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# BCTGM *News*

VOLUME 7  
NUMBER 3

## SOCIAL SECURITY

*What Does  
it Mean  
to You?*

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## the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### Pension Benefits are Hard Earned and Must be Protected

With the stroke of a judge's pen, thousands of United Airlines workers recently saw their retirement security ripped apart. They are not alone. Over the last several years, through no fault of their own, work-

ers and retirees at numerous other companies around the country also have seen their pensions gutted.

As I closely monitor this outrageous development, I am struck by the way the courts, employers and media have been describing workers' pension benefits. They talk as if these benefits are somehow a "handout" or given to workers out of the goodness of the employers' hearts. Quite frankly, this should infuriate every citizen who has worked hard and sacrificed over the years to ensure a decent standard of living in his or her retirement years.

It is time that politicians and judges who so easily disrupt people's lives understand that pension benefits are bought and paid for by workers in the collective bargaining process. These benefits are part of the overall economic package along with wages and health insurance. They are not "charity" or "welfare." These benefits are owed to workers and should be there for them at the end of a long career.

It is ironic that the very same politicians and judges (appointed by the politicians) who are so quick to wipe out workers' pension benefits and rail against "taxpayer bailouts" have their own pensions paid for by the taxpayers and guaranteed by the federal government.

Worse yet, many of the corporate executives rushing to the courts looking to get rid of their companies' legitimate employee pension obligations actually have guaranteed multi-million dollar pensions for themselves.

The upheaval so many pension plans are experiencing is primarily the result of employers' failure to make the necessary pension contributions.

The B&C Fund, of which I am the Chairman, in reality is both a defined benefit and defined contribution plan. Our contracts define the exact pension benefit as well as the amount of contribution the employer must make in order to reach that benefit level. Our Fund is one of the most successful of its kind in the nation largely because the union trustees effectively ensure that the pension provisions in our contracts are adhered to by the participating employers.

For years, employers have been complaining that the union trustees have too much influence over Taft-Hartley (jointly administered by labor and management) pension funds such as the B&C Fund. Now, with their allies running the federal government, they are planting the seeds to change the laws in order to remove workers' representatives from the decision-making process in these Funds.

This would be nothing short of a disaster for workers and retirees covered by these pension plans. Without the responsible balance and oversight that union representatives bring to the administration of pension funds, there is no doubt that millions more workers would face the same future that retirees from employer-controlled pension funds such as Enron, WorldCom, United and other companies have had to suffer.

The elimination of pension benefits is just one more piece of evidence that the race to the bottom for American

workers is in high gear. In America, we have always taken great pride that each new generation of working families was better off than the one that preceded it.

Sadly, for the first time in decades the children and grandchildren of working people are not making that advancement. In fact, the next generations are less secure and are likely to have a lower standard of living than their parents.

The staggering loss of quality jobs with good wages and benefits, out-of-control health care costs and the fading away of comprehensive pension plans have created a level of economic insecurity unseen in this country for 75 years.

Despite all of this, I am confident that this downward spiral can and will be reversed. At some point, Americans will put in power politicians who support working people. Once that takes place, then we can begin rebuilding the social security of the American worker.

The American labor movement will lead these politicians to revamp the nation's broken health care system, make a genuine commitment to public education, throw out the lousy trade deals that have caused millions of good jobs to be shipped to low-wage countries and scrap the bankruptcy laws that allow judges to destroy the lives of good, hard-working people with the stroke of a pen.

But no action would be more important to the revival of economic opportunity than the enactment of legislation that gives American workers a true opportunity to improve their lives through union membership. History clearly shows that when the number of organized workers grows, the American standard of living advances.

Organized labor built and sustained the middle class in this country for generations. And it must do so again. We simply must fulfill our obligations to our children and our country.

**Frank Hurt**  
BCTGM International President



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# Sweets, Treats and Smiles Highlight BCTGM Exhibit at the 2005 Union Industries Show

Scores of Oregon school children were among the estimated 300,000 visitors who discovered why “good jobs build strong communities” at this year’s AFL-CIO Union Industries Show, which featured hundreds of BCTGM-made products and demonstrations from skilled union cake decorators.

The annual union trade show was held at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland April 29–May 2 and displayed products from nearly 50 BCTGM contracted companies. With enough space to highlight products made by North American union members representing a diverse facet of the BCTGM, the expansive booth exhibited everything from bread, candy, cakes and cereals to dog biscuits, cat food, flour and sugar.

As is the case each year, the BCTGM exhibit was the most visited and enjoyed. More than 1,200 grocery

bags filled with the union’s products were raffled off and distributed from the union’s unique exposition.

A class of Grade Four students from Vancouver, Washington visited the show and was thrilled by the BCTGM Powerman and the bags of goodies they took home to their families. One student, in his thank you letter to the BCTGM notes, “Thank you for all the samples of yummy food. I hope the knowledge from learning about the union jobs will help me make good choices in life. I would like to be a union baker some day.”



## **SLASHING SOCIAL SECURITY:**

# Bush Plan Cuts Benefits

On April 28, President Bush endorsed a Social Security proposal that would result in substantial cuts in benefits for middle-income families and deeper cuts for higher-income families. And contrary to statements by the proposal's supporters, the Bush plan would sizably increase the deficit.

Although the President described his proposal as one that would reduce benefits for the most affluent Americans, the plan would result in large benefit reductions for middle-class workers as well. The benefit reductions for average earners would be the largest in Social Security's history. Here are some facts:

All workers with income above \$20,000 would be subject to benefit reductions. Seven of every ten workers would be affected.

Benefit cuts for middle-class workers would be large. A 25-year-old worker who earns the average wage over the course of his or her career—about \$36,500—would receive a

*“Should any political party attempt to abolish social security, unemployment insurance, and eliminate labor laws..., you would not hear of that party again in our political history. There is a **tiny splinter group**...that believes you can do these things. Among them are...a few Texas oil millionaires, and an occasional politician or business man from other areas. Their number is negligible and they are stupid.”*

President Dwight D. Eisenhower, 11/8/54

reduction in Social Security benefits of \$3,523 a year upon retirement in 2045. That's 16 percent lower than would be the case under current law. An average worker retiring in 2075 would receive \$7,629 less, a 28 percent reduction.

The plan would work in combination with the President's previously announced proposal to privatize Social Security. Although Bush claims that private investment accounts would be voluntary, his plan cuts benefits by 30 percent even if you choose not to participate in private accounts. The average retiree would lose a total of \$134,000 in benefits under this plan if they live for 20 years after they retire. As a result, workers

will be forced to invest the difference in private accounts.

Another controversial aspect of the President's proposal is that the administration and Congress will choose which investment firms have management over the new accounts—a process that improperly mixes politics and political influence in a fight for the billions of dollars in profits these firms could make.

Social Security is a successful insurance program that protects workers and their families against the income loss that occurs when a worker retires, becomes disabled, or dies. Privatization risks this program's success and endangers the many individuals who rely on its funds for survival.

To learn more about the privatization of Social Security and to send an email to your members of Congress urging them to protect the existing program visit:

<http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/bctgmProtectSocialSecurity>



# New Boudin Bakery Celebrates History of San Francisco



*B*oudin Bakery, creator of the original San Francisco Sourdough French Bread and the city's oldest ongoing business, opened the company's new flagship, Boudin at the Wharf in May.

Located at Pier 43½ on the city's famed Fisherman's Wharf, the new facility features BCTGM Local 24 members hard at work in the demonstration bakery. The complex also includes the Bakers Hall market; Boudin Café; Bistro Boudin; and the Boudin Museum & Bakery Tour.

"The history of San Francisco and the story of Boudin Bakery have been intertwined since the Gold Rush," notes Boudin co-chairman Lou Giraudo. "Boudin at the Wharf is our way of celebrating that connection."

Boudin Original San Francisco Sourdough French Bread is still baked fresh daily by union members using the same recipe that enticed Gold Rush-era San Franciscans who flocked to the Boudin bakery each morning.

Every loaf is made with a portion of the original Boudin "mother dough" that has been carefully preserved over the decades—and heroically saved by Louise Boudin during the Great Earthquake in 1906.

For the past 30 years, residents and tourists have enjoyed watching BCTGM Local 24 bakers at Boudin craft fresh, piping-hot loaves of bread at the Boudin Bakery near Pier 43½. With the opening of Boudin at the Wharf, thousands more will have a chance to observe BCTGM members hard at work at the new 5,000-square-foot demonstration bakery. The Bakery Tour provides a glass-walled catwalk with full views of the working bakery, and each tour concludes with a visit to the tasting room, where each visitor can sample oven-fresh BCTGM-made bread.



Pictured here are Local 24 members crafting Boudin sourdough bread products at the new Boudin at the Wharf location.

Photos by Nita Winter ©2005

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# Regional Councils Stress **UNITY, ORGANIZING**

The 2005 BCTGM regional council meetings began with successful conventions in the Fourth Region and the Western Conference. Discussions at both conventions focused heavily on organizing new members and maintaining the standard of living of BCTGM members during difficult economic and political times.

BCTGM International President Frank Hurt was the keynote speaker at both meetings and he outlined the challenges as well as the opportunities for the union in the current environment. He stressed the importance of unity and solidarity throughout the BCTGM in order to effectively stand up to employers and beat back the threats to working families posed by the politicians currently running the country.



**2005 Western Conference**

Hurt called on the delegates and each local union represented at the meetings to redouble their efforts to bring new people into the union by organizing new shops and signing up workers in BCTGM shops in “right-to-work for less” states who are not members.

International Secretary-Treasurer and Director of

Organization David Durkee also addressed both meetings and emphasized the enormous potential for growth within the BCTGM by detailing the wealth of organizing targets in the union’s respective industries.

At its April meeting in Myrtle Beach, S.C., delegates from the 16 BCTGM locals that make up the Fourth Region Council re-elected Local 25 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) Business Agent Larry Altman as secretary-treasurer.

In Portland, Ore. in May, the Western Conference elected Local 31 (Long Beach, Calif.) Financial Secretary Doyle Townson as president, Local 24 (San Francisco) Financial Secretary Felisa Castillo as vice president and Local 315 (San Diego) Secretary-Treasurer Deborah Lacey-Zuelsdorf as secretary-treasurer of the Western Conference.



**2005 Fourth Region Conference**

# KELLOGG POLICY COMMITTEE

## *Meets to Strategize*

On Tuesday, May 17, International Vice President and Chief Negotiator Bob Oakley and the BCTGM Kellogg negotiating committee held a policy committee meeting at the union's International Headquarters in Kensington, Maryland.

In welcoming the group, BCTGM International President Frank Hurt said, "Your dedication and solidarity throughout negotiations will help ensure a quality contract for our members. As Chief Negotiator, International Vice President Bob Oakley has

the experience and skills to effectively lead the BCTGM in these crucial negotiations."

In reflecting on the negotiations slated to begin in mid-July, Vice President Oakley stated, "The purpose of this meeting is to prepare for the Kellogg Master Contract negotiations this summer. Numerous issues were discussed on behalf of our membership. The contract will cover approximately 1,700 BCTGM members working at Kellogg plants in various locations throughout the U.S.

"I am impressed by the knowledge of the negotiating committee. I remain confident we should be able to reach an agreement with Kellogg's—a contract that will be fair for both parties and at the same time be able to maintain a good working relationship with the Kellogg Company," concluded Oakley.

Policy Committee members were also addressed by International Secretary Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee, Executive Vice President Joe Thibodeau, Director of Research and Education Ray Scannell and Assistant Director of Research Matthew Clark.



Kellogg workers take notes on the bargaining schedule slated for July.



Policy committee members review and discuss contract issues.



Intl. V.P. Bob Oakley (left) explains membership concerns with committee members.



Intl. Pres. Frank Hurt (left) welcomes the committee to union headquarters.

# BCTGM Members Speak Out Against CAFTA

**St. Paul, Minn.**—In a rally at the state Capitol and a protest outside U.S. Senator Norm Coleman’s Minnesota office, BCTGM members were among the labor and environmental groups who voiced their opposition to the proposed Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) on April 21.

BCTGM Local 264G (East Grand Forks, N.D.) member Mark Froemke held up a sugar beet as he spoke about the harm that CAFTA would pose to the state’s economy. The beet sugar industry along the Minnesota-North Dakota border—which contributes \$3 billion a year to the economy—would be destroyed under CAFTA and similar agreements, taking with it 30,000 jobs that are directly and indirectly supported by it, Froemke said.

Dennis Sjodin, vice president of the Minnesota Farmers Union, echoed Froemke’s comments. “The farmers I represent are very con-



BCTGM members participate in the protest against CAFTA at the Minn. state capital in St. Paul.

cerned about what will happen if CAFTA passes,” said Sjodin, a corn and beans farmer and cattle operator. “What will happen to our rural communities, our schools, our churches?”

Later in the day, BCTGM members joined more than 125 demonstrators that lined the street outside Senator Coleman’s office, urging him to oppose CAFTA if it comes up for a vote. Despite reports in Minnesota and Washington D.C. that Coleman is against the trade deal, a spokesperson in his Twin Cities office confirmed that the senator has not taken a position.

Speakers pointed out

the detrimental impact CAFTA is likely to have on jobs, on the environment and on workers and communities in all the affected nations.

Steve Hunter, secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, called CAFTA a “foul trade” agreement that would repeat the mistakes of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Christopher Childs of the Sierra Club said that CAFTA and similar trade deals “are about production and profit. They’re not about people, and God knows they’re not about the planet.”

The event was organized by the Minnesota Blue Green Alliance, a coalition of labor and environmental groups seeking to promote both good-paying jobs and environmentally safe economic development.



Local 264G (East Grand Forks, N.D.) member Mark Froemke holds up in sugar beet to highlight the threat CAFTA poses to his industry.

# CAFTA: ANOTHER FLAWED TRADE DEAL

The BCTGM joins the AFL-CIO, trade unionists throughout the world and their allies in the fight to stop the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), signed May 28, 2004, by the United States and six Central American countries. The Bush administration plans to present the deal to Congress later this year.

CAFTA, which does not include protections for workers' right to form a union or safe work conditions, is the first bilateral or regional agreement the Bush administration has pushed since fierce opposition from workers in North and South America and their community allies stymied trade ministers in November 2003 from consolidating the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Negotiations on FTAA were suspended for most of 2004 and trade ministers have not met this year to discuss it. If approved,

FTAA would eliminate tariffs from 34 countries with a population of more than 800 million.

At the same time, the Bush White House is pushing CAFTA and has made it the top trade priority. If approved, CAFTA would eliminate tariffs from the United States, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. It would extend to Central America the disastrous job loss and environmental damage caused by 10 years of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). U.S. workers lost 879,280 jobs and real wages in Mexico have fallen as a result of NAFTA in the past 10 years, according to the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute.

A recent report by Human Rights Watch has highlighted how workers in Central America are often denied such basic rights as the right to organize and bargain collectively. Yet, the Bush administration has refused to include workers' rights in CAFTA.

## What Would CAFTA Do?

**WIPE OUT MORE AMERICAN JOBS.** Under NAFTA, 879,280 U.S. jobs were lost to "free" trade. CAFTA would significantly expand this job loss. Many BCTGM members have seen their jobs shipped offshore because of NAFTA. BCTGM members who work in the sugar beet industry, as well as sugar beet growers, would see their livelihoods disappear as CAFTA would give foreign sugar producers duty-free access to U.S. markets and lift tariffs on U.S. exports to Central American countries. There are 4,427 BCTGM members employed in the sugar industry.

**UNDERMINE WORKER RIGHTS.** CAFTA contains no core labor protections for workers. This would undermine working standards in all countries and promote a global "race to the bottom" where workers are pitted against each other in the search for the cheapest labor.

**PRESSURE FOR THE FTAA.** The CAFTA agreement is a clear way for U.S. trade negotiators to build momentum for a much larger (and equally flawed) free trade agreement called the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) that would include every country in Central America, South America and the Caribbean, except Cuba.



## CAFTA NOW!

Visit the BCTGM E-Activist Network to send a letter to your members of Congress today:

[www.unionvoice.org/campaign/bctgm\\_cafta](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/bctgm_cafta)

# BCTGM Product Goes to the Dogs (Literally)

The next time you throw your dog a Milk-Bone you will be rewarding him with a BCTGM-made treat. At the Milk-Bone plant in Buffalo, New York, the Kraft-owned company manufactures all of the Milk-Bone products that are consumed by canines in North America. The workers who make these treats all belong to BCTGM Local 802.

At the highly automated Milk-Bone facility, more than a dozen ovens produce a wide range of products including dry dog food, biscuits, and both crunchy and chewy treats for dogs of all ages. The plant, which was originally built in the 1920's, features a dedicated union workforce with a very high rate of seniority. The commitment and hard work of

Local 802's members is evident in the quality of the product, the very high case-fill rate, and the plant's impeccable safety record.

However, the Local 802 workers are not the only BCTGM

members feeding America's pets:

Nestle-Purina workers in Fairburn, Georgia represented by BCTGM Local 42 (Atlanta), produces more than 330,000 tons of product each year.

More than 100 members work on 12 lines to produce over seventy different



With more than 150 million dogs and cats in the United States, the production of pet food and treats is big business.

Some of the largest food companies in the world, including Nestle and

Mars Inc., are all eager to take a bite out of the estimated \$14 billion

Americans will spend on pet-food products in 2005.

The U.S. pet food market is dominated by a handful of large companies, including Nestle, which acquired Ralston Purina, Del Monte Foods, Masterfoods (Mars Inc.), Kraft Foods, and IAMS (Proctor & Gamble).

With more than 11,000 U.S.-based production workers making pet food products for both domestic and foreign consumption, the pet food industry is a major player in the grain-based food industry. Indeed, the global pet-food market will consume over \$30 billion worth of product in 2005, and American producers ship more than \$1 billion worth of pet-food to foreign markets.

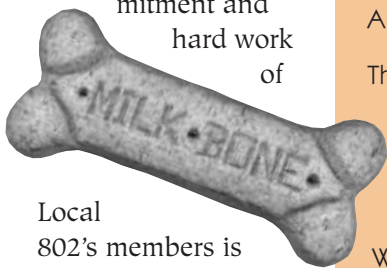


brands of pet food including *Cat Chow*, *Dog Chow*, *ProPlan*, *Beneful*, *ONE* and *Kibbles & Chunks*. This product is shipped to the Southeastern United States, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

BCTGM Local 366G (Oklahoma City) members also produce Nestle-Purina products at the Edmond, Okla. facility.

Hundreds of workers there produce dry dog and cat food under the *Dog Chow*, *Friskies*, *Alpo*, and *Kibbles and Chunks* brands. These brands are distributed nationally, while the plant also produces a large amount of store brand pet food.

Members of BCTGM Local 218 (Overland Park, Kan.) in Joplin, Mo. make pet-food products for private-label producer Doane Inc. On a daily basis, Doane members produce more than 500 tons of dry dog and cat food and over 40 tons of dog biscuits for national distribution. Most of the product made is store brand, while they also co-manufacture for some larger pet food companies.



“Education is an important factor in creating a powerful, mobilized membership both locally as well as internationally,” BCTGM International President Frank Hurt told new local union officers attending the International’s new officers training program April 3-8.

Hurt, who highlighted the importance of building strong local unions through educated leadership, opened the week-long training session for new local officers at the George Meany Center for Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Maryland. The programs, administered by the BCTGM Research & Education

Department, are designed to give new local officers a basic overview of the foundation critical to running a smooth and efficient local union.

For a full week, participants engaged in a mix of lectures, interactive exercises, and group projects. Different speakers instructed the class on labor law, health & safety, contract writing, and contract enforcement. Financial secretaries participated in special seminars that focused on local record-keeping and new Department of Labor reporting requirements. In addition, the class took part in different group exercises that focused on organizing and corporate research, and utilized Internet research and comprehensive planning skills.

To many members, the highlight of the week is the interaction with other local officers. All participants had the chance to compare experiences, discuss

# Union Leaders Educate to Mobilize

strategies, and share unique ways to deal with demanding situations.

One participant noted, “It was very helpful to meet other

officers from different locations in the U.S. and Canada who had the same concerns and issues. I now have formed links to other officers and people within the International who I can call to discuss problems as they arise.”



Local Union officers participate in the interactive training at the George Meany Center in April.

**Graduates of the spring program include:** Local 3 (Long Island City, NY) Fin. Secy. David Schanel, Local 3 Bus. Agt. Joseph Weinbel, Local 9 (Seattle) Bus. Agt. Gloria Bergman, Local 9 Bus. Agt. Cheryl Sutton, Local 154G (London, Ont.) Fin. Secy. Nathan Blay, Local 154G Pres. Leonard Firmani, Local 158G (Dodge City, KS) Pres. Robert Williamson, Local 196T (Owensboro, KY) Pres. P. Louella Moseley, Local 218 (Kansas City, MO) Bus. Agt. Randy Bridendolph, Local 252G (Memphis, TN) Pres. Michael Ford, Local 252 (Calgary, AB) Fin. Secy. Jacqueline Wright, Local 266G (Moorhead, MN) Fin. Secy. Leonard Ringdahl, Local 282G (Heyburn, ID) Pres. Jim Holmes, Local 283G (Twin Falls, ID) Fin. Secy. Ken Wiesmore, Local 327G (Bramalea, ON) Pres. Diana Brammell, Local 348 (Framingham, MA) Rec. Secy. Wayne Matthews, Local 372B (Indianapolis, IN) Fin. Secy. Charles Ballard, Local 433 (South Sioux City, NE) Fin. Secy. Gregory Barnes, Local 433 Pres. Patrick Enright, and Local 531 (London, KY) Pres./Bus. Agt. Bill Hiatt.

# The Employee Free Choice Act

More working people than ever—some 57 million—say they would join a union if they had a chance, according to a survey from Peter D. Hart Research Associates. But employers routinely harass, intimidate and coerce workers who try to exercise their right to form a union at work.

**The Employee Free Choice Act (S. 842, H.R. 1696)** was re-introduced as bipartisan legislation in the 109th Congress on April 19 by Senators Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Representatives George Miller (D-Calif.) and Peter King (R-N.Y.). The act would strengthen protections for workers' freedom to choose by requiring employers to recognize a union after a majority of workers sign cards authorizing union representation. It also would provide for mediation and arbitration of first-contract disputes and

authorize stronger penalties for violation of the law when workers seek to form a union.

## Why It Matters

Each year, employers are charged with over 20,000 instances of violating workplace labor rights. These violations are everyone's problem.

A worker's right to a voice at work is being eroded by corporations whose only concern is the bottom line. As Senator Ted Kennedy said when he introduced the bill, "America's workers deserve better. American democracy deserves better."

## What will it do?

### **The Employee Free Choice Act will:**

- Give employees the freedom to form unions by "card check," that is, by signing cards authorizing union representation instead of through elections that

can so easily be manipulated.

- Provide mediation and arbitration for first contract disputes.
- Establish stronger penalties for corporations who violate employee rights when workers seek to form a union and during first contract negotiations.

## What can you do?

Passing the Employee Free Choice Act won't be easy. Too many elected officials, dependent on corporate money, are reluctant to lend their support to a bill that benefits working Americans instead of employers. The only way to win is to demonstrate public support for this measure—to stand together.

Email your members of Congress and urge them to support the EFCA and workers' freedom to choose their union:

[http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/BCTGMSupport\\_EFCA\\_clone\\_4](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/BCTGMSupport_EFCA_clone_4).

## Sara Lee Worker Wins Arbitration Award

On May 16, 2005, BCTGM Local 111 (Dallas) member Loretta Robison finally received the news that she had been waiting nearly two years for: that her grievance against Sara Lee had been sustained and that she would receive 96 weeks of back pay and benefits.

In August 2002, Robison, a machine operator with an unblemished 28 years of experience at Sara Lee's Paris, Texas facility, took medical leave for a work-related injury. After approximately an eight month layoff, she was cleared by her Workers Compensation (WC) nurse to return to work on restricted duty. According to the Federal Mediation

and Conciliation Service (FMCS) *Opinion and Award*, Robison contacted Sara Lee regularly over the next four months in an attempt to secure light-duty work, only to be denied on each occasion. A year after her medical leave began, she was terminated by the company. BCTGM Local 111 then took the case to arbitration.

According to Arbitrator S.J. William's findings, the "actions of the HR Manager clearly prevented this 28-year employee from returning to work and then used this fact against her in order to justify terminating her for being on medical leave for longer than 12 months." Williams also

wrote that the "Grievant's termination was arbitrary and unreasonable."

According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, it is up to unions to protect those workers deemed expendable by companies. "It is unconscionable that a senior employee with an impeccable record was treated this way after getting hurt *at work*," notes Hurt. "It is the union's responsibility to right these wrongs and we must continue to do so."

Robison was awarded 96 weeks of back pay, accumulated seniority, restoration of full benefits, and out-of-pocket medical expenses.

## Local 406 Educates Members in Moncton



Local 406 (Moncton, New Brunswick) continued its long tradition of educating its stewards by holding a two-day education conference in late April. The training, which was facilitated by International Organizer/Representative Karl Walker, was attended by members from Canada Bread, MCRI, Atlantic Wholesalers, Moncton Community Residence Inc., Bonte Foods, and Atlantic Waffle.

The theme of the conference

was grievance handling. To that end, Walker led a session on investigating and processing grievances which included a presentation, various group activities and situational role-playing. According to Walker, the participants were encouraged to learn from each others experiences. "Many of the members here come from very different work environments, and have different ways of dealing with problems and challenges," said Walker.

In conjunction with the training, representatives from the Department of Training and Labour conducted a session that focused on the way management

and unions interact with each other. The session included an interactive presentation and some interesting discussion about the dynamics of that delicate relationship.

The conference also included a speech by John Murphy, Executive Secretary for the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. Murphy spoke about the mainstream media's lack of coverage of labour issues, his experience dealing with the current conservative provincial government, and the progress Organized Labour has made in the province.



Stewards listen as International Representative/Organizer Karl Walker discusses grievance handling procedures.



Interactive activities highlight the Education Conference.

## Christie Brown Workers Ratify New Contract



In early May, members of BCTGM Local 426 (Toronto) who work at Kraft Foods' Christie Brown facility in Toronto, overwhelmingly approved a new contract. The four year agreement features a wage increase of \$2.05 over the course of the contract, enhanced retirement packages, annual increases in pension benefits, and an additional paid holiday. However, according to BCTGM Vice President for Canada, Sean Kelly, the

highlight of the new deal is the positive language changes that were made. "The negotiating committee, acting on behalf of the membership, really wanted to improve the language of the contract and to ensure that the contract worked efficiently for the members," said Kelly after the contract was ratified. Assisting Kelly and the Local negotiating committee was International Representative Jim Condran.

# LOCAL *View*

## IRISH SPIRIT



On March 12, three Buffalo, N.Y. BCTGM local unions participated in the city's annual St. Patrick's Day parade. Members of Locals 36G, 110G and 802, joined scores of other labor organizations and members of the community for the festive event. Pictured here following the parade is L. 802 Bus. Agt. Jim Short (left) and L. 36G Bus. Agt. Tom Bingler (right).

## POLITICAL ACTION



Local 315 (San Diego) understands the importance of political involvement. Pictured here following a luncheon for California Rep. Bob Filner (D-51st) is (from left to right) L. 315 Pres. Curtis Robertson, Filner and L. 315 Secy.-Treas. Deborah Lacey-Zuelsdorf.

A large group of BCTGM Local 464 (Hershey, Pa.) members received diplomas following their successful completion of the 49th Annual Labor Institute. The labor seminar, which was held at the union hall on March 19, included such topics as work place health and safety, workers' compensation laws, and more. Pictured here is members of the 2005 graduating class.



## LABOR EDUCATION

## ANTI-UNION WAL-MART



Representatives of BCTGM Local 406 (Moncton, N.B.) joined hundreds of other labor and community activists throughout Canada, to protest the recent announcement by Wal-Mart that it would close the store in Jonquiere, Quebec where workers were trying to organize.

# BCTGM

# POWER

# Mortgage & Real Estate



**Call BCTGM  
Power/Union Plus  
Mortgage and  
Real Estate at:  
1-800-416-5786**

## **BCTGM Power Union Plus Mortgage & Real Estate makes refinancing and home-buying easier and more affordable for working families.**

Through Chase Manhattan Mortgage Corporation, one of the largest lenders in the U.S., union members can take advantage of convenient mortgage programs. Take a look at some of the benefits:

- Easy application process right over the phone or in-person
- Strike and unemployment/disability benefits to help you make payments when you're out of work
- Mortgage loans to purchase or refinance your home
- For refinancing: You could lower your rate, lower your monthly payments and shorten your loan term
- Mortgage programs for borrowers with "less than perfect" credit
- Your family—including parents and children—are also eligible for Union Plus mortgages.
- Down payments as low as 5%—and even lower for qualified buyers
- \$350 toward closing costs (for buyers who use both the real estate and mortgage portions of the program)

The average maximum lender fee under the Union Plus program is only \$100, compared to an industry average of \$753 in fees, based on a national survey of mortgage lender fees by HSH Associates in May 2003. **So union members save an average of \$653.**

### **HOME FINANCING MADE SIMPLE**

Visit the Home Finance Center online at [www.bctgm.org/benefits/index.htm](http://www.bctgm.org/benefits/index.htm) for first-time home buyers' support, planning calculators and information about the entire mortgage process. You can also call the BCTGM Power/Union Plus Mortgage and Real Estate at: 1-800-416-5786. A program counselor will answer all of your home-buying questions—from how much house you can afford, to what type of mortgage will best suit your needs. They can also refer you to a professional real estate agent who can help you find a home within your price range.

# BCTGM Action Network

## Collective Action through Electronic Unity

*The BCTGM Action Network gives individual union members the powerful tool of collective electronic activism. In a moment's time, thousands of BCTGM e-activists throughout the U.S. and Canada can unite in action on important issues.*

**I**ndependent research shows that union members are increasingly using email to communicate.

Results of membership surveys show that nearly half of BCTGM members have email at home.

*"We need to funnel our collective power through online campaigns to make our voices heard from the halls of Congress and the White House to the board rooms of major corporations. The BCTGM Action Network is a valuable new tool for every union member to do this," says BCTGM International President Frank Hurt.*

The BCTGM Action Network is an email list of union members and activists throughout North America. Periodically e-activists receive email updates or requests for action, such as sending an email message to a member of Congress, the President, or urging an employer to treat workers with dignity, justice and respect.

As a BCTGM E-Activist you can take action on these current online campaigns:

- **SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION**
- **EMPLOYEE FREE CHOICE ACT**
- **CENTRAL AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT**
- **WAL-MART ACCOUNTABILITY**

The BCTGM Action Network has grown by hundreds since its inception in 2004—however it still includes a small percentage of BCTGM members. You can help this vital action tool grow by signing up and asking your co-workers, family and friends to also become activists.

Visit [www.BCTGM.org](http://www.BCTGM.org)