Boilermakers help restore balance to Congress

Members participate in Labor 2006 to get out the vote and the message

WITH DOZENS OF governor, Senate, House, and state legislative positions in play, 2006 presented a real opportunity for working families to take back control from the anti-worker majority that held power. And that is just what workers did, tipping the scales back in favor of the Democratic Party.

Tom Baca is new Western States IVP

Joe Stinger retires after 40 years of service

THE INTL. EXECUTIVE COUNCIL voted J. Tom Baca into the office of International vice president for the Western States effective February 1, Baca, BM-ST for Local 549 (Pittsburg, Calif.), was nominated by International President Newton B. Jones to take the position vacated by IVP Joe Stinger’s retirement.

Stinger expressed his strong endorsement of Baca, saying, “Tom will do an excellent job in representing the Western States membership and as a member of the International Executive Council. I have complete confidence in Tom’s ability.”

Baca joins established leadership team

J. TOM BACA HAS been business manager of Local 549 since March 2005, beginning his Boilermaker career as a field construction worker in 1969. He worked his way up the ranks, from steward to job superintendent, earning an appointment as an assistant business manager in 1994. He has served as both trustee and chairman of trustees on the Local 549 executive board.

In 2005, Baca was appointed union trustee to the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust. He also served on the Law Committee for the 31st Consolidated Convention, held in July 2006.

In 2005, Baca was appointed union trustee to the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust. He also served on the Law Committee for the 31st Consolidated Convention, held in July 2006.

Stinger calls end to career that began in 1967

JOSEPHA “JOE” STINGER first retired on January 1, 2003, as administrative assistant to International President Charles W. Jones and director of the Boilermakers’ Railroad Division. He continued to serve as a member of the executive board for that area’s NAACP chapter.

Baca says he is honored that IP Jones, IVP Stinger, and the entire International Executive Council had the confidence to nominate and vote him into this important position.

“As the Western States International vice president, I know that my principal role will be to provide service to our members,” Baca stated. “I will never forget that, and every decision I make for this great organization will be for the good of the entire membership.”

Boilermakers help restore balance to Congress

Boilermakers help restore balance to Congress
Boilermakers attend ASA conference

DGA staff members meet with owners, key members of Congress

WHEN BOILERMAKERS DIRECTOR of Government Affairs Bridget Martin and Assistant Director Abe Breehey attended the annual conference and legislative workshop of the American Shipbuilding Association (ASA) in November, the arguments they made (and the ones they heard) were nearly identical to the ones made each year at the Boilermakers LEAP conference. There is no surprise to anyone except the ASA that it is an organization that represents shipyards—that is, Boilermaker employers.

But in shipbuilding, as in some other industries, the Boilermakers’ legislative agenda coincides very closely with that of the companies who employ our members. ASA members want to build ships. So do we. And members of Congress hold the key to making that possible. The ASA conference provides a vehicle for Boilermakers and shipyard owners to meet with key legislators who can help us enact our legislative agenda.

Breehey says, “It is much easier to get Congress to act on critical shipbuilding issues—especially those related to federal spending—when labor and management work together to advance shared goals.”

Martin explains, “It is vitally important that we provide our perspective on the need to ensure that America maintains a strong fleet of U.S.-built ships that keep shipbuilders working and America secure and economically prosperous. The ASA conference provides a forum for union leaders, industry leaders, and distinguished members of Congress to build relationships and discuss the critical role of budgets and policies to rebuild our shipbuilding industrial base.”

This year’s conference drew 10 members of the House of Representatives: Tom Allen (D-ME), Corrine Brown (D-FL), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Jo Ann Davis (R-VA), Maurice Hinchey (D-NY), David Hobson (R-OH), John Mica (R-FL), Bobby Scott (D-VA), Gene Taylor (D-MS), and Bennie Thompson (D-MS). These representatives serve on numerous committees that shape legislation vital to shipbuilding, including Budget, Energy, and Commerce; Transportation and Infrastructure; Appropriations; Armed Services; Government Reform; and Homeland Security.

Congressman Gene Taylor (D-MS) discusses legislative issues with Assistant Director of Government Affairs Abe Breehey (right).

“The presence of the Boilermakers at the ASA conference demonstrates to those representatives who attend that investment in shipbuilding means investment in good jobs,” says Breehey.

Government action shapes shipbuilding

FOR OVER 100 YEARS the actions of the federal government have had an enormous impact on the U.S. shipbuilding industry. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the buildup of the U.S. Navy expanded the nation’s shipyards. Electric Boat, an ASA member and Boilermaker employer, first began building submarines for the U.S. government during this period.

Wartime shipbuilding greatly expanded the nation’s shipbuilding industry during World Wars I and II, and also expanded membership in the Boilermakers union.

Although a post-war decline in shipbuilding was inevitable, a single government action in 1981—President Reagan’s suspension of the Constructional Subsidy Program—nearly dealt a death blow to U.S. shipbuilding. When the United States ended its subsidies, other nation’s increased their efforts to get our share of the shipbuilding market.

And they succeeded. In 1987 the United States did not have a single commercial ship on order or under construction. The U.S. market share dropped from nine percent in 1979 to zero in 1988. Since that time, the United States has managed to regain nearly one percent of the worldwide market share for commercial shipbuilding.

That tiny share is the result of another government action—the Jones Act, a federal law that requires ships carrying cargo between two U.S. points to be built in the United States. Without the Jones Act, there would be zero commercial shipbuilding in the United States. Any erosion of the Jones Act is a serious concern for both the ASA and the Boilermakers.

Since the 1980s, nearly all U.S. shipbuilding has been sustained by orders from the U.S. Navy. Although all but destroyed commercial shipbuilding in the United States, creating construction subsidies, President Reagan kept the shipbuilding industry afloat by promoting a 600-ship U.S. Navy. His successors in the White House have seen to it that the Jones Act is preserved.

The Boilermakers are working hard to ensure that the Jones Act remains an integral part of our national shipbuilding strategy and resume the promotion of other shipbuilding and ship repair subcontracts.

IVP James Hickenbotham retires

Former Cement Division director ends 34-year career

JAMES HICKENBOTHAM JR., 61, International vice president for the CLGAW Division since Oct. 1994, retired January 17.

He began his career as a member of the Paper Workers Union. Eight years later, he went to work for Lonestar Inc. at its Roanoke cement plant, joining Local D314 (Davieville, Va.) in 1973. He served the lodge as both a recording secretary and local president. In January 1988, Hickenbotham was appointed International representative for the North American region. As a member and co-chair for the ICMEC’s materials sector, Hickenbotham often represented the Boilermakers union at global meetings. In 2005, he was elected to a four-year term as chair of the ICMEC’s materials sector at its world conference in Brussels, Belgium.

Hickenbotham is looking forward to having more time to spend with his family: his wife of 35 years, Betty; daughter, April; and nine-year-old grandson, Averie. His position as IVP and member of the International Executive Council will not be filled, in accordance with action granted the IEC at the 31st Consolidated Convention.

Jim Hickenbotham retires after serving 12-plus years as IVP of the CLGAW Division.

Hickenbotham is a member of the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine, and General Workers’ Unions (ICEM), serving on the executive board family: his wife of 35 years, Betty; daughter, April; and nine-year-old grandson, Averie. His position as IVP and member of the International Executive Council will not be filled, in accordance with action granted the IEC at the 31st Consolidated Convention.

Jan • Mar 2007 Vol. 46 No. 1
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Sean Murphy, Northeast
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Joe Muehony, Western Canada
Ed Power, Eastern Canada
Otho Smith Jr., At-Large
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Donald Caswell, Managing Editor
Carol Almand, Asst. to the Managing Editor
Mike Lindermann, Writer and Editor

The Boilermaker Reporter is the official publication of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers, and Helpers, AFL-CIO. It is published quarterly to disseminate information of use and interest to its members. Subscriptions from members, local lodges, and subordinate or affiliated bodies are welcomed and encouraged. This publication is mailed free of charge to active members and retired members holding a Retired Members Card. Others may subscribe for the price of $10 for three years. Standard Mail (A) postage paid at Kansas City, Kan., and additional mailing offices. SSN No. 1079-4121.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
The Boilermaker Reporter
700 Wolfe Avenue, Suite 560
Kansas City, KS 66101
(913) 371-2640; FAX (913) 281-8104
Website: www.boilermakers.org
http://www.cclaw.org/publiser

Editorial staff
Donald Caswell, Managing Editor
Carol Almand, Asst. to the Managing Editor
Mike Lindermann, Writer and Editor

A prize-winning newspaper

PUBLICATION AGREEMENT No. 40010131
**Great Lakes Council #1 holds annual meeting**

Group discusses finances, FMLA

**Great Lakes Council #1 holds annual meeting**

**Metal Trades sues Coast Guard over ‘kit ships’**

Outsourcing work to South Korea violates Jones Act, says MTD

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**Senco Construction earns top OSHA award**

**Contractor is first to receive STAR award in Illinois, and first Marathon Petroleum contractor awarded nationwide**

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT of Labor has approved VPP STAR status for NTL contractor Senco Construction Inc. — the highest OSHA award available. It is the first time an Illinois contractor has received the award, and the first time nationwide that a contractor at a Marathon Petroleum Co. facility has earned this status. In fact, only two other contractors in the six-state OSHA Region V have ever received this award, making Senco one of fewer than 20 contractors nationwide to earn STAR status.

Senco is a multi-craft employer at Marathon’s Illinois division in Robinson, Ill. The award draws national recognition and culminates Senco’s efforts that started in October 2003 to achieve and maintain an ongoing standard of excellence in workplace safety.

To receive a STAR designation, a company must design, implement, and achieve a standard of safety excellence for all safety and health programs. Employees must recognize workplace hazards and be proactively involved in both the elimination of hazards and the continuous improvement of safety efforts. Management must also demonstrate strong leadership and a commitment to safety and health efforts.

Senco employs around 15 NTL members year-round at the Marathon Petroleums facility. To be eligible the company must continuously improve safety and health efforts, achieve a standard of excellence for all safety and health programs, and be proactive in both the elimination of hazards and the continuous improvement of safety efforts.
ASA Conference

(continued from p. 2)

not supported a Navy of this size, resulting in a rap-
idly shrinking Navy and an equally rapidly shrink-
ing shipbuilding industry.

Under Reagan, the Navy ordered an average of
19 ships a year. During the 1990s and continuing to
today, the Navy has been ordering only six
ships a year — the fewest on order since the
Great Depression.

Low rates of both commercial and Navy construc-
tion have contributed to a contraction of the ship-
building industry to dangerous levels. Only one
shipyard currently builds nuclear aircraft carri-
ers. Each of the other types of Navy ships — nuclear sub-
maries, surface combatants, and auxiliary ships — is
being built in only two shipyards. The loss of any of
these six yards will lead to a single source for cer-
tain: the House majority has come out firing, and
they deserve.

DOE proposal would reduce employee benefits

Unions join Congress and public in
demanding plan review

UNDER PRESSURE FROM organized labor, Con-
gress, and the public, the Department of Energy last
year suspended a controversial new policy that
would end reimbursements to contractors for tradi-
tional, defined-benefit pension and comprehensive
medical plans. Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman
ordered the one-year suspension just three
weeks after he first announced the new policy.

The department had planned on full implementa-
tion of the new policy by March 1, 2007.

Under the policy, future DOE contracts would
only cover 401(k)-style retirement plans and “market-
based” health plans. Because these plans are subject
to market swings, they are less reliable than
traditional plans. And they often carry a higher
cost for employees. The new policy also would
restrict active employees and retirees who are
covered under existing DOE contracts from making
plan improvements.

The DOE claims these changes are needed because
rising health care costs and other benefit expenses are
hurting its budget. Several Boilermaker contractor
among the companies performing operations and
maintenance work for the DOE.

Abe Breehey, the Boilermakers’ assistant director
government affairs, called the suspension “a huge
victory for union members employed at DOE facili-
ties.” He said unions were angry that the Bush
administration did not even consult them before
attempting to implement the new policy.

Members of Congress who challenged the pro-
posal said the DOE did not clear it through the
Department of Labor, nor did the department submit
the new policy to the public for notice and comment.

The one-year suspension will now permit
public scrutiny.

The Bush administration has come under repeated
fire for its attempts to restrict the rights of federal
employees. Just last year, a federal district court judge
ruled that the Department of Defense’s new person-
nel rules “eviscerated collective bargaining rights.”
The court prevented the DOD from implementing
the new rules.

Democrats keep ‘100 hours’ promise

New House majority moves swiftly on
worker-friendly legislation

WITH THEIR NEWLY won majority, Democrats in
the U.S. House wasted no time in pushing through
bills benefiting working families. In fact, the House
— with bipartisan support — passed every piece of
legislation promised by Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA
8th) in her “100 hours” pledge. Pelosi and other
House Democrats used the pledge during midterm
elections to show voters how serious they are about
changing the country’s direction. Not only did they
fulfill their pledge, they did so within the first 43
hours of the 110th Congress.

By Jan. 18, the House had passed bills that raise the
minimum wage, enable Medicare to negotiate with
pharmaceutical companies for lower drug prices,
reduce interest rates on college loans, and cut back
subsidies for Big Oil. Also in the first 100 hours, the
House toughened its lobbying and ethics rules, and
passed bills to implement the recommendations of
the 9-11 Commission and to back stem cell research.

Much of the legislation coming out of the House is
long overdue and has the support of the majority of
the American people. For the past 12 years, however,
anti-worker politicians in power blocked efforts to
move these initiatives forward. For example, the min-
imum wage has not been increased in a decade.

The ASA and the Boilermakers union are deter-
rmined to keep that from happening, and we are
working together to convince Congress to take
the steps necessary to keep our shipyards open and
productive.

Union contracts in 2006 improve
over 2005

THE BUREAU OF NATIONAL Affairs reports
that an analysis of new collective bargaining
agreements through Nov. 20, 2006, shows an
average wage increase of 3.4 percent in the first
year of the contract, compared to 3.1 percent in
the comparable period of 2005.

Major contracts reached during the period include
a new three-year contract between Tyson
Foods and the United Food and Commercial
Workers, representing approximately 900
workers in Ohio, and new three-year contracts
between St. Vincent Mercy Medical Center
and United Auto Workers, covering approximately 2,000
workers.

RESUMES SOUGHT FOR
APPRENTICE INSTRUCTORS

Resumes for future full-time instructor positions are being accepted
at the National Apprenticeship Training Center in Kansas City, Kansas.

❑ Ten years of journeyman Boilermaker experience is preferred.
❑ Welding certification (tubular, plate) and a working
understanding of other welding procedures (i.e. orbital
welding), rigging, and tube rolling are required.
❑ Drafting, blueprint, and layout experience is a
definite plus.
❑ Previous instructional experience is not required;
will train.
❑ Wage and benefits are comparable to the Local 83
field package.

More information is available upon written request only
(phone inquiries not accepted).
Please send resumes and written requests
to the attention of:
Barbara Dunham
1017 North 9th St.
Kansas City, KS 66101.
SAJAC builds training center in Texas to meet job growth

Facility honors IVP George D. Rogers, former L-132 BM-ST

“BUILD IT AND they will come.”

That famous movie phrase could easily apply to the new training facility built by the Southeastern Area Joint Apprenticeship Committee (SAJAC) on land donated by Local 132 in LaMarque, Texas.

Since the center was completed in June 2006, the two classrooms and 22 welding booths have been in near-constant use, says Mark Thompson, business manager and secretary-treasurer of Local 132 since July 2002.

The $1 million training facility is being used to turn out a new generation of welders. After years of decline, the demand for unionized welders is on an upswing thanks to a boom in construction work across Texas — in particular, in the construction of power plants.

Power, a construction firm that specializes in building power plants, will donate the material for the frame. Gary Haught, the Houston area director for APCOM Power, told the Galveston County Daily News that “having the newly-trained work force is a blessing. Not only do the new recruits help fill a desperate need for skilled workers, but APCOM knows what type of worker they will get if that worker comes through the training program first.”

The facility is owned and operated by SAJAC and will primarily be used by members of the Lone Star District Lodge. Lone Star represents members of Local Lodges 74 (Houston), 132 (Galveston), 531 (Amarillo), and 587 (Orange).

“We will need over 3,000 Boilermakers in the next two years in Texas alone,” predicts Central Section International Vice President George D. Rogers. Rogers, a former Local 132 business manager and secretary-treasurer, accepted a plaque naming the building in his honor at the November 2 dedication ceremony. The plaque will be hung on the wall between the shop and classrooms at the 5,500-square-foot facility.

Thompson said 300 apprentice Boilermakers can be turned out each year at the school. Some training will take place at the new facility, the rest on the job working side-by-side with veteran Boilermakers. A rigging frame will be erected outside the facility. APCOM

SAJAC’s new training facility houses state-of-the-art equipment, including this track torch used for cutting (burning) carbon steel plate.

SAJAC’s new training facility includes 22 welding booths where trainees can use a welder’s torch to weld metal according to training specs.

Training coordinators and staff from five Canadian local lodges attend a Master Rigger course

Event features four-day Master Rigger course

CANADIAN APPRENTICE training coordinators and their staffs attended the second annual train-the-trainer conference Nov. 5-9 in Woodland, Wash. Grant Jacobs, national training coordinator, said the conference is designed to prepare and equip local union training instructors to provide “first-rate training programs for our members.”

He said the conference also allows Boilermaker trainers to compare methods used in their home locals. “A lot of practical advice and ideas are exchanged at this event as the instructors discuss how they do training and what types of courses they offer — and the resources they use.”

The 2006 conference featured a four-day rigging course conducted by Mike Parnell, owner of Industrial Training International (ITI) at the firm’s national headquarters. All participants received a Master Rigger certificate.

The ITI course, designed for those who have completed basic rigging instruction, included both classroom instruction and practical exercises. Participants split into teams that competed, on the final day, in a “Survivor-style” marathon, said Jacobs, alluding to the popular television series. All teams were evaluated on safety, teamwork, procedures, and time. Topics included load control, center of gravity, winch systems, jacking and rolling equipment, assisted load movement systems, D/D ratios (a measuring standard used to avoid wire rope fatigue due to excessive bending), effects of shock loading, load weight estimation, load factors for sling angles, inspection of rigging gear, rigging accident case studies, riggers’ checklist, rigging design, multiple hitch systems, load turning and load drifting, special load handling, hazard recognition, hitches and pick points, and lift planning.

The ITI course also included instruction on classroom teaching techniques and delivery methods. “Even the most seasoned and experienced participants in this course felt the four-day training program was very valuable and they learned a lot,” Jacobs said.

Jacobs noted that the Boilermakers’ national training program has completed a rigging handbook and will soon complete a rigging training manual. These materials will be used in local lodge training programs focusing on practical rigging from Level One to Master Rigger. Each Canadian local intends to conduct at least a Level One course during 2007.

Pictured above are national coordinator Grant Jacobs (seated); kneeling, l. to r., L-146 rigging examiner/instructor Eric Lindsay (Halifax, Nova Scotia); L-128 welding instructor Ron Sostomi (Toronto, Ontario); L-146 instructor J’Amey Holroyd (Edmonton, Alberta); L-146 executive board member Darwin Leitch; L-355 instructor Jim Beauchamp (Winnipeg, Manitoba); and ITI instructor Mike Parnell. Standing, l. to r., are L-128 training coordinator Ed Frenotte; L-128’s Marc Guay; L-359 instructor Russell Osborne (Vancouver, British Columbia); L-73 training coordinator Eugene LeBlanc; L-359 instructor Alfred Bennett; L-73 rigging instructor Samuel Basque; L-128 safety instructor Blair Allin; L-349 training coordinator Joe Kuvier; and L-146 welding examiner/instructor Jason Carroll.
Democrats lead Congress for first time in 12 years

Worker-friendly politicians ride “national wave” to victory in House and Senate

“A NATIONAL WAVE” of voter anxiety. That is how CNN political analyst Amy Walter described the environment in which Democrats might possibly take back the House and Senate as she addressed Boilermakers at last year’s LEAP conference.

Walter warned Boilermakers that such a scenario was unlikely although polls were showing signs of widespread public unrest. In the months following her presentation, a wave did appear — fueled by anxiety over the war in Iraq, the economy, and jobs, and a mounting disenchantment with Pres. Bush. That wave lifted worker-friendly politicians into majorities in both houses of Congress in midterm elections last November.

Promising a more ethical approach to politics — and less partisan rancor — the Democratic majority has begun settling in to its new leadership role. A mix of progressives and centrists, Democratic congressional leaders face the daunting tasks of fulfilling campaign promises while seeking the cooperation of moderate Republicans and overcoming the veto threat of an unpopular president.

Who are these Democrats now holding the reins of Congress? Following are profiles of the new House leaders and six new senators who assume a major role in shifting power in the U.S. Senate.

Democrats win slim majority in Senate

Sherrod Brown (D-OH)

“SHERROD BROWN STRONGLY opposes misguided trade agreements that cost millions of American jobs. He organized Democratic opposition in the House to CAFTA, working closely with organized labor and other allies. Nobody has done more in Congress to promote trade fairness and fight for an end to job-killing trade agreements. He will continue to be our champion on this issue as a United States senator.”

— Alex Brathe, assistant director of government affairs

Boilermakers backed Sherrod Brown with campaign donations and get-out-the-vote efforts in a U.S. Senate race seen by labor as critical to the future of U.S. trade policies. Wracked by jobs shipped overseas and an ethics scandal involving its Republican governor, Ohio appeared ready for change. And change came. Brown unseated two-term Republican incumbent Mike DeWine, winning by a 56-44 percent margin.

Elected to the U.S. House in 1992, Brown, 54, was re-elected six times in the heavily Democratic 13th District in the Cleveland area. He was last year’s co-recipient of the Boilermakers’ Legislators of the Year award at the Brotherhood’s LEAP conference. In 2005 he earned a 100 percent voting record on Boilermaker issues and 93 percent from the AFL-CIO. That same year, Brown led the Democratic effort to block the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) in the House, lining up substantial bipartisan support. However, in unusual circumstances that included a late-night session, the Republican majority held open a roll-call vote well past the standard 15 minutes, mustering additional support. CAFTA passed by one vote, 217 to 215 (a tie would have resulted in a defeat). Brown said this stinging outcome prompted him to run for the U.S. Senate.

Democrats take control of House of Representatives

Seven leaders make Boilermaker “watch list” for 110th Congress

DEMOCRATS NEEDED TO win 15 seats to take control of the House of Representatives in last November’s midterm elections. They captured 29. Much of their success has been attributed to the strong get-out-the-vote effort of organized labor, including the Boilermakers union and our legislative program — LEAP. A high percentage of labor’s vote went to pro-worker candidates — largely Democrats, but some Republicans as well. Now, as the new majority party, Democrats will set the House’s legislative agenda. They will also take over the chairmanship of the House’s 21 committees, which have been dominated by Republicans since 1995. The Boilermakers and labor at-large will look to the House majority party to introduce pro-labor bills and keep anti-worker measures from being considered on the floor.

The opportunities for unions and working families to benefit from this power shift are substantial. But so are the challenges. George W. Bush still has two years remaining in his presidency, and the Democratic majority is not large enough to override his vetoes without help from Republican congressmen. (A two-thirds majority is required to defeat a veto.) Moreover, the Democratic majority includes 44 moderate and conservative Democrats (“blue dogs”), whose positions may often conflict with those of the House leadership.

According to political analysts, for Democrats to take advantage of their victory, they must have party unity and stay focused on achievable goals. The success or failure of the 2006 Democratic power shift may well rest upon the shoulders of key Democratic leaders like those profiled in this section.

Nancy Pelosi (D-CA 8th), Speaker of the House

IN JANUARY THE 110th Congress elected Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA 8th) speaker of the House of Representatives. She is the first woman ever to hold this position and the first Italian American to do so. House speaker is one of the most powerful and visible political offices in the country. In her new role, Pelosi, 66, will decide which measures will be considered in the House, and she will control the floor proceedings. The position of speaker is also second in the line of succession to the U.S. presidency (after the vice president).

Pelosi’s selection as speaker was all but assured after Democrats captured 29 House seats and took over majority status. Although all House members
House

(continued from p. 6)

may vote for the speaker, the ruling party typically controls the House because it has more votes.

Endorsed by organized labor, Pelosi has consistently received high ratings in support of measures important to unions. In 2005, the Boilermakers, the nation's largest ironworkers union and the AFL-CIO, rated her even higher, at 93 percent.

Pelosi’s district includes most of the city and county of San Francisco and is widely considered a bastion of liberal, pro-labor, pro-choice politics. In the 2006 midterm elections, Pelosi received 93 percent of the vote in her district, easily defeating her Republican challenger. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 1988, Pelosi has represented the district since 1987 and has been reelected nine times, always by large margins. She has served on the Appropriations and Intelligence Committees and in 2001 was elected the House minority whip. A year later, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt resigned his position to campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, and Democrats elected Pelosi to replace him.

According to Washington Post staff writer Los Romano, “[Pelosi] has proved to be a tough-minded tactician who has led her caucus from the political center and kept the fractious House Democrats in line.” Since Pelosi took over as the highest-ranking female member of Congress in 2002 and served as the chair of the Democratic caucus in 2003, members of her caucus have been able to say that she has proved to be a “unashamed advocate of labor and working families by taking an increase in the minimum wage off the table.” — Abe Breheny, assistant director of government affairs

Steny Hoyer (D-MD 5th), majority leader

He sits on the House Appropriations Committee, which allocates billions of dollars in federal funds each year. He also serves on the Transportation-Treasury Subcommittee and the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittees.

Over the past several years, Hoyer has supported most of the legislative positions taken by the Boilermakers. He voted to strengthen OSHA, to protect overtime pay, and to repeal tax breaks for companies exporting jobs. He also voted against free trade treaties with Oman and with the Dominican Republic and Central America.

Pelosi has consistently supported the Employee Free Choice Act. In 1990, he was credited with helping to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act.

As a centrist Democrat, Hoyer sometimes votes in line with those in his party who are more moderate or conservative. “The Prince George Gazette said Hoyer is “in touch with the Democratic caucus. He’s a flexible moderate, perhaps because of the growing conservative nature of his district.”

James Clyburn (D-SC 6th), majority whip

“[H]e has a strong voice on the Appropriations Committee and is responsible for keeping members informed, making sure they understand the Democratic leadership position, and helping to coordinate the party’s legislative agenda.” — Bridget Martin, director of government affairs

By a 149-86 VOTE, Democratic congressmen last November elected Steny Hoyer (D-MD 5th) House majority leader over Rep. John Murtha (D-PA 12th). In his new position, Hoyer will be responsible for keeping members informed, making sure they understand the Democratic leadership position, and helping to coordinate the party leadership regarding the pulse of the Democratic caucus. He's a flexible moderate, perhaps because of the growing conservative nature of his district.”

In 2006, the Boilermakers rated him at 75 percent, while the AFL-CIO scored him at 100 percent.

Hoyer’s district includes portions of the states of South Carolina, Missouri, and Arundel counties, as well as the three counties making up the southern Maryland—Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary’s—in an area bordering Washington, D.C.

In the 2006 midterm elections, Hoyer received 83 percent of the vote in his district, easily defeating his Green Party challenger. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 1981 and reelected 12 times, Hoyer, 67, has served as a representative longer than anyone else in the history of southern Maryland.

Hoyer is also the highest-ranking member of Congress in Maryland history.

He sits on the House Appropriations Committee, which allocates billions of dollars in federal funds each year. He also serves on the Transportation-Treasury Subcommittee and the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Subcommittees.

Over the past several years, Hoyer has supported most of the legislative positions taken by the Boilermakers. He voted to strengthen OSHA, to protect overtime pay, and to repeal tax breaks for companies exporting jobs. He also voted against free trade treaties with Oman and with the Dominican Republic and Central America.

He is a cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Clayton

LAST NOVEMBER, REP. James Clyburn (D-SC 6th) became the second black lawmaker in history to be elected House majority whip, the highest congressional office ever to be held by an African American. Clyburn reports to the new House majority leader, Rep. Steny Hoyer. In his new position, Clyburn is responsible for keeping members of Congress informed, making sure they understand the Democratic leadership position, and helping to coordinate the party’s legislative agenda regarding the pulse of the Democratic caucus.

Clyburn’s district is in central South Carolina. Heavily Democratic, the district was gerrymandered (reconstructed) in the 1990s to include rural counties with predominantly black populations as well as black precincts in Charleston and Columbia.

In the 2006 midterm elections, Clyburn received 64 percent of the vote in his district to defeat his Republican challenger, who received 34 percent. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 1992 and reelected seven times, Clyburn is 66 years old.

He was unanimously elected to chair the Congressional Black Caucus in 1998. He sits on the powerful House Appropriations Committee and also is a member of the Environmental and Select subcommittees on Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development, the Judiciary District of Columbia.

Over the past several years, Clyburn has supported most of the legislative positions taken by the Boilermakers. He voted to strengthen OSHA and to protect overtime pay. He also voted against free trade treaties with Oman and with the Dominican Republic and Central America. He is a cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Clyburn’s hometown newspaper, The State (Columbia, S.C.) praised him as an “unashamed advocate of labor and a strong supporter. He will be an asset for the House.”

—Bridget Martin, director of government affairs

Rahm Emanuel (D-IL 5th), chairman of the Democratic caucus

A FORMER CLINTON White House political advisor — Rahm Emanuel (D-IL 5th) received his party’s nod as chair of the Democratic caucus for the 110th Congress. Emanuel becomes the fourth-ranking member of Congress to lead the House, an impressive achievement for a congressman with only two terms under his belt. In his new leadership role, Emanuel will set the agenda for and preside over weekly House Democratic Caucus meetings. Emanuel will also establish caucus issue task forces to develop and communicate legislative and party policy. Like House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, Emanuel is considered a centrist. In 2005, the Boilermakers rated his voting record at 75 percent, while the AFL-CIO scored him at 93 percent.

Emanuel’s district includes the northern part of Chicago and parts of suburban Cook County. According to the Washington-based AFL-CIO, Emanuel is composed mainly of “working-class Polish and Catholic precincts.”

Over the past several years, Emanuel won 79 percent of the vote in his district, compared to 21 percent for his Republican challenger. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 2000 and reelected twice, Emanuel, 47, got involved in politics by joining the advo- cacy group Common Cause while in college. He later assisted Paul Simon in his first successful U.S. Senate race in 1984. But it was his wildly suc- cessful fund-raising effort for Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in 1989 (in which he raised $7 million) that vaulted Emanuel into the national spotlight. He was invited to join Bill Clin- ton’s presidential campaign in 1991 and later became a trusted political advisor in the Clinton White House, serving until 1998.

As a congressman, Emanuel serves on the Ways and Means Committee. In 2005, he was picked to chair the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee for the 2006 midterm elections.

Over the past several years, Emanuel has supported most of the legislative positions taken by the Boilermakers. He voted to strengthen OSHA, to protect overtime pay, and to repeal tax breaks for companies exporting jobs. He also voted against free trade treaties with Oman and with the Dominican Republic and Central America.

He is a cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act.

“...Rahm Emanuel was charged with candidate recruitment and national fundraising to ensure that Democrats were well-positioned to take advantage of the ‘voters’ call for change in Washington. He is a fearless — some would say ruthless—politician who understands how to win elections.” — Abe Breheny, assistant director of government affairs

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House

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George Miller III (D-CA 7th), chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce

half of Contra Costa County, Solano County, and a tiny portion of Napa County. Major cities in the district include Richmond, Martinez, San Pablo, Vallejo, Vacaville, and portions of Concord.

In the 2006 midterm elections, Miller received 84 percent of the vote in his district to easily defeat his Libertarian challenger. First elected to the U.S. Congress in 1975, Miller, 61, has been reelected each time since then.

In addition to serving as chairman of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Miller is the ranking member of the House Committee on Resources, which considers legislation related to fisheries and wildlife, public lands, Native Americans, irrigation and reclamation, mineral lands and mining, and oceanography. He served as chair of that committee from 1985 to 1987, and from 2003 to 2007, when he chaired the Democratic Policy Committee, which helps Democrats define and articulate policies, such as the Democrats’ “New Direction for America,” a blueprint used in the 2006 midterm elections.

Miller is the original sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act. Supported by the Boilermakers, this act would allow workers to obtain union recognition by card check rather than secret ballot, helping to reduce employer intimidation during organizing drives. Miller also is leading the fight to raise the federal minimum wage, currently $5.15 an hour, to $7.25. This is one of the House Democratic majority’s priorities going into the 110th Congress. The federal minimum wage has not been raised in nearly a decade. In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Miller was one of the most outspoken critics of the Bush administration’s decision to suspend Davis-Bacon protections in the Gulf. He helped marshal bipartisan opposition to the move, and he introduced a joint resolution to allow Congress to take fast-track action when a president unilaterally suspends a law. Pres. Bush subsequently reinstated Davis-Bacon.

As one of four congressional authors of the No Child Left Behind Act, Miller worked with bipartisan support to draft legislation aimed at improving teacher quality and holding schools accountable for educating all children. He continues to seek full funding for the act.

Miller has also been involved in legislative investigations of labor and human rights abuses in the U.S. and abroad, with a focus on human rights abuses in the U.S. and abroad, with a focus on child labor and OKTOS conditions. Miller also has served on the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Miller served in the U.S. Army from 1948 and saw action in the Korean War. He served in the Air Force as a commander in the Navy Reserve at the beginning of the Vietnam War. He served in the Air Force as a commander in the Navy Reserve at the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Charles Rangel (D-NY 15th), chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means

"Less than a month after the election, Rep. Rangel reached out to labor to discuss changes in the tax code that would make it easier to achieve a fair and equitable tax code. Corporate interests have had their way with the Republican-controlled Congress in the last 12 years. With Charlie in charge, it's going to be a whole new ball game." —Alv Breahey, assistant director of government affairs

OUTSPOKEN AND OFTEN CONTROVERSIAL, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY 15th) was elected December 6 by the House Democratic Caucus to head the House Committee on Ways and Means. This committee, he says, is the most important in Congress.

Rangel’s district includes a variety of neighborhoods of Harlem, the Bronx, and parts of Brooklyn. Miller received 84 percent of the vote. Candidates running in this district are expected to have a close race.

"Chairman Rangel understands that reliable, affordable energy production demands that our nation invest in a wide range of energy sources. He has long sought common sense solutions that bridge partnerships across the political spectrum. While many Democrats may be serving as a committee chairman for the first time, Rep. Rangel brings with him the experience and the knowledge of what it takes to use this powerful position to achieve results. He also understands the difficult policy issues that will impact men-hours for our construction members."

—Brice Davis, director of government affairs

John Dingell Jr. (D-MI 15th), chairman, Energy and Commerce Committee

In 2005, the Boilermakers endorsed Dingell’s re-election, citing his strong support for the Employee Free Choice Act and his record of fight to raise the minimum wage to $7.25. Dingell also backed issues in support of the Boilermakers, including Davis-Bacon.

"Chairman Dingell understands that reliable, affordable energy production demands that our nation invest in a wide range of energy sources. He has long sought common sense solutions that bridge partnerships across the political spectrum. While many Democrats may be serving as a committee chairman for the first time, Rep. Rangel brings with him the experience and the knowledge of what it takes to use this powerful position to achieve results. He also understands the difficult policy issues that will impact men-hours for our construction members."

—Brice Davis, director of government affairs

JOHN DINGELL CHAIRS the Energy and Commerce Committee from 1981 until 1995, when Democrats lost control of the House. With the Democrats now back in power, Dingell will again lead this committee. Energy and Commerce is a vitally important committee for the Boilermakers. It deals with utility regulations, energy, and environmental protection, including the Clean Air Act, energy resources, and national energy policy.

In 2005, the Boilermakers rated Dingell’s voting record a perfect 100 percent, as did the AFL-CIO. He has generally considered a progressive politician on labor, social, and environmental issues.

Dingell’s district is located in the southeast corner of the state of Michigan. It borders Lake Erie to the east and Ohio to the south. The district includes portions of the counties and all of Monroe County, including Detroit’s southwest suburbs.

In the 2006 midterm elections, Dingell received 88 percent of the vote. Candidates running in this district are expected to have a close race.

Over the past several years, Dingell has supported every major piece of legislation introduced by the Boilermakers. He voted to strengthen OSHA, to protect workers from over-time and to repeal tax breaks for companies exporting jobs. He also voted against free trade treaties with Oman and with the Dominican Republic and Central America. He is a cosponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act.

Dingell has a reputation as an independent critic of the Bush administration. He introduced a resolution in 2003 seeking to have Donald Rumsfeld fired as secretary of defense, and he has engaged in a public feud with Vice President Dick Cheney over Cheney’s lack of military service as well as his willingness to fight a war “with other people’s children.”

Recently, Rangel has drawn national attention by introducing a bill to ratify the military draft. He told CNN that a draft would likely deter politicians from going to war in the future. Dingell introduced similar legislation in 2003.
Senate

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Soon after being elected to the U.S. House, Bob Casey Jr. (D-PA) criticized the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). He went on to play a key role in efforts to defeat fast-track trade negotiating authority in Congress.

During his political career, Casey has been a strong supporter not only of fair trade, but also of job creation, affordable health care, and other important issues to working families.

While the ranking minority member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee’s Health Subcommittee, Casey gained national attention by pushing for affordable prescription drugs. He led the effort to close legal loopholes used by brand-name drug companies to prevent price competition. He also sponsored bus trips to Canada for his Ohio constituents to get prescription drugs at 20 percent less than U.S. prices.

Bob Casey was first elected to office in 1975, becoming one of the youngest state representatives in Ohio’s history. In 1982, he ran for the U.S. Senate as an educator and attorney. He practiced law until 1996, when he was elected to the Pennsylvania state auditor general — the Commonwealth’s fiscal and public integrity advocate.

Casey ran for state treasurer in 2004, setting two new records for Pennsylvania: winning the heaviest voter turnout ever, and with more votes than ever before for a statewide office.

He then won the 2005 Democratic primary for U.S. Senate in a landslide, receiving almost 85 percent of the votes. On election night, Casey’s margin of victory was the third largest of all time for a Democrat running for the U.S. Senate in Pennsylvania. He is also the first Pennsylvania Democrat elected to a full term in the Senate in his own right since Joseph S. Clark was re-elected in 1962.

As a U.S. senator, Casey says he will focus on creating jobs, restoring fiscal responsibility, lowering the cost of health care, improving education, safeguarding Social Security, protecting our environment, and strengthening homeland security.

On November 15, 2006, Sen. Majority Leader in waiting Harry Reid appointed Casey to several committees, including the United States Congress Joint Economic Committee, where Casey can put his “fiscal and public safety watchdog” experience to good use.

Robert Casey Jr. (D-PA)

Claire McCaskill (D-MO)

“John Tester is a freshman senator who is not widely known outside of Montana. His views on issues like corporate raiders...”

Jonathan “Jon” Tester was a virtual unknown in national politics — that is, until the midterm elections vaulted his U.S. Senate race into the national spotlight. His victory was essential to the Democratic Party if it was to regain the Senate majority.

Democrat Tester out-polled incumbent Republican Conrad Burns, was vulnerable because of his alleged involvement in the Jack Abramoff lobbying scandal. Tester beat Burns by almost 17 percentage points — less than 3,000 votes. His narrow victory illustrates the wisdom of the old saw: “every vote counts,” and why labor’s get-out-the-vote efforts are so important.

Except for three years spent in private practice as an attorney (1981 to 1984), McCaskill, 53, has worked in the public sector continuously since graduating from law school. She worked in public courts and also served in the Jackson County prosecutor’s office. In 1988, she was elected to the county courts and later became the first female attorney to serve in that body in some 40 years. McCaskill received her law degree from Washington and holds a bachelor’s degree in social work from Drake University.

In 2000, McCaskill served on the Senate Select Committee on Aging, the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, the Committee on Environment and Public Works, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Special Committee on Aging.

As the new U.S. senator from Missouri for McCaskill, serves on five committees, including Homeland Security and a special committee on aging.

JAMIES “JIM” WEBB narrowly defeated incumbent Republican Sen. George Allen in the November 2006 elections in Virginia, winning 49.5 percent of the votes cast to Allen’s 49.3 percent. So thin was the margin of victory that election results were not formally declared until two days after the vote. Like Sen. Jon Tester’s race in Montana, this outcome shows just how important each vote can be. Webb’s Senate seat pushed the Democrats into the majority.

Webb, 61, is a highly-decorated combat veteran. He saw action in Vietnam commanding a Marine rifle platoon and later a company. He earned a Navy Cross, the second high-
Eliot Engel named Legislator of the Year

Congressman is proven ally of Boilermakers and labor

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-17th NY) will receive the Boilermakers’ Legislator of the Year award at the 39th annual conference of the Legislative Education and Political Action Program (LEAP) this March in Washington, D.C.

Government Affairs Director Bridget Martin said the award acknowledges Engel’s exemplary efforts to support organized labor.

Now in his 10th term in the House, Engel has proven himself an ally of the Boilermakers and labor in general since he first took office in 1988. He has consistently voted for issues that are vital to working families, championed affordable housing, supported labor and, for education for all Americans.

The son of an Ironworker, Engel was born in the Bronx in 1947. He worked as a teacher and counselor and earned a law degree from New York Law School. He served in the New York State Assembly for 11 years before being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

In 2006 Engel became directly involved in a key Boilermakers’ victory by introducing a bill — along with Rep. Joe Wilson (R-2nd SC) — to allow Canadian Boilermakers to work in the U.S. temporarily. The bill, H.R. 3644, would exempt Boilermakers from annual caps on H-2B visas. The exemptions are important because over the last several years surges in demand for Boilermakers performing power plant work have occurred. In the 100th Congress the legislation was introduced by Engel.

Without the ability to obtain a visa, Canadian Boilermakers cannot supplement the U.S. workforce in times of need. This situation could force owners to delay much-needed projects and cause construction Boilermakers to lose their livelihood.

Although H.R. 3644 did not come to a vote in the House last year, Rep. Engel has vowed to reintroduce the measure in the 110th Congress.

Engel has also helped lead the challenge against an effort by the National Labor Relations Board to expand the definition of supervisors, a move that would deny union membership to thousands of skilled workers because they come under the control of their supervisors.

The NLRB stance on the issue, which is known as the “Kentucky River” case, has prompted outrage by organized labor and its supporters. In a letter to the NLRB last year, signed by more than 100 congressmen, Engel insisted that the agency consider hearing oral arguments because of the gravity of the question at hand and to make sure the agency ensures “the greatest degree of procedural fairness and openness…possible.”

In his presentation to the conference, Engel said the NLRA is being used to “punish” unions as a way to starve organized labor of its “lifeline.”

In all, Engel has been a strong supporter of organized labor and a frequent advocate for financial assistance to labor newspapers and periodicals. In 1977 he was a leader in the movement to establish a trust fund to support these publications.

LEAP President John W. Day said, “The National Labor Relations Board is rushing to take away the right of workers to join unions and play an active role in the management of their working lives. The NLRA was designed to give working families a voice in the workplace and is the cornerstone of a democratic society.”

“Engel has been a champion for the American working class and a steady supporter of the NLRA,” Day added. “We are happy to honor him this year as Legislator of the Year.”

L-455 celebrates Labor Day in Alabama, Tennessee

Members participate in parade and political rallies; raise money for LEF

MEMBERS OF LOCAL 455, Sheffield, Ala., were busy the week of Labor Day. On Monday, Sept. 4, they participated in a parade in Tuscumbia, Ala. They rode motorcycles, ATVs, and both classic and new vehicles, tossing candy to children along on Main Street. The parade ended in Spring Park, where Local 455 and other area unions organized a demonstration expressing their position as a force to be acknowledged for politics in Shoals, Ala., and nationwide.

Later that week, on Saturday, Sept. 9, Local 455 carried their message across the state line to Adams, Tenn., where they participated in a Democratic rally and Labor Day celebration at the Charles Hard Busweiler Farm. There they sponsored a booth and sold tickets to a raisemoney for the Boilermakers’ Legislative Education Fund. The members sold chances for a hand-made quilt donated by Thresa Frost, wife of L-455 BM-ST Jack Frost. In all they raised $1,245 for the LEF. The previous year, they sold chances for another of Mrs. Frost’s quilts, raising $1,900 that year for LEF.

“We at Local 455 are pleased each year to be a part of this demonstration expressing our position as a force to be acknowledged for politics in Shoals, Ala., and nationwide.”

L-455 is one of 54 local Boilermakers’ unions.”

SHOULD WHITEHOUSE defeated incumbent Lincoln Chafee for the Rhode Island U.S. Senate seat. With 20 years experience in public service, Whitehead said he ran for the Senate because senior citizens are scared, confused, and worst of all under the new Medicare prescription drug plan. He labels the American health care system as both our biggest national problem and our biggest national opportunity.

Whitehouse believes Washington has lost its way — spending is out of control, and politicians have the wrong priorities. He said, “Politicians in Washington meet in the middle of the night to pass emergency legislation to intervene in the private tragedy of the Schiavo family [a famous right-to-life case], but they can’t seem to do anything about the public tragedies facing so many of our families — the runaway cost of health care, the failings in our schools, the looting of worker pensions, the runaway cost of health care, the failings in our schools, the looting of worker pensions, the deepening of our environmental problems, and America’s continued dependence on foreign oil.”

Whitehouse, 51, a graduate of Yale University and the Virginia Law School, has worked as a clerk in the U.S. Supreme Court, special assistant attorney general, chief of a regulatory unit overseeing utilities, and assistant attorney general in 1991. He was executive counsel to Rhode Island Governor Bruce Sundlun. He later served as director of business regulation, where he oversaw a drastic reform in the state’s workers’ compensation insurance program.

President Bill Clinton appointed him U.S. attorney for Rhode Island in 1994, a position Whitehouse held for four years. He was the first prosecutor to convict a member of organized crime under Clinton’s “three strikes law” for organized crime.

Whitehouse was elected attorney general in 1998, and fought for legislation that strengthened penalties for armed criminals. He also founded the Rhode Island Quality Institute, an organization dedicated to improving health care quality, and authorized the first Rhode Island state police wire tap to investigate public corruption.

Whitehouse used Rhode Island’s status as the most Democratic state in the nation as a means to ask voters to send a Democrat to the Senate over his opponent, Republican Lincoln Chafee. Despite Chafee’s liberal positions on social issues and the war, Whitehouse was able to use President Bush’s unpopularity against the incumbent senator.

As a U.S. senator, Whitehouse says he will work to strengthen Social Security, protect the environment, and make health care more available and affordable.

“Since he is new to Congress, we haven’t had an opportunity to work with Sen. Whitehouse before. We do know that he has a long history of public service. In some of his public statements, he appears to support issues such as health care reform and pension protections. We’ll learn more about him in the coming months.”

— Bridget Martin, director of government affairs

Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
**Railroad safety in desperate need of reform**

Transpotation labor testifies at congressional hearing

CONGRESS MUST OVERCOME the railroad industry's decade-long campaign to block common-sense safety legislation and make clear that profits do not override safety, Transportation Trades Department (TTD) said at a hearing on Capitol Hill recently. The Boilermakers are one of 52 members of the TTD. They were in the department.

"It is simply disgraceful that over a decade has passed since our nation's rail safety programs have been reauthorized," said Edward Wytkind, TTD president. "We have met stiff resistance from railroads and their lobbyists who have spent a decade or more derailing every attempt to reauthorize federal rail safety programs."

According to Wytkind, since January 16, a train derailed near Brooks, Ky., with a full-scale evacuation but no serious injuries. But other derauls have not proven so lucky, with deaths in Granville, Ohio, in 2005; Macdona, Texas, in 2004; and Minot, N.D., in 2002. According to Railroad Administration statistics, there were 1,744 derailments in 2006 and 20 hazardous material spills (reporting was from January through October 2006).

"Railroad workers want more training," Wytkind said. "They want whistleblower protections so they can identify security or safety risks without fear of retaliation from their employers. They also want more government oversight, because they believe that safety and security aren't negotiable."

Testifying before the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, Wytkind presented the view and concerns of transportation workers. He said fines for safety infractions are "mere nuisances to multi-billion-dollar railroads." Fines need to be greatly increased. He pointed out that despite record profits, railroads refuse to hire and adequately train the necessary work force to handle traffic. Five-plus years after 9/11, workers still do not know how to react to potential security threats. In addition, Wytkind addressed issues such as employee harassment for reporting accidents and excessive fatigue from overtime pay (which are sometimes required to work more than 400 hours in a 30-day period).

According to the TTD, the nation's largest railroads reported 2006 net incomes of $1.89 billion for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., $1.61 billion for Union Pacific, $1.58 billion for CSX Corp., and $1.31 billion for CSX Corp. "The railroad industry is making money and over fisc," Wytkind said. "It's time for them to do their part to protect their workers and the American public."

"In short, workers want more government oversight, because they believe that safety and security aren't negotiable."

**Happy hour will not be banned**

**Appeals court overturns NLRB ruling**

IN A VICTORY for workers — and happy hour lovers everywhere — the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled February 2 that the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) erred when it supported a new probation policy for Guardsmark LLC that would have banned off-duty "fraternizing" by co-workers.

The case first drew national attention in the summer of 2005, when Guardsmark won an NLRB decision for a new policy that stated: "While on duty you must NOT . . . fraternize or do any off-duty, or become overly friendly with the client's employees or with co-workers."

Critics of the NLRB decision were astounded and wondered if common social activities such as happy hour and coffee breaks would become a thing of the past if the ruling stood and set a precedent.

"Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 24/7, which represents Guardsmark security employees in San Francisco, appealed the decision, charging that the policy unconstitutionally restricts employees from exercising their rights under Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act."

Section 7 allows workers "the right to self-organization, to form, join or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purposes of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection."

Guardsmark had argued that the policy was not intended to restrict employees from engaging in protected union activities but rather to prevent personal entanglements in on the job. The appeals court said that its employees would understand the intent. However, the Court disagreed, agreeing with the union's contention that the policy's use of the term "fraternize" could reasonably be construed as referring to fraternal organization activities such as, and thus banned employees from discussing terms and conditions of employment on or off the job. Because the company's policy infringed on the employees' right to discuss terms and conditions of employment as guaranteed by Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, the Court ruled that the company's policy was unlawfully broad.

The NLRB support of Guardsmark in this case has sparked widespread condemnation from many unions, educators, attorneys, lawyers, and workers. When the story first broke, the Washington Post ran a story with the headline, "Big Brother On and Off the Job."

"While we should all meet up after work to celebrate this decision, it's a sad day when a higher court has to save workers' rights from destruction," said the union's national president. "Because we were facing greater legal exposure on this matter on several related lawsuits. The fact that the current administrator of the Labor Department's Wage and Hour Division, Paul Decamp, has done extensive legal work for Wal-Mart is a stark reminder of why so many organizations opposed DeCamp's nomination last year."

The DOL came under intense fire for making a sweetheart deal with Wal-Ma in 2005. In a case involving child labor law violations, DOL fined the multi-billion-dollar company just $35,430 for allowing young teenagers to operate dangerous machinery. In addition to the paltry fine, the DOL was ordered to grant Wal-Mart a 180-day written notice before it conducted any investigation or audit in the future — essentially granting the company an opportunity to cover up any violations before investigators arrive.

Wal-Mart is one of the most scrutinized companies in history. It has been repeatedly investigated by federal and state agencies — and sued by its own employees — for workplace infractions. Just last year, a Pennsylvania jury awarded $78.5 million to employees who were forced to work off the clock and through lunch breaks. In 2005, California's Fair Employment and Housing Commission ordered the company to pay $172 million to more than 100,000 workers for failing to provide rest breaks. In 2003, following an investigation of 61 Wal-Mart stores, the company paid $33 million for hiring illegal immigrants to work off-the-clock. The company has also violated family leave laws and gender discrimination laws. It currently faces more than 50 class action lawsuits.

Headquartered in Bentonville, Ark., Wal-Mart operates about 3,400 discount stores in the United States. ❑
**Members beat the odds, win in tough campaigns**

**BOILERMAKERS LOCAL 28 (Newark, N.J.) has the distinction of having all three members of its legislative committee in public office. John Devlin, Woody Dooley, and Jay Brophy all mounted effective campaigns to win council seats in their New Jersey communities — and they did so despite stiff opposition.**

Devlin, L-28’s legislative director, ran as a Democrat in the heavily-Republican Wall Township in 2005. He won, becoming the first Democrat ever to be elected to a second term on the township council. When he first won his seat, in 2001, he was the only second Democrat to be elected in 70 years.

Dooley also ran as a Democrat in 2005 and won a seat on the Westville council. Like Wall Township, Westville typically elects Republicans, even though the area has a largely blue collar population. In fact, Dooley was the first Democrat to win a council seat in Westville in the last 30 years, and he captured 80 percent of the vote.

Brophy faced off in Gloucester City, not against Republicans, but against other Democrats whom he described as entrenched “rubber stampers.” Brophy and his faction — running as Independents in the general election — captured two council seats and the mayor’s office last year. Their success was remarkable considering the opposition were incumbents, had a much larger campaign fund, and had the backing of Mayor James Kennedy (D-MA), who traveled to Gloucester City and campaigned for them.

Winning an election is hard work, Devlin, Dooley, and Brophy agree — and it requires a strong base of support. Their support includes a politically-active local union. Local 28 BM-ST Ray Cushing said that over the years his lodge has built important contacts with other unions, politicians, and community organizations. In fact, the New Jersey State AFL-CIO picked Local 28’s union hall as a staging area for grassroots campaigning. Volunteers from area unions gather there and take buses to neighborhoods for Project Labor Walk, during which they visit union households, hand out voter information, and talk with voters face-to-face.

Cushing said another critical support element is the Brotherhood’s legislative program, which provides political education. Local 28 participates in the annual LEAP conference every March in Washington, D.C.

Bridge Martin, director of the government affairs department, said Local 28 is one of the more politically active Boilermaker lodges. Her department is often in contact with the local and has helped out with campaign funding.

“It’s critical for us to put labor candidates in local and state offices,” she said. “After the next census, in 2010, state lawmakers will decide on how to draw up districts — and the party in power controls the process. The more pro-worker state legislators we have, the more we can shape the political landscape for years to come.”

Devlin, Dooley, and Brophy also benefited from attending the New Jersey State AFL-CIO Labor Candidates Program. This intensive, three-day training course teaches the basics, from campaign planning to fund raising to media relations. Candidates practice public speaking and develop the messages they will use during their actual campaigns. Graduates may receive financial support as well. According to the New Jersey State AFL-CIO, candidates who complete the course go on to win their races 75 percent of the time.

New Jersey State AFL-CIO President Charles Wowkanech said Devlin, Dooley, and Brophy did an excellent job not only in the labor candidates program but also in their races. “All three members of Local 28 were very impressive candidates. All overcame odds that most people would not even have attempted. That says a lot about the Boilermakers…”

— Charles Wowkanech, president, New Jersey State AFL-CIO

_Three from Local 28 hold political office_
Local 60 awards $17,500 scholarships

Members participate in fundraisers throughout year to finance education program

LOCAL LODGE 60 (Peoria, Ill.) announced the winners of its second annual scholarship award on October 21, 2006. A total of $8,500 was awarded to 17 scholarship recipients. The one-year, $500 grants were awarded to every 2006 applicant — all Local 60 Boilermakers or their dependents. Only Local 60 members — or the spouse, child, or grandchild of a Local 60 member — are eligible for this scholarship award.

For the second year in a row, Local 60 members participated in fund-raisers to help raise money for the scholarships. They sponsored a golf outing, conducted 50/50 drawings, and collected donations from various groups. They raised enough money last year that every Local 60 scholarship applicant was awarded a $500 grant.

Recipients of Local 60's second annual scholarship award include:

- Rikki Lynn Alsvig, granddaughter of Oatley Burress; Alyssa Dynae Bauer, daughter of Gary Bauer; William David Burress, son of Bill Burress; Corey Robert Crawford, son of Loren Crawford; Jacob John Grilc, son of Mark Grilc; Darcy Jo Hamilton, granddaughter of Harold Tournee; Zachary Elliott Harrison, son of Dwain Harrison; Malory L. Hunt, daughter of Gary Hunt; Nora Nicole Miskell, daughter of Tom Miskell; Rhiana Taylor Neubam; granddaughter of Calvin Neubam; Jenny Jacqueline Sorrell, daughter of Jimmy Jo Sorrell; Kara B. Spooner, granddaughter of Harold Tournee; Stacy Stear, daughter of Jamie Stear; Lydia Christina Vincent and Lynsey Rose Vincent, daughters of Jeff Vincent; Sara L. Wilson, daughter of Scott Wilson; and Katie Elizabeth Witzman, daughter of Charlie Witzman.

L-374's Beebe devotes life to Boy Scouts

Retiree makes oath “To help others at all times” his life-long goal

BE PREPARED. That’s the motto of the Boy Scouts. “Be prepared for what?” someone once asked Baden-Powell, the founder of scouting. “Why, for any old thing,” he answered. And that’s how John A. Beebe Sr. has lived — being prepared for any old thing and helping others become prepared.

Beebe, 62, a retired field construction worker out of Local 374, Hammond, Ind., has devoted his life to teaching kids how to become good adults through the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) program. His love for scouting began 55 years ago, when he first became a member of the BSA. As a youth, he worked hard earning merit badges and eventually became an Eagle Scout — the highest BSA rank attainable. As an adult, he worked as a scout leader (his son, John Jr., was a member), earning the BSA’s Silver Beaver award for outstanding service to youth. Today, Beebe is a member of the BSA’s local council as well as the central region board (which covers 13 states and 82 different councils), and the national committee.

Fellow retiree A. T. Jones says Beebe deserves an award for all his good work. “He will always be a good union person.”

But Beebe just wants to help out. If he is not working with the scouts, he is helping out the United Way as a member of its allocations committee, or working with the council of community events in his hometown of Highland, Ind. He has also served on the executive board for the Calumet Council Girl Scouts (his daughter, Annette Neyhart, was a member), and he is a lifetime member of the Hessville Historical Society.

Beebe said he built his life on the belief system he first learned as a young Scout — the highest BSA merit badge. “The Boy Scout oath or promise is the best way to live your life,” he said. “The oath’s teachings are the ultimate guidelines by which one should live his life.”

Local 158 participates in telethon

Members raise $3,000 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

ON AUGUST 5, 2006, Local 158 Sec.-Treas. Kevin Reatherford didn’t mind answering the phone. In fact, the more calls he got, the happier he was — and the more money he raised for the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn.

Reatherford had the honor of working the annual telethon to raise money for the pediatric treatment and research facility founded by entertainer Danny Thomas in 1962. Not only did Reatherford raise money by answering the phone that day, but members of his local in Peoria, Ill., had a telethon of their own, raising an additional $3,000 for the study and treatment of catastrophic diseases in children.

Fourth-generation Kirkland is new L-587 vice president

Kevin Kirkland, second from right, is sworn in as vice president of Local 587 (Orange, Texas) by his uncle and retiring president, Terry Kirkland (far left).

Pictured second from left is Kevin’s father, Local 587 BM-ST James Kirkland. The photo was taken by Kevin’s twin brother, Keith Kirkland. Both young men are fourth-generation Boilermakers. Their grandfather, James H. Kirkland Jr., was a trustee and assistant business manager for Local 587. Their great-grandfather, James H. Kirkland Sr., was also a Local 587 member.

Pictured to Kevin’s left and right are Dennis Verrett, trustee, and George Dronett, president. Seated is trustee J.R. Wilson.
Union Tools closes Frankfort, N.Y., plant

Seventy-five Local 1916 members lose jobs

A 100-YEAR-OLD lawn and garden tool-making operation in Frankfort, N.Y., shut its doors permanently December 1, throwing 75 Boilermakers from Local 1916 out of work. Union Tools had produced shovels, hoes, and forks, under brand names like Razor-Back and UnionPro. In April 2006, Ames True Temper purchased Union Tools. It subsequently shut down the Frankfort plant and folded the operation into its more modern U.S. manufacturing facilities.

The tool-making plant had long been a key employer in Frankfort, a community of about 7,300 located in central upstate New York. Just six years ago, its union workforce numbered more than 300. But competition — both domestic and global — took a toll on Union Tools’ finances, and jobs dwindled.

Plant had older work force

LOCAL 1916 PRESIDENT Richard Bernier, 55, said Union Tools had an older work force. “Most of the people have worked there since the 1970s. I started when I was 19. This is going to be tough for me, because I’ve had one job my whole life.”

According to Bernier, workers at Union Tools averaged about $29 an hour in wages and benefits. Members worked in three production areas: hand-rolling, forging, and assembly and shipping. “At one time, we made the only hand-rolled forks in the United States,” Bernier noted. “We hand-rolled each time on the fork.” He said an Austrian firm began using laser machines to cut forks more rapidly and efficiently, putting competitive pressure on Union Tools. Meanwhile, the union work force received pressure from another source — cheap labor. Bernier said the company began contracting out tool production to China. “How do you compete with 85 cents an hour?” Bernier asked.

Workers saw closure coming

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES had plagued the Frankfort operation for some time, Bernier said. By early 2006, workers were anticipating trouble. Union Tools advised the local that if it intended to outsource some shovel blade production to China and move sawmill operations to its Kentucky facility. “We’d been negotiating since January on and off. We knew all along they were stalling until they could sell [the plant to True Temper].”

When True Temper completed its purchase of Union Tools, it soon became clear that the Frankfort plant would be shut down. “They told us they didn’t need us because they had so many tool-making facilities,” Bernier recalled. “The operation was redundant for True Temper,” said DeRollo. “We did bargain over the decision to close the plant. The committee made an offer to accept a 20 percent wage reduction and a reduction in vacations, which amounted to more than half-a-million dollars a year. However, True Temper said they would need to come up with another $3 million or so. There was virtually no dispute that the company could save what it wanted — any way to counter it. Our members essentially would have had to work for free.”

Once it became clear that no amount of concessions could save the plant, DeRollo and the committee entered into a bargaining over a severance package. Under the agreement, workers with at least most time in service will receive $4,000 each. Those with less time will receive lesser amounts — down to $100 for one year of service. All workers will receive 16 weeks of paid health insurance, two years of paid life insurance, and paid vacation.

“I think they got what they could get,” said DeRollo. “It’s a respectable package. Unfortunately, when you’re bargaining over a severance package, you don’t have much leverage.”

Workers will also receive help under the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which offers extended unemployment insurance payments and training benefits. In some situations, TAA also provides income subsidies for those who get new jobs in similar occupations making less money.

Union 1916 was chartered as a manufacturing lodge in July 1957. It was disbanded effective January 31, 2007.
without radical changes in the way unions operate, organized labor will at best become irrelevant and at worst sink into oblivion. Such gloomy forecasts are prevalent today, with unions representing only about 12 percent of the U.S. workforce, not to mention recent divisions within the AFL-CIO.

But there is hope, according to Mark Breslin, a speaker, author, and trainer. In his book, Organize or Die (published in 2003), Breslin outlines the steps unions must take to rebuild membership and thus regain their former strength.

Breslin is a fourth-generation contractor who has worked closely with construction unions on the West Coast. A popular speaker at labor conferences in North America, he addressed the Boilermakers Winter Construction Conference on Marco Island, Fla., Feb. 14, 2006 as author urges radical shift in union organizing

**Author urges radical shift in union organizing**

Mark Breslin says “clock is ticking,” labor must change to survive

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Breslin doesn’t pull any punches in his book or in his live presentations. He admonishes unions to adopt a more business-like approach to organizing and to avoid blustering and threats. His central argument is for top-down organizing. To be successful, Breslin says, unions must do a much better job of marketing and selling what they have to offer. They must identify the advantages of union crews and articulate those advantages to nonunion contractors and clients. And unions must adopt modern, strategic methods of getting their message out. Moreover, says Breslin, union members themselves must embrace winning attitudes and behaviors; on-the-job excellence by itself is no longer enough in today’s highly competitive construction industry.

Breslin calls for union sales messages that resonate in the marketplace. He rejects such slogans as “union yes,” calling them “feel good” messages that convey nothing of substance to contractors whom unions may wish to organize. Organize or Die is both a warning and a message of hope. In Breslin’s view, unions can regain market share if they act aggressively and with total commitment. But he estimates that labor has perhaps a five-year window to reformulate itself before it’s too late. “The clock is ticking,” he says.

Learn more about the book online at www.breslin.biz; by phone at 866-351-6275; or by writing to Mark Breslin, 2415 San Ramon Valley Blvd., #4-230, San Ramon, CA 94583.

**MOST tests new leadership training program**

Locals 154 and 83 host pilot sessions

THE NEW LEADERSHIP training program created for foremen by the tripartite alliance received high marks following two pilot sessions held in late 2006 and early 2007. Local 154 (Pittsburgh) and Local 83 (Kansas City, Mo.) hosted the training.

Unlike the previous foreman training course, which focused on technical instruction, the new program stresses people skills, administrative responsibilities, and the business aspects of construction. During past tripartite conferences, these areas were identified as being critical to effective first-line supervision. A contractor-union committee in conjunction with industry consultant FMI Corp. — then developed the new course, and train-the-trainer sessions were held last summer to familiarize potential instructors with the concepts. The program is being administered by MOST (Mobilization, Optimization, Stabilization, and Training). The previous foreman training program had been administered by BNAP (Building and Construction Trades Industry Program).

Each pilot session ran two days and included three instructors who worked from newly-developed course materials, organized into modules. At the first pilot session, held Dec. 12 and 13, Local 154 instructors Gerry Klimo, Don Fiorilli, and Jim Basilone presented the course to 29 Local 154 members and B&W safety superintendent Raymond Winkleskite, Larry Wargo, consultant for contractor services with FirstEnergy Corp., attended as an observer. Local 83 held its pilot program Jan. 11 and 12. Instructors included Dave Leimer, Local 83 welding instructor; John Standish, BNAP instructor; and Mike Ballard, a B&W construction manager. Twenty-two Local 83 members attended the course.

Marty Spencer, rigging instructor for the Northeast Area, who serves on the leadership training committee, monitored both the Pittsburgh and Kansas City training sessions. He said the two owner representatives who attended the event — Nelson Jordan of Mid America Energy and Jim Prothe of Kansas City Power & Light — expressed enthusiasm about what they saw and heard. “They really liked the content and the fact that we are working to meet their needs,” said Spencer. “They were very positive and appreciative of our efforts.”

Spencer said he will submit a report to the tripartite leadership training committee detailing his findings and recommendations. A full roll-out of the program is planned for sometime this year.


Participating in the Kansas City pilot session were Local 83 members James Brooks Jr., Thomas Burgess Jr., Clinton Burriside, James Crowl, Rodney Czes, Raymond Gorham, Kristian Harmon, Glenn Haygood, Casey Jensen, Paul Lawrence, Joseph Lewandowski, Randall Mendenhall, Joseph Miller Jr., Joshua Nelson, Edward Owens, Steve Pachmayr, Chris Pruitt, Ronnie Smith, Arlin Thody, and J. Bradley White.

Twenty-nine Local 154 members and a B&W management representative participate in a pilot session of the new leadership training course.

**Training information is available online**

MEMBERS LOOKING FOR A SAFETY CLASS to attend can go to the MOST Web site www.mostprograms.com and click on the training tab. There you will find a list of upcoming classes. MOST (Mobilization, Optimization, Stabilization, and Training) is a joint labor-management trust that seeks to promote the interests of the tripartite partners (the Boilermakers union, NACBE contractors, and construction industry owners). The trust also oversees such programs as drug screening and a manpower reserve center. All MOST programs are aimed at maintaining a highly skilled, dependable Boilermaker work force.
Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust

This is a summary of the annual report for the Boilermaker-Blacksmith National Pension Trust, Employer Identification Number 48-6168020, for Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2005. This report has been filed with the Department of Labor, as required by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Basic financial statement

Benefits under the plan are provided by the trust fund directly to participants or their beneficiaries. Plan expenses were $206,578,630. These expenses include $3,921,672 in administrative expenses, $60,927,825 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, and $148,843,341 as of Dec. 31, 2005. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of $48,030,491. This increase includes unrealized appreciation or depreciation in the value of plan assets, that is, the difference between the value of the plan assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year, or the cost of assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of $254,860,171 (including employer contributions of $221,567,307, employee and retiree contributions of $27,123,454, realized loss on sale of assets of $1,282,648, earnings from investments of $15,108,444, and other income of $2,042,964). Plan expenses were $206,578,630. These expenses included $8,491,340 in administrative expenses and $198,087,290 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Boilermakers National Annuity Trust

This is a summary of the annual report for the Boilermakers National Annuity Trust, Employer Identification Number 48-1029345, for Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2005. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, as required by the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Basic financial statement

Benefits under the plan are provided from trust assets. Plan expenses were $65,417,970. These expenses include $3,921,672 in administrative expenses, $60,927,825 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries, and other expenses of $586,273. A total of 1,378 persons were participants in the plan at the end of the plan year. The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was $148,843,341 as of Dec. 31, 2005, compared to $148,843,341 as of Jan. 1, 2005. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of $210,843,292. This increase includes unrealized depreciation in the value of plan assets, that is, the difference between the value of the plan assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year, or the cost of assets acquired during the year.

The plan had total income of $708,056,589. This includes employer contributions of $708,056,589, losses of $11,863,808 from the sale of assets, net earnings from investments of $252,342,910, transfer of assets from a merger of $6,843,750,870 as of Dec. 31, 2004, and $6,843,750,868 as of Jan. 1, 2005. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of $203,894,072.

Minimum funding standards

An ACTUARY’S STATEMENT shows that enough funds have been set aside for plan liabilities and expected future claims for the duration of the plan. The plan had total income of $708,056,589. This includes employer contributions of $708,056,589, losses of $11,863,808 from the sale of assets, net earnings from investments of $252,342,910, transfer of assets from a merger of $6,843,750,870 as of Dec. 31, 2004, and $6,843,750,868 as of Jan. 1, 2005. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of $203,894,072.

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New contract summaries
A brief listing of recent agreements signed and ratified by Boilermaker local lodges

Local 1 — Chicago
Effective Nov. 1, 2006 to June 30, 2009, for members of Local 1, Chicago, who work in the plate shop at Hudson Boiler & Tank, and effective Nov. 1, 2006 through June 30, 2009, for Local 1 members working in the shop of mechanical contractor, Servoce Inc.

Local M7 — Grand Rapids, Mich.
Effective Nov. 7, 2006 to Nov. 6, 2009, for 85 members of Local M7, Grand Rapids, Mich., who make Brunswick boat parts at the ALCO Co.

Local 5 — New York
Effective Sept. 1, 2006 to Dec. 31, 2009, for members of Local 5, New York, who work at Fresh Meadows Mechanical, and effective June 1, 2006 to May 31, 2007, for four Local 5 members who work with small heating boilers at ROJO Mechanical LLC.

Local D69 — Waco, Texas
Effective April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2011, for 42 members of Local D69, Waco, Texas, who produce white Portland and masonry cement at Lehigh Cement. White cement is a specialized product, manufactured to exacting standards, often used for architectural projects in which pure white concrete is specified, or as a base cement when vibrant color is desired. Because of its reflective surface, white cement is also used in highway infrastructure for traffic safety and in warm climates to reduce air conditioning costs.

Local D114 — Ada, Okla.

Local M100 — Albany, Ga.
Effective Aug. 1, 2006 to July 31, 2009, for 22 members of Local M100, Albany, Ga., who manufacture golf clubs at MacGregor Golf.

Local 128 — Toronto, Ontario

Local 132 — Galveston, Texas
Effective Sept. 1, 2006 to Aug. 31, 2009, for 42 members of Local 132, Galveston, Texas, who fabricate and repair heat exchangers at Dunn Heat Exchangers.

Local 146 — Edmonton, Alberta
Effective Oct. 1, 2006 to Sept. 30, 2009, for members of Local 146, Edmonton, Alberta, who work in the production and manufacturing of vessels at Edmonton Exchanger Manufacturing Ltd.

Local 151 — Erie, Pa.
Effective September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2009, for members of Local 151, Erie, Pa., who work at Rely Power Inc., a steam generator and fuel firing equipment manufacturing facility that is part of the services business unit of Babcock Power Inc.

Local 158 — Peoria, Ill.
Effective Sept. 1, 2006 to Sept. 1, 2009, for 318 members of Local 158, Peoria, Ill., who work in the production and manufacturing of mining trucks at Komatsu Mining Systems.

Local 196 — Sayre, Pa.
Effective Oct. 19, 2006 to Oct. 18, 2011, for members of Local 196, Sayre, Pa., who work at GE Railcar Repair Services.

Local D239 — Three Forks, Mont.
Effective August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2010, for 45 members of Local D239. Three Forks, Mont., who work in production and maintenance at Luzenac America, a talc producer.

Local 242 — Spokane, Wash.
Effective Nov. 16, 2006 to Nov. 15, 2010, for members of Local 242, Spokane, Wash., who work at EZ Loader Boat Trailers Inc., a manufacturer of aluminum and galvanized steel roller and bunk trailers.

Local D263 — Clark, Nev.
Effective August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2009, for 35 members of Local D263, Clark, Nev., who work for EaglePicher Filtration and Minerals in Reno, Nev. Members make diatomaceous earth (DE) products, including filter aids and fillers for paints, catalyst supports, and polyethylene film under the trademark of Celatom®, and soil amendments and conditioners for landscaping, golf courses, and ball park infielders under the trademarks of AXIS® and PLAY BALL®.

Local D374 — Grantsville, Utah
Effective October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2010, for 18 members of Local D374, Grantsville, Utah, who work in production and maintenance at the Chemical Lime Co.’s Utah plant.

Local D381 — Las Vegas
Effective Nov. 20, 2006 to Nov. 30, 2010, for nine members of Local D381, Las Vegas, who work in production and maintenance at the Chemical Lime Co., a producer of Calcium Hydrosol slurry (lime slurry); Slurry is often used in products and services for industrial and municipal waste treatment, sludge and soil stabilization, and waste remediation.

Local D400 — Vancouver, British Columbia
Effective September 1, 2006 to August 31, 2010, for 18 members of Local D400, Vancouver, British Columbia, who work in production and maintenance of custom agricultural and industrial equipment at Artex Fabricators.

Local 482 — Wood River, Ill.
Effective Nov. 1, 2006 to Oct. 31, 2011, for 35 members of Local 482, Wood River, Ill., who repair small diesel engines at Mike’s Inc.

Local D486 — New Westminster, British Columbia
Effective October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2010, for 27 members of Local D486, New Westminster, British Columbia, who work in production and maintenance at the Chemical Lime Co.’s Langley plant, where they produce limestone products, hydrated lime, and lime slurry.

Local 500 — Salem, Ore.
Effective Sept. 18, 2006 to Sept. 18, 2011, for six members of Local 500, Salem, Ore., who rebuild electric motors at the Reliance Electric Service Center.

Local D503 — Kamloops, British Columbia
Effective August 1, 2006 to July 31, 2010, for 27 members of Local D503, Kamloops, British Columbia, who work at Graymont’s Pavilion plant, producing a range of lime and limestone products, including high calcium quicklime and screened limestone.

Local D561 — Weeping Water, Neb.
Effective June 25, 2006 to July 31, 2011, for 35 members of Local D561, Weeping Water, Neb., who work at Kerford Limestone Company producing over two million tons of crushed limestone each year for use in asphalt and concrete.

Local D583 — Richmond, Calif.
Effective Nov. 1, 2006 to Nov. 1, 2009, for 50 members of Local D583, Richmond, Calif., who produce wallboard at the National Gypsum Co.

Union leaders negotiate contracts
UNION LEADERS, like these pictured here, work long hours to negotiate the best benefits they can for Boilermaker members.

Negotiating a three-year agreement for Local 151 at Riley Power Inc. are, l. to r.: front, Marc Posterli, Jim Owens Jr., Scott Miller, and IR Bob Heine; back, Gerry Graves, Jeff Frum, and Chuck Goodman.

Negotiating a five-year agreement for Local D561 members at the Kerford Limestone Co. are, l. to r.: standing, Kit Cooper, Rex Schreiner, and Mike Hansen; sitting, Jim Rheden and Art Baldwin. Not pictured is Mike Kerr.

Negotiating a six-year agreement at the Ladish Co. for members of Local 1509, Cudahy, Wis., are, l. to r.: Scott Hoffer, Dan Seng, Jim Mallo, John Stewart, Duane Larson, Randy Taltsko, and Roger Reeding.

Negotiating a three-year agreement for L-1600 members at General American Door Co., are, l. to r.: Gumercindo Cuevas, Anselmo Allellano, and Jose Purido.

Continued on next page
Payday finally arrives for Local 483

After a four-year delay, NLRB sends case to resolution process

IN 2002, LOCAL 483 (Alton, Ill.) filed unfair labor practice charges against Joy Technologies Inc., d/b/a Joy Mining Machinery, when the company refused to bargain with the union, imposed a mandatory overtime policy without notifying or bargaining to impasse with the union, and would not let employees return to work following a ULP strike as mandated by law. Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) David L. Evans ruled in the union’s favor, but the company refused to make payment and appealed the case to the National Labor Relations Board. The case has been there ever since. That is until late 2006, when the NLRB referred the case to its Pilot Alternative Dispute Resolution Program.

The case was assigned to ALJ William Cates. Cates met with counsel and bargaining committees of both company and union until an agreement could be reached. Eligible members ratified an agreement with the company in August. On Sept. 14, 2006, the NLRB approved a settlement in the amount of $1.02 million — a lot of money, but far less from the original estimate of nearly $4 million.

“Although the settlement was not the full amount of liability there were many factors the members had to consider,” reports Research Director Jim Pressley.

“The company has since combined two locations, built a new plant in Kentucky, and closed the plant in Illinois. We also had to consider the make-up of the NLRB itself [whether or not the current board has a fair member representation for both management and union] and the fact the board had many options — only one of which was better than the settlement approved. This case had been before the board about four years. There was no end in sight, and it was amounting to a war. Any group would appeal any NLRB decision to the courts.”

Local 483 President Bill Staggs said the company informed him in 2005 that the plant would be closed in January 2006. Most of the members have since found other work, some in other shops, others in field construction Boilermakers. But there are still too many who are out of work.

Staggs says the fate of this plant was pretty well sealed in 2001, when workers refused to work under a mandatory overtime policy the company had imposed without consulting with or negotiating with the union.

“I think it comes down to this: the company did not like the union; they did not like being told what to do, and they found out they could do business cheaper in Kentucky,” Staggs said.

Staggs continued: “Now you can quote me on this. When the company vice president told me they were closing the plant, he flat out stated: ‘If you lose a thumb in Illinois, we have to pay you; in Kentucky, you go back to work.’ This really puts into perspective how this company feels about its employees.”

The decision to ratify the 2006 settlement agreement did bring some closure for the members of Local 483. The agreement was timely, due to the plant shut-down, and Pressley says there is absolutely no question that the monetary amount was more than the company ever intended to pay the employees.

“Local 483 members are to be commended for their patience throughout this extremely long and unfair procedure.” — Bill Staggs, L-483 President

New Contract Summaries

Continued from previous page

Local 584 — Tuscaloosa, Ala.
Effective Nov. 1, 2006 to Oct. 31, 2009, for seven members of Local 584, Tuscaloosa, Ala., who manufacture and service vacuum trucks for Gazzleer Manufacturing Inc.

Local 903 — West Point, Miss.
Effective Aug. 1, 2006 to July 31, 2009, for 465 members of Local 903, West Point, Miss., who manufacture brake and clutch components for automotive companies that supply highly engineered products and services for automotive and industrial manufacturers around the world.

Local 1240 — Wabash, Ind.
Effective March 1, 2006 to August 1, 2008, for members of Local 1240, Wabash, Ind., who work at Wabash Alloys LLC. Founded in 1958, Wabash Alloys now owns eight plants and produces over five million pounds of aluminum alloy each day, for a total of 1.6 billion pounds per year. They are the world’s largest producer of recycled aluminum casting alloys.

Local 1247 — Chicago
Effective Oct. 8, 2006 to Oct. 8, 2010, for 50 members of Local 1247, Chicago, who produce open die and ring rolled forgings at Charles E. Larson & Sons Inc.
National Transient Lodge
Will Hinojosa, BM-ST for the National Transient Lodge, reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
35 YEARS – Eugene Byrde; and
25 YEARS – Patrick Clark, Ronnie Marple.
Locals 1, Chicago
John Skermont, BM-ST of Local 1, Chicago, reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
35 YEARS – Edward Anderson, Timothy Barry, Raymond Fraley, Mark Gustafson, Ronald Kowalski Sr., Jack Ray; and
Locals 13, Philadelphia
James Banford Jr., BM-ST of Local 13, Philadelphia, reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
60 YEARS – Al Dziedzina.
Locals 60, Peoria, III.
Ed Herbert, BM-ST of Local 60, Peoria, Ill., reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
65 YEARS – George W. Green;
60 YEARS – Vernon F. Hackman;
50 YEARS – Lydell Karnick, Earl D. Main, Elbert Moreland, Victor Wood;
45 YEARS – John Moss;
30 YEARS – Philip W. Hasty, Mark Huddleston, Wayne Inman, William Lafford Jr., Thomas M. Scheving, James L. Schneider, Rickey L. Scott, Robert R. Larkin, Trenton L. Moore, Anton Paul, Larry M. Sabrowsky, Mark Silvnik, Francis R. Troetter; and
25 YEARS – Jacob J. Beckius, John T. Bell, Deborah R. Bistodeau, Randall C. Grinham, James L. Schneider, Rickey L. Scott, Robert R. Larkin, Trenton L. Moore, Anton Paul, Larry M. Sabrowsky, Mark Silvnik, Francis R. Troetter; and
20 YEARS – Roger Atkins, Curtis Ball, Russell Q. Adams; and
15 YEARS – Terry A. Boswell, Gerald D. Bradley, Robert A. Flamion, William C. Grambo, James E. Grunhard, Tommy Lane, William J. Lopez, David E. Lynn, Terry L. Marchand, John L. Nolen, Guillermo Romo, Nick Voydock, Jason D. Vuletic, Terry Weaver, Dennis K. Whitman; and
10 YEARS – Joseph M. Halasjak, David P. Royer, Carlos J. Tite.
Locals 647, Minneapolis
Paul Pendberg, BM-ST of Local 647, Minneapolis, reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
65 YEARS – Arnold L. Lindholm;
60 YEARS – Clarence Beck, Ellsworth L. Geilgau, Irving S. Holland, Gordon D. Shalts, Philip R. Viskor;
45 YEARS – Edward Backer, Gary Foley;
25 YEARS – Grant N. Bakke, Terry A. Cosand, Sylvester Dahler, Wayne H. Dale, Ricky L. Dockter, Peter P. Howard, Charles A. Powers, Robert R. Larkin, Trenton L. Moore, Anton Paul, Larry M. Sabrowsky, Mark Silvnik, Francis R. Troetter; and
20 YEARS – Jacob J. Beckius, John T. Bell, Deborah R. Bistodeau, Randall C. Grinham, James L. Schneider, Rickey L. Scott, Robert R. Larkin, Trenton L. Moore, Anton Paul, Larry M. Sabrowsky, Mark Silvnik, Francis R. Troetter; and
15 YEARS – Roger Atkins, Curtis Ball, Russell Q. Adams; and
10 YEARS – Roger Atkins, Curtis Ball, Russell Q. Adams; and
5 YEARS – James Ross, Mike Yurkovich; and
5 YEARS – John J. Bowman, Frank G. Dudek, John Jurkasch.
Locals 374, Hammond, Ind.
Paul Maday, Local 374 BM-ST, Hammond, Ind., reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
55 YEARS – James Ross, Mike Yurkovich; and
50 YEARS – John J. Bowman, Frank G. Dudek, John Jurkasch;
45 YEARS – Edward Jacobs;
40 YEARS – Michael A. Noel, Alan A. Rodda, Eugene Shepherd, John C. Williams, Victor W. Wood;
35 YEARS – Philip W. Hasty, Mark Huddleston, Wayne Inman, William Lafford Jr., Thomas M. Scheving, James L. Schneider, Rickey L. Scott, Robert R. Larkin, Trenton L. Moore, Anton Paul, Larry M. Sabrowsky, Mark Silvnik, Francis R. Troetter; and
25 YEARS – Bradley D. Jarvis, Daniel R. Jarvis, Randall D. Jarvis; and
Locals 667, Charleston, S.C.
George Pinkerman, BM-ST of Local 667, Charleston, S.C., reports the following pin presentations:
65 YEARS – Russell Q. Adams;
60 YEARS – William Profitt;
55 YEARS – Darrell Deem, Haskell Frinley, Clark Townsend, Wendell Williams, Gilmer Mosteller;
50 YEARS – Vernon Dalton;
20 YEARS – David Casto, James W. Eggers, Gregory S. Johnson; and
Locals 687, Charleston Heights, S.C.
David W. Imison, dispatcher for Local 687, Charleston Heights, S.C., reports presentation of membership pins to the following:
35 YEARS – Deryl L. Singleton;
20 YEARS – James A. Feagin, Johnny F. Hall, Leroy N. Keit Jr., A. Sean Lister, James A. Moore; and
Boilermakers rehab boiler at A.S. King Plant

B&W crews work 140,000 man-hours without injury

WORKING AT EXCEL Energy’s A.S. King Plant in Bayport, Minn., 265 Boilermakers are completing a Babcock & Wilcox boiler rehab project — and they are compiling an impressive safety record in the process. B&W field supervisor Mike James reported that more than 140,000 man-hours have been worked “without so much as a scratch.” The job requires 10 cyclone change-outs. “These men truly deserve praise for their hard work and attention to detail,” James stated.

Local 647 BM-ST Paul Pendergast (Minneapolis, Minn.) said the project is winding down and should be completed by late February.

Boilermakers are among the night shift rigging crew pictured at right. First row, l. to r.: Javier Gonzalez, Local 74 (standing); Phillip Farris, Local 132; Kevin Wheatley, Local 132; Gregg Gross, Local 587; Parker Rogers, Local 500; Al Simmons, Local 132; Roy Burris, Local 132; John Silversmith, Local 627; Dave Hymes, Local 627, and Shawn Morgan, Local 74. Second row, l. to r.: Dee Seymour, B&W supervision; David Parkinson, B&W supervision; Charles Hall, Local 627; Alex Secody, Local 4; Kelly Hendon, Local 108; Brennan Miles, Local 455; Richy Carter, Local 627; and Jim Lough, Local 112. Back row, l. to r.: Al Perrin, Local 647; John Murray, Local 647 (partially hidden); Mike James, B&W supervision; Richard Hill, Local 455; Keith Reed (Operating Engineers); and Jerry Lee (Operating Engineers).

L-13 members put rigging, welding skills to test

It’s another job well done with no defects, accidents, or complaints

LOCAL 13 (PHILADELPHIA) members have successfully completed a new wet gas scrubbing unit at the Valero Refinery in Delaware City, Del. Working for Riggs Distler Inc., nearly 60 Boilermakers built a new pre-scrubber and absorber to replace a multi-clone precipitator that CBI (another Boilermaker union contractor) removed a few years prior. Located at Valero’s fluid catalytic cracking unit (FCCU), the new scrubber and absorber to replace a multi-clone precipitator that CBI (another Boilermaker union contractor) removed a few years prior. Located at Valero’s fluid catalytic cracking unit (FCCU), the new scrubber will remove 81 percent of the particulates and 98 percent of the sulfur dioxide out of the FCCU’s flue gas emission.

According to Mike Murray, the Local 13 erection foreman on the project, the crew had thousands of feet of circumferential welds with countless penetrations that resulted in zero defects. And to top it off, they had no lost-time injuries and no OSHA recordable injuries.

The pre-scrubber they built was 30 feet in diameter and 140 feet in height. Members erected it in five sections, ranging in weight from 50,000 pounds to 120,000 pounds. The absorber was 32 feet in diameter and 194 feet in height. The first 120 feet of the absorber was made up of 15 ring sections. The ring sections were sub-assembled on site and then stacked two-to-four rings in height, based on weight or optimal construction breaks. It took Local 13 members five lifts to raise the main column, with a typical weight of 90,000 pounds each lift. The top two-ring section, transition cone, and stack were sub-assembled as a single 87-foot-tall unit, weighing 85,000 pounds. Its lift is pictured here.

The absorber column has two collector trays and three packing beds. It took 14 shifts alone for Local 13 members to pack all 9,308 pieces of packing into the beds — an amazing 28 shifts ahead of schedule. In all, from the job’s startup in late June to mechanical completion in Dec. 2006, Local 13 members worked around 167,000 man-hours in 21 weeks.

FirstEnergy applauds Local 154 on outage work

IT GIVES ME great pleasure to once again thank you (BM Ray Ventron) and the Boilermakers of Local 154 (Pittsburgh). Your membership continually demonstrates a commitment for excellence. As an observer, I personally see that commitment and I also see the pride on the faces of your membership. You don’t see much of that these days.

Your membership again gave above and beyond effort to return our units 6 and 7 from a forced outage in safe and record time. I commend you and each member of Local 154.

The Venture expresses appreciation to L-80

ON BEHALF OF the Venture Management Team at the Byron Nuclear Station we would like to express our appreciation to the staff and members of Boilermakers Local 60 (Peoria, Ill.) for their support in helping us successfully accomplish our goals for B1R14. The support of your staff in recruiting Boilermakers to support our outage work was excellent, and the support shown by the members of Local 60 to execute our outage commitments was exemplary. We especially appreciate the compliance to our safety program, which helped us achieve an outage without an OSHA recordable incident.

Again, our thanks go to you [Ed Hebert, L-80 BM-ST], your staff, and your members who supported us.

Bob Vivian, project manager
Jacci Schlosser, work control support
Fred Talisma, project support

I would also like to mention at this time that the Boilermakers working our massive AQC [air quality control] project also demonstrate this commitment for excellence. Please let your membership know of my appreciation. If there is anything you need from me, please give me a call at your convenience.

Frank A. Lubich
FirstEnergy
W.H. Sammis Plant, Scranton, Ohio
Boilermakers Lose Three Retired International Officers

Clay Parton
Retired IVP-at-Large Thomas B. Kemme died Jan. 14. He was 71. Kemme was president of the Stovewater Furnace, & Allied Appliance Workers International Union at the time it merged with the Boilermakers in 1994. Kemme served as IVP Local S105 (Effingham, Ill.) in 1954 and became the local’s president in 1970. He became a vice president of the SFAW in 1974 and its president in 1981, serving as the top officer for 13 years.

As part of the merger agreement, Kemme became an International vice president-at-large in the Boilermakers, with responsibilities for the SFEAW Division. He was reelected to that position at the 1996 consolidated convention and retired Dec. 31, 1998.

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.

Boilermakers Lose Three Retired International Officers

Clay Parton
Retired Northwest Section IVP Raymond C. “Clay” Parton passed away Jan. 22 at the age of 79. Parton retired Dec. 31, 1995, after 45 years as a Boilermaker and 30 years as an officer and staff member.

He joined Local 656 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) in 1951 and later was elected to the presidency. In 1965 he became an International rep, and in 1970 was appointed special assistant to the International president. In 1979 Parton directed the Boilermaker’s Houston organizing office. He was appointed administrative assistant to the International president in 1984, and the following year was selected to complete Clifford L. Stave’s term as IVP of the Northwest Section. He was reelected to that position at the 1986 and 1991 consolidated conventions.

Jack Sloan
Retired Western States IVP John “Jack” P. Sloan Jr. passed away Jan. 19. He was 67. Sloan retired Dec. 31, 1999, for health reasons. He served Boilermaker membership for nearly 40 years. A member of Local 104 (Seattle) since 1960, Sloan served as business manager prior to his 1978 appointment as assistant to the International president. As an AIP, his primary duties were in the Metals Trades Industry Section. He graduated from the Harvard Trade Union Program in 1979.

In 1980 Sloan became International vice president of the Southern Pacific Section, which was later merged with the Northwest Section to become the Western States Section. He was reelected at each succeeding consolidated convention, serving 20 years as an International vice president.
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:

- **Date of Death**: The earliest possible date
- **Beneficiary Forms**: Completed and forwarded to the Administrative Office of the Pension Fund
- **Address**: 754 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite 507, Kansas City, KS 66101

### Lodge, Name & Benefit

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- **Pay** to beneficiaries of the following deceased members who were covered by the plan:
  - **Date of Death**: The earliest possible date
  - **Beneficiary Forms**: Completed and forwarded to the Administrative Office of the Pension Fund

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### IST-REPORTED DEATHS

- **Name**: Begaye, Secscezonski
- **Benefit**: $6,000.00

### 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:

- **Beneficiary Forms**: Completed and forwarded to the Administrative Office of the Pension Fund.

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### Moving? Tell us where...

**Name**

New Address:

City:

State or Province:

Zip:

Local Lodge No.:

E-Mail Address:

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

**Mail form to:**

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

753 State Avenue, Suite 507

Kansas City, KS 66101

(Allow five weeks for change of address.)

See next page
Continued from p. 22

**James W. Moore**

J.W. MOORE, 80, passed away Oct 17, 2006. He joined Local 693 (Pascagoula, Miss.) in 1952, and held a series of positions before becoming lodge president. In 1976, he was appointed Intl. rep. He retired in 1997 as an assistant to the Intl. pres. and served as convention chairman of the Boilermakers at the consolidated conventions in 1996 and 2001. Moore received a Distinguished Service Award on July 25, 2001 — the highest award an International president can give to someone for service to the members of an International union. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Janet; daughter, Cathy; sons, Michael and James; 7 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren.

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Robert J. McDonough

ROBERT J. MCDONOUGH, 82, retired business manager of Local 1, Chicago, passed away June 16, 2006. Born April 2, 1924, he is survived by his wife of 41 years, Marie. McDonough joined the union in 1940, and served as a Local 1 business manager from April 1965 through his retirement in Dec. 1989. He was a trustee for the national health & welfare fund from 1966 to 1999, and served on that fund’s administrative committee for 21 years. “He was always proud to say he was still paying full dues, even after his retirement,” L-1 BM-ST John Skermont reported. “Bob would say that he was ‘retired from the job, not the organization.’”

Birth: April 2, 1924

Death: June 16, 2006

Survivors: Wife, Marie; daughter, Cathy; sons, Michael and James; 7 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren.
Bush health care plan doesn’t address problem

Tax breaks don’t ensure access for all or control costs

In his State of the Union speech, President Bush outlined a health care plan that he claimed would put health care within the reach of those who now do not have it. But the plan he outlined does not address the main problems facing our health care system: universal access and rapidly growing costs.

In fact, it is not really a health care plan. It is rather a tax cut for the top 2 percent of the population who don’t need health insurance and for the companies that buy health insurance for the rest of us.

Administration costs are also driven up by duplication of services — hundreds of insurance companies, health care providers, pharmacies, labs, clinics, and labs — each with their own paperwork. As a result, private health care administrative costs are 24 times as high now as in 1970.

In the for-profit health care sector, administrative costs also cover the salaries of the executives, who are paid much more than the average worker. Raise taxes. The income deduction is a form of tax subsidy. What is really important is to make health care more like other services. Most Americans have now joined the citizens of every other nation in recognizing that health care is a vital service — like roads, sewers, water, Social Security, and police and fire protection — that should be provided by government and paid for by all of us.

Another Petiteq in stock options in 2005. Imagine how taxpayers would react if the head of Medicare asked for that salary.

Fifty-six percent of Americans would prefer a national health care, run by the government and funded by taxes.

Health care costs hurt U.S. businesses

When private providers argue against a national health care plan, they often ignore the significant impact our economy is caused by our high health care prices. Because we cannot abandon the insurance-driven model, the United States spends more of its gross domestic product on health care than any other industrialized nation. The excessive costs U.S. companies pay for health care are driving up the price of the goods and services they produce. For example, health care costs added $1,500 to the price of every GM car manufactured in the United States in 2005; health care costs added only $449 to the cost of a new BMW.

A growing number of corporate executives are beginning to recognize that reforming the U.S. health care delivery system so that it is more efficient will reduce the cost of health care for all Americans by 2012.

This new-found corporate support for health care reform may focus more attention on the problems with our current system, but we cannot leave health care reform to Big Business. Remember that in 1993 corporate interests spent millions to defeat President Clinton’s plan to provide universal access and manage costs. Uninformed workers must be involved in any discussion regarding a national health care plan.

We must debunk the myths about single-payer plans

Typical Arguments Against a Single-Payer Plan are that patients will not be able to choose their own doctors, they will not be able to get the care they need when they need it, and the quality of health care will decline.

Those claims are myths, as a comparison of the United States to Canada quickly demonstrates. Canada’s system may not be perfect — or even the best health care delivery system — but I use it here for comparison because of its similarity to the United States and because comparative facts are readily available.

First, there is the myth of loss of choice. Worldwide, most single-payer health plans allow patients to see the doctor they choose, as Canada does. We do not have to follow the British model, which limits choice, just as HMRC limits choice.

Second, there is the myth of poor delivery of services. Judging by customer satisfaction, Canada’s delivery of necessary care is as good as — or maybe better than — the United States. In a recent poll, only 21 percent of Canadian patients reported having trouble getting the care they needed, but 28 percent of Americans had that complaint.

Another survey showed that nearly 90 percent of Americans who have insurance said the current system is “meeting their needs,” the same percentage in Canada. But only 60 percent of uninsured Americans responded that way; in Canada, every single respondent answered at all times.

Third, many Americans believe our health care system is the best in the world and will deteriorate if we move toward nationalization. But much evidence suggests Americans have an inflated sense of how good our system is at present. Life expectancy in the United States is far below that in most countries with universal access to health care. While U.S. citizens live an average of 77.5 years, Canadians live an average of 79.9. Infant mortality, too, is lower. According to the World Health Organization, Canada’s delivery of quality care, is also lower in Canada and in other countries with single-payer systems than in the United States.

New technology is more readily available in the United States, but the impact on quality of care is ambiguous. Some Americans pay for the tests and procedures (driving up costs) than in Canada, according to experts. Most important, Canadians are more likely to report getting “excellent” or “very good” care than U.S. patients.

If Canadian health care were truly inferior to U.S. care, we would not see Canadians being flocking across the border for surgery and other treatments.

But an extensive examination of hospital records in both countries suggests the opposite. An increasing number of Americans are going to Canada for such procedures as Lasik eye surgery, and to purchase prescription drugs, both of which are lower-priced in Canada.

Many problems yet to solve

With the upcoming presidential election, the United States has an opportunity to take a giant step toward a health care delivery system that will provide necessary medical care to all Americans. But to bring that about, we need to hold candidates accountable. They will not develop positions unless we let them know they are important to voters.

Somehow the United States has fallen behind every other industrialized nation on this issue. There is no reason that the richest nation in the history of the world, whose economy has dominated the world economy since the 1940s or earlier, cannot find a way to ensure that all Americans have access to necessary medical care every day of their lives.

The models are there. We do not have to copy any single nation, but we can learn from the experience of all nations to find a system that works. If we do not enact rising health care costs will force millions of Americans to go without the care they need and make our employers less competitive on the world market.

We cannot afford those alternatives. We need real health care reform now.

How the Bush Plan Works Doesn’t Work

The Proposed Plan allows taxpayers to deduct money from their taxable income — $7,500 for single coverage and $15,000 for family coverage — if they purchase health insurance in the marketplace. Even if employers incurred the cost of employer-provided taxable income. At present, this benefit is not taxed.

In his speech, President Bush said that deducting $15,000 from taxable income provides a tax cut of about $4,500 for an average family. But the Bush family health care insurance plan cost $11,480 in 2006, according to Kaiser Family Foundation. It will undoubtedly be much higher when the plan goes into effect in 2009. Taxpayers would make up the difference — nearly $7,000 a year, using Bush’s estimated tax savings, which tax experts say are high.

For workers with employer-paid health care insurance (most Boilermaker members), the plan actually raises taxes — if not immediately, then within a few years.

The reason is that their employer-paid plan will rise in cost and will be taxable, but the tax deduction will remain at $15,000 or $7,500.

And for most workers, the income deduction will reduce their Social Security retirement and survivor benefits. The reason is that the $15,000 deduction reduces their contributions to Social Security. Social Security benefits are based on total contributions, which are a percentage of earned income. A reduction of $15,000 in income each year will reduce Social Security payments significantly over a lifetime, with a proportional reduction in benefits.