearly all of those who have a pension have some form of defined-benefit pension — another advantage over nonunion workers, who tend to have defined-contribution plans.

A defined-benefit pension is one that uses a formula for determining how much you'll get when you retire. Usually, this formula is based on the number of years you worked for the company. In the case of the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust, the formula is based on how much has been paid into the fund on your behalf.

Either way, these workers will be able to figure out at retirement how much they will get from their pensions. And that figure will not decrease throughout their retirement.

But in recent decades, employers have consistently moved away from defined-benefit plans and toward defined-contribution plans. The reason is simple: less risk for them.

Managing a defined-benefit plan is not easy. Because companies must guarantee their pension plans' benefits, some have had to dip into their profits to pay retirees their promised benefits.

Corporations don't like doing that. Dipping into profits lowers stock prices and may even cut into the CEO's salary.

On the other hand, defined-contribution plans, such as 401(k)s, shift all of the risk to the worker. If you make bad investments, that's tough. The company has no obligation.

Enron is a good example. When the company bankrupted, most Enron employees — whose 401(k)s were heavy in Enron stock — were wiped out. But Enron CEO Ken Lay retired a wealthy man.

As the pension system shifts so that more and more workers are taking on more and more risk, Social Security's guaranteed benefits become even more important. Even a strong 401(k) can be wiped out by unforeseen circumstances or fraud. When that happens, retirees need the guaranteed benefits of Social Security to fall back on.

Social Security reform should increase security

WHETHER JACKSON ROUSE will be able to count on Social Security to help him through his old age remains to be seen. Like all government programs, Social Security can disappear overnight if voters do not hold Congress accountable.

If we want to ensure that Social Security is there for us when we retire — as well as for our children and grandchil-

dren — we need to get Congress to take a realistic look at the problem and make adjustments that strengthen the fund.

There's no such thing as fixing it "once and for all," because the economy and the workforce are always changing. We can make adjustments to strengthen it, but more adjustments might be needed in the future.

Although the shortfall won't occur for another 37 years, we need to do something about it sooner than that. Maybe not this year, but soon. Doing nothing, however, is not a good idea.

President Bush's plan to partially privatize Social Security is not a good idea, either. In fact, his plan is worse than doing nothing.

First, the Bush plan hastens the shortfall. Instead of waiting until 2042 to begin taking cuts, guaranteed benefits to retirees would start getting reduced as early as 2013. And in the long run, the reductions in benefits would be larger than they would be if we did nothing at all.

Congress should consider proposals carefully. Unlike 1983, when the fund hit bottom, our crisis is still 37 years away. We do not need to rush into a reform that won't work. We can take the time necessary to explore the alternatives and choose the best one.

In examining alternatives, Congress should keep these goals in mind:

- Provide the benefits we have paid for — don't shortchange us
- Strengthen Social Security, not Wall Street
- Preserve the guarantees that Social Security provides.

Americans need Social Security — now and in the future. We shouldn't make any changes that threaten the benefits of younger workers and their children. □

Personal accounts = privatization

IN HIS STATE of the union speech, President Bush referred to his proposed private investment accounts as "personal accounts," a misleading term.

Social Security already uses "personal accounts." Your benefits are determined by how much is deposited into your personal account during your working years. If you earn more, you pay in more, and you get more when you retire.

President Bush's proposal allows an individual to remove some of the money from his or her personal Social Security account and invest it in the private sector. The proper term for this is "privatization." His plan sets up private investment accounts.

President Bush is fond of saying he does not make policy based on opinion polls, but he obviously follows them closely. He stopped using the word "crisis" because polls show the public understands the problem is not a crisis. Now he wants us to think of his "private investment accounts" as something much less disagreeable.

Don't be fooled. President Bush's plan privatizes Social Security.

HOW THEY COMPARE

	Social Security	Private Accounts
Dependable	Yes	No
Guaranteed benefits	Yes	No
Guaranteed for life	Yes	No
Family protection	Yes	No
Inflation-adjustments	Yes	No
Administrative costs	Less than 1 percent	12-14 percent
Who supports it	Unions, Seniors groups, Consumer groups, Religious organizations, Disability advocates	Investment firms

How much will I lose?

WHEN HE PROMOTES his plan to privatize Social Security, President Bush says he wants to protect Social Security "for the long term" and fix it "once and for all."

But adding private investment accounts to Social Security will not — by itself — do anything to put off the shortfall now projected for 2042.

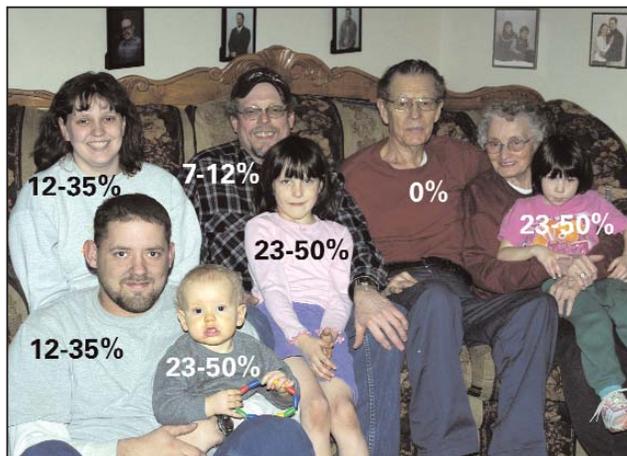
To put off that shortfall, the fund must either bring in more money, spend less, or some combination. In his state of the union speech, President Bush said he would spend less by changing the formula used to calculate benefits, thereby reducing future benefits for everyone under 55.

Using price indexing will reduce benefits

THE CURRENT SYSTEM for calculating benefits employs a formula based on a person's contributions to Social Security, adjusted by something called wage indexing. President Bush has proposed that the formula be changed to use price indexing instead.

Over time, wages have been increasing slightly faster than inflation. That's why each generation is a little bit better off than the previous one. Under price indexing, Social Security benefits will increase at the rate prices increase, not the rate wages increase.

In other words, future beneficiaries will receive benefits with about the



President Bush's plan for privatizing Social Security calls for reducing guaranteed benefits for all workers under 55 by changing the way benefits are calculated.

same buying power as today's beneficiaries. In the past, beneficiaries have benefited from an economy that has improved over time; with Bush's plan, future beneficiaries will not.

The photo above illustrates the approximate amount of reduction people of different generations can expect to experience from this change.

Changing the index used will reduce Wilfred R. Brandt's benefits only about 7-12 percent, because, at 47, he has less than 20 years to retirement. His parents, already retired, will see no change.

For Chrystel (26) and Steve (28), the change will cost them 12-35 percent of their benefits under the current plan.

But Jackson Rouse (1), Destiny Fritz (7), and Anna Prodehl (3) will be the big losers if Bush's proposal becomes law. Price indexing could cut their guaranteed benefits in half.

Private accounts don't make up difference

FOR PRIVATE ACCOUNTS to be of any benefit to future beneficiaries, they

need to make up for any reductions in guaranteed benefits. But the projections of the president's own commission on Social Security show that will not happen.

The president's commission projects that total benefits for the average retiree in 2022 would be seven percent below the benefits guaranteed by current law. In 2042, they would be 12 percent below today's guaranteed benefits, and in 2075, they would fall 23 percent short.

By their own admission, the commission's plan for privatizing Social Security does not protect benefits "for the long term," as Bush has promised.

It cuts benefits. And economists at Goldman Sachs say the commission's projections are too rosy. They say the average return rate assumed by the commission (4.6 percent above inflation) is excessively high. Using a more conservative rate, Goldman Sachs projects that by 2042, the average retiree's total benefits will have fallen by 42 percent.

Doing nothing would cut those same benefits only 27 percent, according to the 2004 Social Security Trustees' report.

Our children could end up paying an awfully high price for privatization. □

Pictured on this page and the front cover are members of a typical Boilermaker family — plus one. Left to right are Chrystel, Steve, and Jackson Rouse; Wilfred R. "Willie" Brandt (Chrystel's father); Destiny Fritz (her daughter); Wilfred C. and Esther Brandt (Willie's parents); and Anna Prodehl (a neighbor). Steve and Willie work at LaFarge's Sugar Creek, Mo., cement plant, where Willie is president of Boilermaker Lodge D27.

Whose account is it, anyway?

Government decides where you can invest, takes part of your earnings

IN HIS STATE of the union address, President Bush said, "You'll be able to pass along the money that accumulates in your personal account, if you wish, to your children . . . or grandchildren. And best of all, the money in the account is yours and the government can never take it away."

Well, not really.

According to *Washington Post* writer Jonathan Weisman, "Under the White House Social Security plan, workers who opt to divert some of their payroll taxes into individual accounts would ultimately get to keep only the investment returns that exceed the rate of return that the money would have accrued in the traditional system."

Specifically, you will only be able to keep the portion of your earnings that goes over an inflation-adjusted return of three percent. For example, if inflation is three percent, you will only be able to keep your earnings that exceed six percent (inflation plus three).

This limitation may surprise lawmakers and voters who believe these accounts would be like an individual retirement account or a 401(k) that they could use fully upon retirement. Not all of the money in "your" account is yours.

What's more, you will not have the freedom to invest your private account as you see fit. You can only invest in certain government-approved stock,

bond, and missed-investment funds. Exactly which funds will be approved is not known, but the process will no doubt involve political trades. Investment firms are already lining up to make their bids.

For example, officials from Charles Schwab, the world's largest discount broker, have already met with White House officials and are being very vocal in their support of the president's plan. Critics point out that between 1999 and 2001, numerous lawsuits were filed against the company, alleging fraud. In the last quarter of 2004, Schwab's profits fell 64 percent, and their stock price has plummeted from a high of \$50 to \$11. Getting a few billion dollars worth of Social Security private investment accounts could help them out of their troubles, but Social Security wasn't created to bail out mismanaged brokerage firms.

The average investor will keep little or nothing

BUSH'S PLAN ALLOWS workers to use one-third of the 12.4 percent they and their employer pay into Social Security for a private investment account. They still receive a guaranteed benefit when they retire, but it is reduced. Exactly how much the guaranteed benefit will be reduced has not yet been determined, but it will have to be considerable, considering up to one-third of monies will be in private accounts, not the general fund.

No one can predict how any specific individual's private investments will

fare, but it is possible to predict what will probably happen with most accounts. The Social Security Administration (SSA) and the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) have projected what they believe are realistic expectations for private accounts, based on economic trends over the next 75 years.

The SSA assumes most people will get a return of 4.6 percent above inflation. The CBO assumes 3.3 percent. Weisman describes a scenario with earnings of 4.0 percent — about halfway between these assumptions.

If you set aside \$1,000 a year for 40 years and earn 4.0 percent annually, the money would grow to \$99,800 in today's dollars. The government would keep \$78,700 — about 80 percent. The remaining \$21,100 would be yours. This \$21,100 would need to make up for whatever amount your guaranteed benefit has been reduced.

If you are lucky enough to earn the 4.6 percent that the SSA assumes, you would have more at retirement, but the government would still keep more than 70 percent.

And if you earn only the 3.3 percent that the CBO assumes, you are left with nothing from your private investment account. The government takes it all, and you are left with your reduced guaranteed benefit.

Even if you don't opt for a private account, you lose

IT WOULD BE easier to support Bush's privatization of Social Security if only those workers who created private

accounts were at risk. We could rationalize that if you're foolish enough to fall for a get-rich-quick scheme, you deserve to lose your money.

But Bush's plan will reduce guaranteed benefits for all workers, whether they choose to invest or not.

Unfortunately, it has to. Allowing people to invest part of their Social Security money does nothing on its own to improve the basic economics of Social Security. To avoid a shortfall, we must increase the money going into the fund, reduce the money going out, or some combination of the two.

Bush's plan reduces the amount leaving the fund by reducing guaranteed benefits. But the added administrative costs for the new private accounts are greater than the savings. The White House says they will cost \$754 billion through 2015.

Between 2009 and 2018, the system would cost more than \$1 trillion, according to Jason Furman, a former Clinton administration economist. And between 2019 and 2028, the price tag would go up to about \$3.5 trillion.

That's not only more than the government stands to save by cutting benefits, it is also more than it would cost to ensure that the current plan pays all benefits through the next 75 years.

The Social Security trustees tell us that the existing plan will run \$3.7 trillion short over the next 75 years. Adding \$3.5 trillion to the plan's expenses is no way to solve the problem of that shortfall. □

Job growth suggests a low-wage future

Good jobs decline, while lower-wage jobs grow

THE GOOD NEWS is that the economy is adding jobs again, after several years of growing losses.

The bad news is that, if you lose your job, your next one will probably not pay as much as your present one.

The average hourly wage in the five industry sectors that have lost the most jobs since 2001 is \$17.25. The average hourly wage in the five sectors that gained the most jobs is only \$14.23.

The sector showing greatest rate of job gain is temporary help, which gained over 203,000 for a growth rate of nine percent. Jobs overall grew at a rate of 1.2 percent.

Low-wage jobs will lead job growth to 2012

GROWTH IN LOW-wage jobs is a trend that will last, according to the Department of Labor. The occupations that will create the most new jobs by 2012 tend to pay below the median hourly wage. The median hourly wage is the dividing line: half of all hourly workers earn more than the median wage, and half earn less.

Many of the jobs with the most growth potential are in the service sector and do not require a college degree, post-secondary education, or apprentice training. □

The 10 occupations generating the most jobs, 2002-2012

- > Registered nurses
- > Postsecondary teachers
- > Retail sales
- > Customer service reps.
- > Food preparation, fast food
- > Cashiers
- > Janitors and cleaners
- > General managers
- > Wait staff
- > Nursing aides and orderlies

Top Five Job Losers During "Recovery"

Sector	Jobs Lost	Average Wage
MANUFACTURING		
Durable goods	893,000	\$16.49
Nondurable goods	390,000	14.69
INFORMATION	274,000	21.29
WHOLESALE	152,000	17.39
TRANSPORTATION	138,000	16.37

Top Five Job Gainers During "Recovery"

Sector	Jobs Gained	Average Wage
HEALTH	588,000	\$15.93
ACCOMODATIONS	180,000	8.20
EDUCATION	179,000	15.75
ADMINISTRATION	176,000	12.69
FINANCE	115,000	18.58

Sources: Economic Policy Institute and Bureau of Labor Statistics

Taxpayers subsidize Canadian Wal-Mart workers unionize

Retail giant is biggest beneficiary of taxpayer-financed healthcare in at least three states

TENNESSEE HAS BECOME the third state to reveal that Wal-Mart is the number one corporate beneficiary of a taxpayer-financed healthcare program. A Tennessee Labor Department study showed that nearly 10,000 Wal-Mart employees in Tennessee received TennCare, the state's expanded Medicaid program for poor families.

Wal-Mart, the state's largest employer, accounts for about one-fourth of all families receiving TennCare. Wal-Mart offers a health plan to full-time workers after six months and part-time employees after two years. But critics point out that the retailer typically keeps workers' hours just below the full-time threshold, so that less than half of its employees qualify for the plan. The majority of those who qualify earn so little in wages that they cannot afford the insurance.

Georgia and Washington have released similar findings.

Georgia revealed in early 2004 that Wal-Mart employees accounted for more than 10,000 Georgia children benefiting from the "PeachCare" program for uninsured kids. That is 14 times as many as the company with the next highest number.

The state of Washington reported in 2003 that its Basic Health Plan for poor families had more Wal-Mart employees on its rolls than any other employer.

Many low-wage and low-benefit companies receive indirect subsidies from welfare programs. The children of full-time, low-wage workers often qualify for food stamps, free school lunches, and health programs.

Phil Mattered, a research director for Good Jobs First, a nonprofit foundation promoting fair use of tax subsidies, says the list of employers with Medicaid-dependent

workers should not include the largest and most profitable companies in the country.

"There was a time when the biggest company in the land — Ford Motor Co. in the early 20th century and General Motors after World War II — set the pace for raising wages and benefits," he said. "But Wal-Mart seems to be leading us downhill and, in effect, using the government to help pay for its expansion by not giving its workers a sufficient health benefit plan."

Last year, a study in California found that Wal-Mart workers there cost that state an estimated \$32 million because of their reliance on public assistance programs.

Good Jobs First has documented more than \$1 billion in subsidies benefiting Wal-Mart. You can read their report at www.goodjobsfirst.org

Gordon Bonnyman, executive director of the Tennessee Justice Center, suggests that the state should allow large companies with low-wage earners to buy into TennCare or other health insurance.

"It would be good if we could get private employers to pitch in and do their fair share, and take advantage of the economy of scale and volume TennCare provides," Bonnyman said. "Nobody understands volume discounts like Wal-Mart."

But at present, the company gets the best discount of all — they pay nothing and let the taxpayers of Tennessee and other states foot the bill.

More information is available at <http://www.walmartcostsyou.org>. □

Web site tracks companies shipping jobs overseas

THE JOB TRACKER WEB SITE, developed by the AFL-CIO's community affiliate, Working America, and the Industrial Union Council, lets workers find out what companies in their area are shipping jobs overseas.

At www.workingamerica.org, you can search for companies exporting jobs by

Company vows to close store rather than let workers negotiate their first contract

UNITED FOOD AND Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 501 was certified by the Quebec Labor Relations Board as the bargaining representative of some 200 employees at Wal-Mart Canada Corp.'s store in Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec. The victory marked the first time workers at a Wal-Mart have voted to form a union.

In retaliation, Wal-Mart said they would close the store, because it would be "impossible" to operate profitably with a union contract.

A spokesperson for the UFCW said they would challenge the legality of closing a profitable store simply to thwart unionization of its employees.

Danaher Tool closes plant

Maker of Craftsman tools moves to nonunion plants

DESPITE OFFERS OF significant wage and benefit concessions to keep the plant open, Danaher Tools, Springfield, Mass., has announced it will close the plant and move the work to nonunion factories in Arkansas and Texas.

Boilermakers Local Lodge 1570 represents 27 of the plant's 300 unionized workers. Lodge President Stanley Pszczola said the concessions package offer

Although this tactic was not expected, union organizers knew the company would be uncompromising in their resistance of the first contract. Wal-Mart has one of the most aggressive union-busting programs in the world. Their training for supervisors includes how to recognize that workers are thinking about unionizing. Supervisors who ignore the signs are threatened with being fired — even if no union organizing ever takes place.

No doubt, Wal-Mart management believes that closing the store will dampen the efforts of union organizers at Wal-Marts throughout the world. However, the company is also waging an expensive advertising campaign to convince the public that they care about their workers.

This announcement illustrates the hypocrisy of those claims. □

by Boilermakers and members of the United Electric-Communications Workers of America could have saved the company about \$4 million. The company claims that moving the plant will save them \$5 million.

Workers enlisted the help of top political figures, including Springfield Mayor Charles V. Ryan and U.S. Rep. Richard E. Neal, D-Springfield, in their effort to save the plant.

Danaher Tool and its predecessors have made mechanic's hand tools at the factory for 100 years. Their main product is wrenches sold under the Craftsman's brand at Sears.

The company will meet with the union in the coming weeks to negotiate details of the closing, which could occur in June or July. Layoffs at the plant could start as early as March.

Pszczola said the union felt it offered a fair package of concessions, and worked hard to try to meet the company's demands. "I'm disappointed with the outcome, but not at all with our efforts," he said. □

On the job, construction Boilermakers are never satisfied with an ordinary job. They strive for excellence. When they turn their attention to other pursuits, that attitude can lead them to interesting places.

Bike-building Boilermaker lands hard-core deal

AFTER LESS THAN a year in business, Jason Barnhouse and Rob Parsons, a member of Local 667, Charleston, W.Va., won Best of Show in Ocean City, Md., with their radical, hand-fabricated, heavy equipment-themed motorcycle. The yellow-and-black bike's fenders, sculpted like bulldozer tracks, its genuine Caterpillar bolts, and its bulldozer blade-shaped air dam, impressed the hosts of "American Chopper."

But it isn't just for looks. The bike's 124-cubic-inch S & S engine cranks out 130 horsepower.

Now the team hopes to put their business, Revelation Choppers, into the black with a hand-sculpted, Hastalloy-jeweled and painted motorcycle, built for the Balzout Corporation, a West Virginia manufacturer of novelty T-shirts. Known for its snarling "smiley face" character surrounded by its trademark motto, "Have a Hardcore Day," Balzout will use the bike for promotional displays around the United States.

"Its most tricked-out feature," Parsons says, "is a DVD screen that will come out from under the seat area at the rear fender mount."

Hot Bike magazine plans a feature spread on another Revelation Choppers' bike — Metal Messiah, the bike that started it all when Parsons began building it in November 2003.

"The Metal Messiah depicts a good-versus-evil theme," says Parsons. Surrounding the Rev-Tech 100 cubic-inch engine is metal flame filigree. Inlaid into the fenders and gas tank are metal daggers with black Onyx and Ruby jeweled handles.

Parsons hand-sculpts 1/8-inch Hastalloy metal (made for use in highly corrosive environments) to create shapes and lines that he polishes to a glittering mirror-finish. He likes to call it motorcycle jewelry.

"Our goal is to be one of the top-notch custom bike builders in America," Parsons says. The team's business plan includes building four to five bikes a year and launching their own line of custom parts. With standing offers from sponsors, steady clothing

sales, and income from the Metal Messiah and their Balzout bike, their business plan seems to be working.

Making high-dollar deals isn't their only goal. "We plan on releasing our blue collar line of bikes — ones we can afford — the first quarter of 2005. They won't be as radical or have quite as much fabrication as the high-end bikes, but they'll be custom and one-of-a-kind."

Revelation Choppers can let the ideas flow, because, in most cases, the shop fabricates literally every part required. "That gives us more control to do what the client wants us to do," Parsons says. "We can take a design someone draws on a napkin and convert it to an Auto-CAD program (computer-aided design). We then take it to the Robert C. Byrd Institute here in Charleston, and machine it, or we send it to our parts connection in Anaheim, Calif. There, they can machine it and have it chromed all in one shop."

Parsons attended the Atlanta Art Institute in 1981. "I didn't want to be a paste-up graphic artist, so after a year I left to do body work on cars. The art institute taught me important basics in design, and the body work refined my painting craft and taught me metal working," Parsons says.

Parsons held a variety of jobs before becoming a born-again Christian in 1998. He joined the Boilermakers shortly after that. His union apprenticeship training gave him additional skills, and the seasonal work allows him the freedom he needs to build his business.

Parsons says, "It [the union] has been an important part of helping me reach my goals. You do the work right, because if you don't, somebody else will be there to do the job instead of you."

Parsons welds carbon and stainless high-pressure tubing and is certified in all Common Arc welding processes. Judging by the care he puts into making his bikes, the tubes he welds are probably works of art, too.

But nobody can jump on a tube and ride into the sunset. □



Jason Barnhouse and L-667 member Rob Parsons (on right) pose with their heavy-equipment themed, award-winning custom motorcycle.



BOOK REVIEW

A Boilermaker tells his story

Working North: Dew Line to Drill Ship
by Rick Ranson (Newest Press)

RICK RANSON, a member of Local Lodge 555, Winnipeg, Man., spent eight years working where few Boilermakers have ever set foot — in the frozen arctic. And when he got home he did what even fewer Boilermakers do — he wrote a book about his experiences. It is a book worth buying and reading.

Ranson first went north to repair boilers in the powerhouses at DEW (Distant Early Warning) sites on several of the islands north of Hudson Bay. North of everything, actually. He went back to work on oil drilling ships stationed in the water surrounding those islands. His stories reveal a world far removed from the comfortable one most of us live in each day, but in many ways, not all that different.

Certainly, many of the situations are alien to the experience of most people: being stalked by a polar bear, flying through the northern lights, living in temperatures more than 40 degrees below zero Celsius. But the people Ranson describes can be found on any

construction site — the bad ones as well as the good. And Ranson has a rare ability to describe people and places very well with a few carefully chosen phrases.

Often, the most uncomfortable experiences supply the starting place for the most entertaining stories, as these stories bear witness.

Welding nonstop for 36 hours to repair a crack in his ship's hull, racing to get the rip mended before the ice floes banging on the hull from the other side widened the hole and flooded his compartment with 32-degree water, makes a fascinating story.

But ignoring fatigue and painful muscles while facing an icy death is probably not nearly as much fun when you're living through it.

Nonetheless, Ranson's stories may give you a glimpse into why he is able to write, "Pity the poor southerner who has never seen an arctic sun skipping along the earth, gathering all the colors of the prism and turning the land a warm purple."

Working North can be special-ordered through most bookstores or purchased through online booksellers.



Here's the bike that started it all — the Metal Messiah.

Locals award service pins to members

Local 1, Chicago

JOHN SKERMONT, BM-ST of Local 1, Chicago, reports presentation of pins for continuous years of membership to the following:

55 YEARS – Emil Priesol;
50 YEARS – Richard Bartos, Wm. Segiet;
40 YEARS – Jack Benz, Arnold Carlson;
35 YEARS – Charles Caffrey, Daniel Durkovic; James Hess;
30 YEARS – Gary Ames, Daniel Bastick, Richard Carlson, Roy Dinovo, Robert Eisenhammer, Ernest Gossett, Charles Hayes, Theodore Heda, Barry Jeleniewski, William Kidd, James Kirby, Robert Knowles, Alvin Lewis, William Morrin, Lawrence Nolan, Fred Promis, Jack Ruby; and
25 YEARS – Bobby Lowe, Robert Rizzo, Wayne Samborski.

Local 60, Peoria, Ill.

ED HEBERT, L-60 BM-ST, Peoria, Ill., reports pin presentation for continuous years of membership to the following:

55 YEARS – Gus Kramarsic, Joseph Schmidt, Bill Stoetzel;
45 YEARS – Gary Foland, Richard Petrechko;
40 YEARS – Rex Bunch, Robert Ennis, John Hall, Darrell Jeggie, Richard Krause, Jim Miskell, Jim Moreland Sr., Mick Nelson, Robert North, Jimmy Sorrell, Ron Summers, Harry Tourene, Robby Underwood, Gary Waters;
35 YEARS – John Askins, Charles Baker, Larry Brousil, Danny Burress, Osmon Bushong, Jack Cooper; Robert DeArcos, Robert Fuller, Ray Grant, Blaine Haskett, Dale Hasler, Lee Roy Jones, Tom Knight, John Lenz, Terry Mason, John Miskell, Joe Palsgrove, Barney Piotrowski, Al Pippitt, Steve Quinlan, Spencer Quinton, Don Raineri, Grady Roberson, Howard Sibert, Frank Storr, Bill Struglinski, Michael Trippett, Keith Van DeVort;
30 YEARS – Robert Behrends, Steve Bradley, John Bryant, Doug Dahl, Gary Gold, Mark Grlic, Paul Guilliams, Mark Hoffman, William Holford, Dave Knight, Darryl Koehn, Rich Magnuson, Bryce Pierman, Dean Sack, Rodney Schwing, Steve Schwing, Terry Smith, Jerry Terando, Larry Underwood, Charles Witzman, Steve Wood;
25 YEARS – Mike Chavez, Kirk Cooper, Greg Gum, Larry Hutchinson, Gene Kolowski, John Latella, Gary Lusk, Kenny Lusk, Carroll Spears, Robert Workman;
20 YEARS – Robert Branan, George Breeding, Brett Cooper, Tom Dwyer, Steve Green, Brian Irvin, Don Long, Robert Lovings, Jerre Moreland, Jim Moreland, Greg Noel, Kurt Piotrowski, Jody Ridley; and
15 YEARS – Joe Gibson, Jerry Goodwin, John Ridley, Jeff Sittler.

Local 101, Denver

HENRY MCCOY, L-101 BM-ST, Denver, reports pin presentation for continuous years of membership to the following:
25 YEARS – Deborah Durfee.

Local 374, Hammond, Ind.

CHUCK VANOVER, BM-ST of Local 374, Hammond, Ind., reports presentation



L-101 BM-ST Henry McCoy presents Deborah Durfee with her 25-year pin.

of pins for continuous years of membership to the following:

50 YEARS – Kenneth Gehlhausen, Gilbert Larson;
45 YEARS – Bobby Eads, Richard Liven-good;
40 YEARS – John Beebe, Paul Bocian, George Talley;
35 YEARS – William Bailey, John Bednash, Lawrence Grambo, James Proctor, Frank Stalbaum, William Vallandingham;
30 YEARS – Frank Begle, Philip Bullock, Charles Burch, Nicholas Chorak, Gary Coomes, Daniel Dattulo, William DeVries, Rodney Dickerson, Roger Dortch, Robert Ensor, Richard Herring-ton, Ronald Hurt, James Johnson, James Keller, Joseph Keller, Rany Lang, Kerry Lee, Steve Litkenhus, Robert Lottes, Robert Meeks, Porfirio Oliva, Gary Peter, Larry Peter, Steve Popovich, Richard Shearn, Jack Smith, Jerry Tempel, Timothy Wilson;
25 YEARS – Tony Adkinson, Kenneth Frey Sr., John Krueger, Gary Meloun, Billie Mowery, Robert Wood;
20 YEARS – Rex Dunn; and
15 YEARS – Elias Flores, Robert Hender-son, Mirko Hodal, James Kizer, Jeff Orlando, James Ross.

Local 502, Tacoma, Wash.

RANDY ROBBINS, L-502 BM-ST, Tacoma, Wash., reports the following pin presentations:

40 YEARS – John Curry, Herb Erickson, Darrell Feighner, Don Forman, G. Don Glacken, Jerry Reed, James Scott, David Willis;
35 YEARS – Robert Anderson, Kip Brendel, Russ Cottrell, William Hayes, James Huff, Dennis Lipscomb, Herman Ohlde, Charles Owens, Ed Richardson, Paul Sanchez, Gary Searle, Larry Wright;
30 YEARS – Jerry Akes, Ron Burns, Dan Carnahan, Ken Collins, Dan Evans, Ed Hanning, Greg Huff, Bruce Jaffa, Craig Koga, Ralph Mitchell, Randy Norwood, Erik Remmen, Ellery Robison, John Shular, Wayne Shutt, Larry Soule, James Tharp, Melton Volk, Roy Vorhoff, Gary Wright; and
25 YEARS – Robert Canfield, Steve Degenstein, Miles Perron, Richard Pope, Ed Post.



Carl Padavick (90) receives his 70-year membership pin from Local 744.

Emerson, Philip Estes, Frederick Feik, Joseph Feik, James Fisher, Ronald Gage, Jack Heidrick, Lonzo Herron, Ernest Holloway, Michael Lewis, John McClarty, Steven Saunders, Thomas Spencer, Dale Stein, Charles Tarman, Clarence Wilson, John Wisnyai;

30 YEARS – Robert Atwood, Samuel Bayle III, Jerome Bien, Robert Boyd, Christopher Campbell, James Carter, Carl Dietz, Frank Dillingham, Jack Dixon, George Durisek, Gary Ebosh, Wayne Foley, Dave Grack, Gerald Greggs, Paul Jewel, Frank Jewett, Joseph Kantor, Francis Keating, Charles Kent III, Andy Kush, John McCachren, Robert McKinney, Terry Mitchell, Carlos Neuroth, Thomas Regan, Charles Robison Jr., Abdullah Saleem, Earl Tharp Jr., Frank Warg, James Wilson, Ralph Wilson, Russell Wilson, Paul Winwood, Paul Wiseman, Robert Zito; and
25 YEARS – Mark Billey, Patrick Boyle, Stephen Bradford, David Collinsworth, Dave Delucia, Robert Dow, Kenneth Formet, James Galbraith, Robert Gardner, Thomas Hermann, James Hodgson, Jamie Jewel, William Lincicome, Robert Lloyd, Kevin Lowry, Jay Maslanka, Larry McCue Jr., Boyd Vanderwyst. □

Local 744, Cleveland

PATRICK GALLAGHER, BM-ST of Local 744, Cleveland, reports presentation of pins for continuous years of membership to the following:

70 YEARS – Carl Padavick;
60 YEARS – John Shipta;
55 YEARS – Julius Eberl, John Grodek, Louis Jewell, James McManamon, Kenneth Sparling, Richard Vanderwyst, Lewis Wagoner;
50 YEARS – Troy Cook, Lawrence Novak Sr., William Rodgers, David Wilson;
45 YEARS – Walter Adams, Victor Conti, James Conway, Dominic Coppa, Wolfgang Galle, Thomas Johnston, Calvin Plute, Jack Ratner, Clifton Smith, Robert Wilson;
40 YEARS – George Brown, William Daubner, Billy Harmon, Paul Hildebrand, Robert Moran, Rodger Parsons, Carl Swiger, Joseph Weigman;
35 YEARS – Nick Avellino, Terry Berlin, Raymond Budny, Robert Connor, David Davis, James DiPenti, Gary

Are you ready for college?

You should apply for a Boilermaker scholarship

ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR BENEFITS of being a Boilermaker is the college scholarship program that helps dependents of Boilermakers get started with their college education. These one-year grants reward the hard work and success of young members of Boilermaker families and encourage members of the next generation of college-educated workers to remember the union advantage.

Boilermaker scholarships are open to high school seniors who will be entering their first year of a two- or four-year academic program at a degree-granting, accredited college or university within one year of their high school graduation and who are dependents of Boilermaker members in good standing. A dependent may be a son, daughter, legally adopted child, or other dependent of an active, retired, disabled, or deceased member.

Winners are chosen based on a variety of criteria that include grades, standardized test scores, extracurricular activities, and a written essay on an assigned topic. Applications for the 2005 awards are available now from your



local lodge and will be accepted from January 1 to March 31, 2005. Applications postmarked after the March 31, 2005, deadline cannot be considered. **Contact your local lodge to get an application.** The International will not mail applications to individuals.

Some local lodges have their own scholarship programs. Scholarships are also available through the Union Plus credit card program and some state and regional labor councils. For information on these scholarship possibilities, contact these organizations directly.

Boilermakers' children survive tsunami — stay to help

SHELLEY GALE WAS sleeping soundly the morning of December 26th when the tsunami struck. A friend of hers saw the ocean draw back from the beaches about a kilometer and sensed something was terribly wrong.

"He ran as fast as he could to wake up Shelley," her father said. "The two ran for their lives, then they jumped in a pickup. As they started it up, the water was rushing in front of the truck. They could see the next wave coming."

Shelley is the 28-year-old daughter of Marg and Gerard Gale, a 32-year member of Locals 73 and 203. Shelley was on the island of Ko Lanta, off the coast of Thailand, to take a scuba-diving course. She had flown to Thailand with her cousin Benjamin Gale, the 28-year-old son of Gennita and Thomas Gale, a 35-year member of Local 203. While Shelley completed her diving course, Benjamin planned to backpack across Vietnam and Cambodia. He was in Bangkok to have dental surgery when the tsunami struck.

"Benjamin heard through the grapevine that 100 scuba divers were missing," says Thomas Gale, Benjamin's father. He thought about Shelley.

"We had not heard from [him] in a couple of weeks. It was a hair-raising time, for all of us, I'll tell you that," Thomas said. The day after the tsunami, Shelley was able to get a call out to her parents. Benjamin managed to get through to her as well.

"I thought they would come home as soon as they could leave," says Thomas Gale, "but that just wasn't Benjamin and Shelley. Ben said, 'I just can't come home seeing the state these people are in.'"

The families and friends of the two Gales immediately began a collection to help the victims on Ko Lanta. "Every penny of the \$1,000 we have sent is going directly to help these people rebuild their homes and businesses," says Marg Gale, Shelley's mother.

Shelley has reported to her parents that the island's most serious problem now is lack of money-generating tourism. She reports the beaches are fine, and the dive areas have been inspected and are intact. They just need tourists.

The Gale children grew up within five miles of each other in Newfoundland's beautiful, rural Codroy Valley. Shelley has backpacked around the world since 1999 and has worked with



Shelley Gale

the handicapped. Benjamin backpacked for two years in Asia and trekked across the Himalayas after completing high school. He has been a professional musician and held various jobs.

"Shelley is strong-willed, a renegade," Gerard Gale says with pride. Perhaps that is why she has plans to join the Gale family tradition as a Boilermaker. Benjamin also plans to become a Boilermaker apprentice in Nova Scotia when he returns in April.



Benjamin Gale

You might say it's a family tradition. The Gale family includes seven Boilermakers in Local 203, Holyrood, Newfoundland, with a combined membership of over 150 years.

In addition to Thomas and Gerard, there are Raymond (30 years), Louis (21 years), Hector (20 years), and Brian (7 years). They are joined by brother-in-law, Owen St. Croix, a 16-year member. And they are all justifiably proud of Shelley and Ben.

"Shelley and Benjamin are our very own Newfoundlanders," says Marg Gale, "our very own Canadians — icons of this nation and the rest of the world." □

Local 193 creates apprentice award for union activity

Local's Boilermaker of the Year award recognizes involvement outside the workplace

ERNEST F. DORSEY, BM-ST for Local 193, Baltimore, and the local's executive board, wanted to find a way to get their apprentices more involved in union activities.

"It's one thing for our members to excel at the worksite, but we need them to also excel as union members," Dorsey explained. "We want them to be active in the union by attending meetings, participating in committee work, and helping with the various activities the local sponsors."

As an incentive, Local 193 created a Boilermaker of the Year award for apprentices who not only stand out as Boilermaker craftsmen, but who learn the value of being a union member through their participation in union activities beyond their training.

Sean W. Farrell, a third-year apprentice, is Local 193's first Boilermaker of the Year. He joined Local 193 on Dec. 27, 2001. According to Dorsey, Farrell came out on top by accomplishing all phases of their competition in a competent and timely manner.

To win, Farrell had to show excellence on his written and practical tests, which cover a wide variety of the skills a journeyman Boilermaker can be expected to perform on the job. He was also required to attend union meetings and volunteer for local functions.

At the local's annual scholarship dinner dance, Dorsey recognized the



Sean W. Farrell is Local 193's 2004 Boilermaker of the Year. At left is BM-ST Ernest Dorsey.

efforts of all the members who participated in their apprenticeship program the past year and became active union members as a result of this competition.

"I hope this contest taught you how to excel as craftsmen and as union members, and that what you learned this past year, you will carry with you the rest of your lives," Dorsey told the contestants.

The Boilermaker of the Year program is sponsored by Local 193 and is available only to apprentice members of Local 193. □



Art Christie, seated, celebrates his 80th birthday with, l. to r., Grant Jacobs, Marty Albright, Sandy MacDonald, Rick Albright, and John Schel.

Art Christie turns 80

ART CHRISTIE, RETIRED general manager of field construction for Combustion Engineering, celebrated his 80th birthday among friends from the Boilermakers union and other construction industry representatives on November 18, 2004.

Christie began his career in 1938 at the Nova Scotia Shipyard in Halifax. Before becoming "Mr. Combustion," Christie worked as a welder for Dominion Bridge, Canadian Comstock, Horton Steel, and Babcock & Wilcox.

In 1959, he accepted a position with Combustion Engineering, where he served in several managerial positions before becoming general manager of field construction. During his career, he worked in all ten Canadian provinces, as well as Australia and New Zealand.

Even when he retired in 1985, he kept working, accepting a consultant position with Babcock & Wilcox Canada, where he stayed until 1990.

L-182's Vigil turns 80

ON OCT. 15, 2004, Joe S. Vigil turned 80 years young. He and his family celebrated this milestone at the VFW in Layton, Utah, at a catered dinner with live music.

Vigil joined Local 182, Salt Lake City, in 1949. He worked as a mechanic and foreman and was on military leave in 1950-51. He retired in 1987.

Vigil has been on dialysis the past two years. He can't go very far without his machine, but his sons have taken him, machine and all, deer and elk hunting.

Married 56 years, he and his wife, Marion, have three sons, three daughters, 21 grandchildren, and 11 great grandchildren.



Joe S. Vigil, a 38-year member of Local 182, turns 80 years young.

Web sites support U.S. jobs, union workers

Consumers can use database to find union-made goods and services — even buy them online

TWO SEPARATE WEB sites created by the AFL-CIO will help online buyers find union-made and American-made goods.

Graduate students of the University of Massachusetts' Labor Relations and Research Center have teamed with the AFL-CIO's Union Label & Service Trades Department to provide comprehensive, up-to-date information listing all goods and services produced by U.S. union members.

The main purpose of this project is to build consumer awareness of and demand for union-made goods and services. It will also benefit the University, providing another opportunity for research.

"The Labor Center will have, in-house, a unique set of data that will be of immense interest to economists, sociologists, and others interested in tracking changes in the domestic economy," said Tom Juravich, Labor Center director.

And the database will give consumers a powerful way to support good U.S. jobs, explained Union Label President Charles E. Mercer.

"Just about everyone has a relative, friend, or neighbor who lost a job because their work was shipped to low-wage, nonunion countries like China or Mexico," said Mercer. "Consumers can 'vote with their dollars' by using the Web site to buy goods and services made by U.S. workers earning decent wages and benefits, with safe working conditions. Good jobs are the backbone of a healthy economy."

The new database, located at www.unionlabel.org/do_buy.asp, allows you to both find and submit union products and services. Some products and services are also categorized by type for easy access: vacation and travel planner, touring plays and musicals, union airlines, union hotels & restaurants, union insurance, union printers, union-made tires, and union-made vehicles.

Union shop makes online buying a snap

IF YOU ARE looking for a gift — for yourself or someone else — be sure to check out the union-made products at <http://unionshop.aflcio.org>, one of the AFL-CIO's newest Web sites.

Launched by their Union Label & Services Department (ULSD), the site offers consumers all-union shopping for a variety of products, including chocolates, clothing, computers, games, greeting cards, music, posters, videos, and more.

"Shoppers can 'Give the Gift of Good Jobs' by buying items produced by workers with good pay, benefits, and rights of a union contract. Union Shop Online makes it easy to support good jobs by buying union," said Matt Bates, ULSD secretary-treasurer. □

Getting credit under control

THE HOLIDAYS ARE over, but for many people, the bills are still coming. If you're feeling pinched by your credit card debt, take control by becoming credit smart. These suggestions may help reduce your debts.

1. Prioritize debts by interest rate

MAKE A LIST of all your credit card and installment loan balances and their required minimum monthly payments, then prioritize them by interest rate. The amount of interest you're paying is important, so if you don't know the rate, contact the lender to find out.

2. Change your payment strategy

YOU SHOULD AT least be paying the minimum amount due on all cards and loans. Figure up what that total amount is and then determine how much more you can afford to pay. Then increase your monthly payment on the loan with the highest interest rate. By paying a little extra each month on one or two of your high-interest loans, you can save a considerable amount of money and shorten the time it takes to pay them off.

For example, if your average credit card balance is \$1,100 with 16 percent interest and you pay only the minimum payment each month, it will take 12 years to pay off the balance and cost you \$2,075 in interest. Paying just \$10 extra each month erases your balance in five years and saves \$538 in interest.

Once you pay off one loan, use this same payment strategy on the loan

with the next highest interest rate. Keep repeating this method until you reach your goal of reducing your debt or becoming debt-free.

3. Reduce interest rates by refinancing

SOME CREDIT CARDS carry interest rates as high as 21 percent, so shop around for the most competitive rates when refinancing a loan or switching credit cards. Lower rates can save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

4. Change your spending habits

STEPS 1, 2, AND 3 won't work if you continue to borrow money. Here are a few tips to help you control your spending:

- If you buy on impulse, try buying only what you need.
- If you use a credit card every time you shop, try walking away without buying anything.
- Write down what you spend. You can't stop overspending if you don't know where your money is going.
- Get every family member involved and set goals to reduce spending. But don't deprive yourself of everything you enjoy; this may cause you to go back to your old free-spending habits.

If you can't get control of your credit, seek debt counseling through Union Plus — 877-833-1745 — or online at www.unionplus.com. □

Wlodyka is new participant outreach representative

EDWARD J. Wlodyka JR., 51, a 24-year member of Local 169, Detroit, is the new participant outreach representative for the Boilermakers national funds office.

According to fund administrator Dave Hanson, as the participant outreach representative, Wlodyka will schedule meetings throughout the country to explain the benefits available under the Boilermaker annuity, health & welfare, and pension plans.

"Through these meetings it is hoped that participants will gain a better understanding of how the plans operate and how they may best utilize the benefits available," Hanson said. "As a result of direct participant contact, Ed will also be an additional source of feedback to our boards of trustees regarding the concerns and suggestions of those covered by the national funds."

The position was established to provide direct contact between the national funds office and various constituent groups (participants, local lodges, and contributing employers). It was advertised in the Jun-Aug issue of *the Boilermaker Reporter*.

One of Wlodyka's co-workers brought him the ad and said, "This is you." The funds office agreed. □



Edward J. Wlodyka

Wlodyka has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Industrial Labor Relations, but he has worked off the "hall list" as a field construction worker since 1977.

He secured the national funds position in November and moved to Kansas City to begin his work with the funds office on January 3.

"I'm a true Boilermaker," Wlodyka said. "There is nothing I can't do or won't do."

Wlodyka has served two terms as a Local 169 trustee, has been elected as a convention delegate, represented his lodge at the annual legislative conference in Washington, D.C., and is currently completing his term as local recording secretary.

"Coming directly out of the field gives me an advantage," Wlodyka said. "I understand the members' concerns about rising health care costs and changes in pension benefits. I am working on a presentation and a glossary of terms that I hope will provide the members with a better understanding of our plans."

At the Feb. 14-18 Construction Division winter meeting in Marco Island, Fla., Wlodyka met with business managers to begin scheduling meetings with members. □



Money-Saving Programs for Members Only

The benefit programs listed below are available only to Boilermaker members and their immediate families.*

Union Plus Credit Card Call: 1-800-522-4000

Mortgage & Real Estate
Also open to children & parents of Boilermaker members.
Call: 1-800-848-6466

Education Services
Get expert advice on scholarships and other funding sources for college and job skills training.
Call: 1-877-881-1022

Personal Loans
Credit-qualified members are eligible for loans for a variety of uses.
Call: 1-888-235-2759

Legal Service
Discounted legal help — first 30 minutes are free.
Visit: www.unionplus.org

Life Insurance
For members, their spouses, and children.
Call: 1-800-899-2782

Accident Insurance
Call: 1-800-899-2782

Health Savings
Save on prescription medicines, hearing, dental, and vision care.
Call: 1-800-228-3523

Car Rental Discounts
Call and give the ID number:

Avia: 1-800-698-5685
AWD #B723700

Budget: 1-800-455-2848
BCD#V816100

Union-Made Checks
Call: 1-888-864-6625

Flower Service
Call: 1-888-667-7779

North American Van Lines
Call: 1-800-524-5533

For information on these programs and other member-only benefits, go to

www.unionplus.org

*Retired members are eligible. Some programs are not available to members outside the continental United States, and not all programs are available in all states.

Phone 1-800-452-9425 for clarification of eligibility.

WITH DEEP SORROW the International Brotherhood records the death of these members as reported to the International Secretary-Treasurer's office, and extends its heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved families.

LODGE & NAME		40	Williams, Robert	92	Paulos, Alexander
1	Lewis, Alvin	60	DeArcos, Robert	104	Blankenship, Donald
1	Weilbacher, Robert	69	Wooten, Thomas	104	Olson, Gerard
6	Relander, Roland	72	Goble, Jack	132	Burnett, Keith
11	Johnson, Marion	72	Olson, Chester	132	Lujan, Eduardo
27	Powelson, James	79	Ardoin, Jeffrey	132	Willoughby, J. M
29	Lapaglia, Howard	85	Bloom, Herthel	146	Dickerson, Matthew
37	Leader, Charles	85	Toth, Julius	146	Peevey, Randy
40	Doyle, Ricky	92	Christensen, Donald	154	Baver, Pelegren
40	Meisenhelder, Paul	92	Esparza, Candelario	154	Joyce, James

154	Kantrimaitis, William	453	Cagle, Virgle
154	Petrun Jr., Michael	502	John, Robert
154	Procak, Anthony	587	Locke, Vernon
169	Jenerou, Elmer	592	Ellis, William
175	Woolson, David	595	Chapman, Walter E.
M194	Bishow, William	647	Schweitzer, Gerald
204	Tolar, Homer	656	Troxell, Vaughn
242	Hanson, Elmer	667	Clark, James
D287	Bash, Deane W.	667	Ellis, Lowell
357	Spencer, Jerry	667	Miller, Harold
357	Townsend, Larry	744	Hunn, Jack
433	Barja, Joe	1626	McConaha, Lester

DEATH BENEFITS

THE DEATH BENEFIT PLAN under the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust has paid the beneficiaries of the following deceased members who were covered by the plan since the last issue of our publication.

LODGE, NAME & BENEFIT	37	Baham, Raymond D.	300.00
Intl. Chambers, Charles A.	\$6,000.00	37 Leader, Charles G.	6,000.00
Intl. McFadden, Rose K.	6,000.00	37 McCoy, James E.	6,000.00
Intl. Walker, Jeanne	6,000.00	37 Morel, Lenix	6,000.00
NTL Bush, Don E.	6,000.00	37 Passalacqua, Joseph	6,000.00
NTL Funk, Carl L.	6,000.00	60 Bushong, Ronald P.	6,000.00
NTL Kerrigan, Donald	6,000.00	60 DeArcos, Robert L.	6,000.00
NTL Lefler, Robert L.	6,000.00	69 Wooten, Thomas D.	6,000.00
NTL Minnis, John F.	6,000.00	72 Bergman, Gene A.	6,000.00
NTL Richburg, William H.	4,000.00	72 Crisp, Walter J.	6,000.00
NTL Riffle, Frank W.	15,000.00	72 Espinosa, Lloyd	6,000.00
NTL Speegle, Walter D.	6,000.00	72 Goble, Jack E.	6,000.00
NTL Stewart, Norwood M.	6,000.00	72 Jones, Ernest	6,000.00
1 Boles, Eddie	882.88	72 Kennedy, James L.	6,000.00
1 McGhie Sr., James E.	6,000.00	72 Martinez, Mike	2,000.00
1 Mullaney, Richard	6,000.00	72 Olson, Chester A.	6,000.00
1 Ragisus, Edward E.	6,000.00	72 Ostby, Lester O.	6,000.00
1 Riller, Rudolf	6,000.00	74 Bellis Jr., Raymond J.	6,000.00
1 Ryan, Patrick J.	6,000.00	74 Jacobs, W.B.	6,000.00
6 Anderson, Earl E.	3,000.00	74 Ramos, Esmerejildo	864.56
6 Barthelemy, Claude A.	6,000.00	79 Bowman, Wayne G.	6,000.00
6 Brallier, David E.	6,000.00	83 Adams, Chester F.	6,000.00
6 Cox, Cleo Charles	6,000.00	83 Crnic, Joseph J.	6,000.00
6 Fry, Ronald G.	6,000.00	83 Howell, J.I.	3,000.00
6 Gonzales Sr., Charles J.	1,000.00	83 Reyes, Lupe M.	6,000.00
6 Hodges, Michael A.	7,914.60	83 Rogers Sr., Harvey L.	6,000.00
6 Holm, Philip D.	6,000.00	83 Scott, Shelby J.	6,000.00
6 Lee, Walter B.	6,000.00	84 Hoffman, John H.S.	6,000.00
6 Middlestead, Oscar	3,000.00	85 Bloom, Herthel C.	6,000.00
6 Rivera, Fernando	6,000.00	85 Lanning, Mark A.	10,834.98
6 Torres, Manuel L.	6,000.00	85 Toth, Julius E.	6,000.00
10 Casey, Albert	1,200.00	92 Amador, Pete	6,000.00
10 Tribble, Albert	6,000.00	92 Casby, William	6,000.00
11 DuBrey, Lionel H.	6,000.00	92 Castro, Amador R.	6,000.00
11 Johnson, Marion A.	6,000.00	92 Christensen, Donald E.	6,000.00
11 Lujan, Eduardo	9,562.70	92 Cook, Kenneth R.	6,000.00
13 Valent, Anthony F.	2,000.00	92 Douvia, Dale	6,000.00
26 Coleman, Neal	6,000.00	92 Maples, Bill J.	6,000.00
26 Head Jr., Ras K.	6,000.00	92 Martinez, Edmund H.	6,000.00
26 Hollar, Richard B.	6,000.00	92 Neiberger, Balteir	6,000.00
26 Lee Sr., John William	6,000.00	92 Paulos, Alexander	6,000.00
26 Newton, George D.	6,000.00	104 Badda, Edward Charles	6,000.00
27 Bratcher, Tyrone L.	6,000.00	104 Blankenship, Donald R.	8,084.30
27 Powelson, James R.	6,000.00	104 Jones, Larry R.	6,000.00
27 Sencibaugh, James E.	6,000.00	104 Leydig, Dale A.	2,763.71
27 Shoults, Harvey S.	6,000.00	104 Loe, Jacob J.	6,000.00
29 Toulouse, Rosaire A.	6,000.00	104 Minarich, Mike F.	6,000.00
30 Vogler, Anderson L.	6,000.00	104 Minchew, Preston C.	6,000.00
37 Aymami, Melvin H.	6,000.00	104 Pontius, James R.	6,000.00

IF YOU HAVE NOT yet been furnished this information, contact your local lodge, secure the beneficiary forms, complete the required information and forward to the Administrative Office of the Pension Fund, 754 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 522, Kansas City, KS 66101, at the earliest possible date. NOTE: These additional death benefits can only be derived for members who worked under a collective bargaining agreement with an employer contributing to the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust.

104	Rodriguez, Umberto R.	6,000.00	449	Chaudoir, Leonard A.	6,000.00
104	Rone, Melvin Leonard	6,000.00	453	Cagle, Virgle	6,000.00
105	Good, Leonard I.	6,000.00	454	Howard, Max H.	6,000.00
105	Griffith, Randy L.	15,000.00	454	Moss Sr., Robert K.	6,000.00
106	Miller, Robert Lee	6,000.00	454	Newman, Jodie D.	6,000.00
107	Halsne, Timothy W.	15,000.00	454	Richbourg, Kenneth D.	1,126.00
107	Martin, Charles	4,355.75	455	Hunnicut, Louie D.	6,000.00
107	Moore, James Patrick	4,500.00	455	Mann, Thoris N.	13,649.54
107	Walendowski, Richard	6,000.00	487	DeCramer, Elmer A.	3,000.00
108	Smith, Marvin D.	130.79	500	Hodges, James W.	6,000.00
113	Taylor, Alvin S.	6,000.00	502	John, Robert W.	14,731.90
124	Sikowski, Richard P.	6,000.00	549	Gregory, James O.	6,000.00
132	Petrosky, David R.	6,000.00	549	Houx, George A.	6,000.00
132	Santos Jr., Jesse A.	6,000.00	568	Berglund, Lawrence S.	6,000.00
132	Wilkins, Bobby R.	3,000.00	577	Panas, George J.	6,000.00
132	Willoughby, J.M.	6,000.00	582	Francois, Jessie	6,000.00
154	Adamson, Timothy C.	15,000.00	582	Mullens, Kenneth L.	6,000.00
154	Joyce, James E.	6,000.00	583	Epperson, John E.	6,000.00
154	Kantrimaitis, William	6,000.00	583	Sims, William Robert	6,000.00
154	Meixner, Thomas S.	11,156.98	587	Graden, G.W.	6,000.00
154	Petrun Jr., Michael	6,000.00	587	Locke, Vernon L.	6,000.00
154	Procak, Anthony	6,000.00	587	Taylor, Hal L.	6,000.00
154	Shimkus, Thomas A.	6,000.00	592	Ellis, William R.	6,000.00
159	Frisbie, Robert J.	6,000.00	592	Hamilton, Raymond F.	3,000.00
169	Boler, Charles W.	6,000.00	627	Gregory, Bruce	6,000.00
169	Jenerou, Elmer A.	6,000.00	627	Lantana, Larry	642.25
169	Marker, Henry	6,000.00	627	Sabine, John E.	6,000.00
175	Woolson, David Rex	6,000.00	627	Weese, Charles B.	6,000.00
175	Yerdon, Kenneth H.	6,000.00	647	Olson, Richard A.	6,000.00
193	Helms, John D.	6,000.00	647	Schweitzer, Gerald A.	3,668.31
195	Philhower, Douglas A.	3,148.76	667	Clark, James A.	6,000.00
197	Gendron, Gerald C.	6,000.00	667	Foland, William E.	6,000.00
199	Christmas, William N.	729.50	667	Harman, John C.	6,000.00
199	Waller, Tommy C.	6,000.00	673	Borton, Joseph J.	6,000.00
242	Bench, Allen T.	6,000.00	673	Nevins, Peter	6,000.00
242	Hanson, Elmer V.	6,000.00	679	Wesley, Edward C.	6,000.00
288	Kepka, Leonard J.	6,000.00	696	McDonald, Donald D.	3,000.00
327	Zickgraf Sr., James A.	6,000.00	697	Ebert, Clarence A.	6,000.00
357	Ard, Arvis	6,000.00	744	Dunn, John C.	8,741.80
363	Slattery, Edward F.	6,000.00	744	Hunn, Jack	4,000.00
374	Bean III, Dewey C.	6,000.00	749	Kerr, Kenneth	6,000.00
374	Hawks, Frank M.	6,000.00	752	Fitzpatrick, David R.	6,000.00
374	Howell, Phillip K.	10,559.76	799	Lloyd, William J.	6,000.00
397	Messerle, Louis H.	6,000.00	801	Jacob, Alfred C.	6,000.00
433	Alexander, Michael C.	6,000.00	802	Augustine, Reynold L.	6,000.00
433	Barja, Joe	6,000.00	802	Harding, Robert M.	3,000.00
433	Copeland, David L.	6,000.00	802	Hunter, Louis D.	6,000.00
433	Phillips, Lemuel	6,000.00	802	Nelson, Eric	2,752.63
433	Valenti, Jimmie	6,000.00	802	Payne Jr., William	6,000.00

Moving? Tell us where...

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State or Province _____ Zip _____

Local Lodge No. _____ Register No. _____

(Also please notify the secretary of your local lodge.)

Mail form to:

Publications Department
753 State Avenue, Suite 565
Kansas City, KS 66101

(Allow five weeks for change of address.)

1086	Green, George W.	6,000.00
1184	Gilbert, Donald J.	1,594.51
1204	Hasenbuhler, Gordon	6,000.00
1241	Birchfield, A.	2,000.00
1243	Coburn, Howard V.	6,000.00
1509	Lawler, Sherman	6,000.00
1509	Zaidel, Leonard T.	2,000.00
1592	Frick, Richard S.	6,000.00
1592	Keppel, Frank	6,000.00
1592	Valek, Stephen J.	6,000.00
1600	Adkisson, Zelman	6,000.00
1603	Middleton, William H.	6,000.00
1702	Fabinack, Theodore W.	6,000.00

Let's ensure a good future for all

IN HIS FIRST TERM, President Bush's number one priority was lowering taxes. He succeeded to a degree that still amazes many observers. Though his tax cuts primarily benefited the wealthiest Americans and created our nation's largest budget deficits in history, they sailed through Congress.

The tax cuts of 2001-2004 shifted more of the tax burden to middle-class working families and saddled our children and grandchildren with trillions of dollars of government debt.

In his second term, the president has set his sights on privatizing Social Security. If he is as successful over the next four years as he was in his first four, future generations of American workers can expect not only to begin shouldering an unfair share of the national debt, they can expect to lose a significant portion of the Social Security benefits that current law guarantees them.

Make no mistake: Social Security is facing a shortfall sometime in the next 35-50 years. We need to make changes to ensure that future generations enjoy the core financial stability Social Security gives today's workers and retirees.

But the privatization plan proposed by President Bush will not do that. Instead, it will cause the government to borrow trillions of dollars to pay for "transitional costs," lower guaranteed benefits for all workers under 55, and open the door to political manipulation of Social Security funds.

Worst of all, **President Bush's privatization plan simply does not solve the problem.** We must find one that protects all generations.

When talking about the future of Social Security, it is easy to get lost in the numbers, not to mention the concepts

on which these numbers are based — wage indexing, price indexing, actuarial assumptions. Fortunately, we know where to find experts who can analyze the Social Security question with the best interests of workers in mind. The Economic Policy Institute Web site (www.epinet.org) provides numerous examples of what would happen under Bush's plan.

We cannot let the Social Security debate distract us from supporting legislation that helps our members and our union.

For example, the president proposes using price indexing instead of wage indexing to calculate benefits of future retirees. An article on EPI's Web site shows how this change could have a negative impact on retiree benefits.

The current Social Security benefit for a worker retiring in 2005 with average earnings over his lifetime is \$15,336 per year, which replaces 42 percent of his pre-retirement income. But if price indexing were used instead of wage indexing, the EPI calculates that same 2005 retiree would receive only \$6,180 per year, replacing just 17 percent of his income — a 60 percent cut in benefits.

Workers have many allies in our effort to protect Social Security from the radical overhaul proposed by President Bush. Among them are at least 29 Republicans in the House of Representatives, with more joining every day. They agree with us that the president's plan to partially privatize Social Security will not fix the shortfall problem and they want to wait until we find a plan that will. Let's do that.

In the meantime, we cannot let Social Security totally consume our attention, or we risk ignoring many other issues that affect our members and our country. For most Americans, access to affordable health care is a far more pressing issue than Social Security reform. In fact, rising health care costs threaten the future of another vital program for seniors, Medicare. Yet media attention has been shifted from health care to Social Security because of the president's proposal.

The president's proposed budget for next year is another issue that we must not overlook. President Bush's budget will cut 150 programs, while increasing our federal debt by \$533 billion. We need to follow the budget approval process closely and try to save good programs where possible.

In his second term, the president will have the opportunity to appoint numerous federal judges and two members of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). We must keep on top of these developments to ensure we get fair treatment from the NLRB and federal courts. Democrats in the senate have been criticized for opposing some of the president's nominations, but that is their duty to their constituents.

The approval process required by the U.S. Constitution provides important checks and balances so that those persons placed in high positions represent a broad section of the voting public, not just the interests of the president and his close inner circle.

We must not allow our opposition to President Bush's Social Security plan to detract from the good relationships we have with many Republicans in both the House and the Senate. Senator Trent



Newton B. Jones
International President

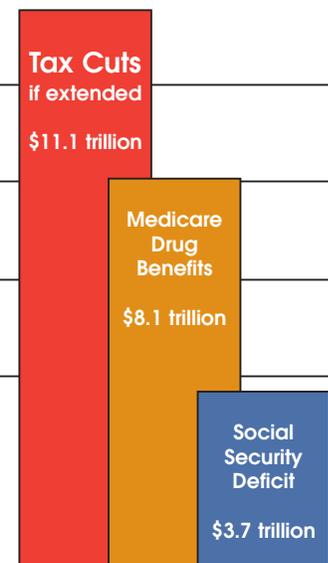
Lott (R-MS) and Congressman Rob Simmons (CT-2nd, R) have done much to help our shipyard members. We look forward to working with them more in the future.

And we will support all measures that we determine are good for our members and the country. For example, after much study we have determined that President Bush's Clear Skies initiative will help to clean up the air while creating jobs that will help our country's economic recovery. Boilermakers legislative representative Abe Breehey testified on exactly those points to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

Our union's mission is to protect our members in the workplace, to protect their livelihoods and lifestyles. Ensuring that all workers continue to enjoy the core financial security provided by Social Security is an important goal, but it is not our only goal. □

Can we afford to fix Social Security?

Costs over the next 75 years, in today's dollars



A FREQUENTLY HEARD argument for privatizing Social Security is that we simply cannot afford it anymore.

This argument simply doesn't hold water. If we want to keep Social Security, we can. It's just a matter of proper budgeting.

The often-cited Social Security shortfall that could begin in 2042, may cost as much as \$3.7 trillion over the next 75 years.

But the Medicare Drug Benefit will cost more than twice that amount.

And the tax cuts passed from 2001-2004 will cost nearly \$12 trillion.

The tax cuts for the richest two percent alone will cost \$2.9 trillion, nearly 80% of the projected cost of Social Security for all retirees.

The question is not whether we can afford to fix Social Security. It is which method will do the job best.

Letters to the Editor

Can we combine all Metal Trades insurance plans?

IS THERE ANY reason why the Boilermakers can't get together with the other Metal Trades unions and pool all of our health & welfare plans and get an insurer and use a system that all members can use (total co-pay) all over the country?

By joining forces with the other trades, we should command better rates and better coverage by forming, possibly, the largest group plan in the country, and probably lower our administration costs, with a centralized office and system.

JACK MELLON, L-5
New York, N.Y.

L-104 retiree Terry Hawley thanks union for his success

I RECEIVE a Boilermaker pension out of Local 104 in Seattle. Although I'm employed as the operations director for the Northshore Utility District north of Seattle, most of my career was in shipbuilding and construction at Lockheed Shipbuilding and at MARCO in Seattle.

After earning my degree in business administration I changed careers and now work in the utility field

(water/sewer). However, without the background and work ethic I received from the Boilermakers union I could never have been as successful as I am now. Thank you, Boilermakers.

TERRY C. HAWLEY, L-104
Seattle, Wash.

Disabled member upset about loss of health care

IF YOU RETIRE or become disabled, you lose your health and welfare benefits when you use up your banked hours. This is totally unfair to the retired and disabled boilermaker and needs to be changed so we can afford health care.

C. G. JOLLY, L-83
Kansas City, Mo.

Got something to say?

WE WELCOME LETTERS of fewer than 150 words on topics of interest to our members and their families. We do not publish personal attacks on members or unsigned letters.

SEND A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

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