

JANUARY/  
FEBRUARY 2005

# BCTGM *News*

VOLUME 7  
NUMBER 1

## THE NEVER ENDING BATTLE

Organizing

2005

SOCIAL  
SECURITY

workers'  
rights

Health Care

JOBS

pension





## If It Sounds Too Good To Be True...

Anyone who has ever been at the bargaining table knows that when an employer comes up with a new plan that's "a great deal for employees" it's time to listen carefully, ask tough questions and hold on to our wallets. This is exactly how the BCTGM and the entire labor movement have approached the Bush Administration's proposal to privatize Social Security.

As the focus in Washington, DC shifts from politics to policy, the debate over Social Security privatization has moved to the front burner. President Bush has touted his privatization plan as a big win for younger and older workers as well as retirees. Given that this President has consistently pushed policies that have hurt workers and the elderly, his boast about the benefits of his Social Security plan set off alarm bells within the labor community.

Economists and retirement experts within the labor movement have examined the Bush plan and come up with a far different conclusion than the President. Privatizing Social Security would have a serious, negative effect on current wage earners as well as retirees. It would result in across-the-board benefit cuts of anywhere between 30-50 percent, even for those who do not choose a private account. Workers who do choose private accounts would have to give a significant percentage of their gains back to the government when they retire.

At a time when corporate executives are receiving retirement compensation in the tens of millions of dollars (even if they were failures) it is outrageous that the Bush Administration is calling for benefit cuts and raising the retirement age for men and women who have worked so hard during their careers. These workers have earned and deserve these benefits.

Social Security is not a handout. It is a contract between generations. The Bush plan pits one generation against another. This is wrong when employers try it through two-tiered wage and benefit plans. And it is wrong when politicians try it with phony substitutes for legitimate programs.

Beyond the unfair benefit cuts, the Bush plan will add another \$2 trillion to the national debt, most of which we would owe to foreign countries such as China and Japan. I can think of nothing more dangerous to our economy than giving foreign countries, particularly China, even more control over it. China's influence is the number one reason that America's working families are trapped in a devastating "race to the bottom."

The BCTGM staunchly supports the current Social Security system not out of a sense of nostalgia, but because it works and has worked for nearly 70 years. It has been America's most effective program to reduce poverty among the elderly. Social Security eases the financial burden on working people who have the responsibility of helping their parents in their retirement years.

Undermining Social Security just so a small group of Wall Street firms, handpicked by a select group of politicians, can get even richer is terribly cynical and unconscionable.

Instead of promoting risky schemes that threaten the effectiveness of Social Security, our government leaders should be seeking ways to strengthen the program. While the program is not in "crisis", as President Bush would have us believe, we know it needs some creative, responsible ideas to improve it so that it can continue to provide recipients the benefits they have earned for generations to come.

Surely government leaders, the labor movement, business community and retiree advocates can come together and generate the ideas that will make Social Security an even more effective government program in the future. And while we're at it, let's also focus on the program that's truly in crisis, Medicare. That however, is a subject for another column.

**Frank Hurt**  
BCTGM International President



Official Publication of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union  
10401 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, Maryland 20895-3961  
(301) 933-8600

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BCTGM News (ISSN 1525-4860) is published bi-monthly by the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, 10401 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895-3961. Periodicals postage paid at Kensington, MD and at additional mailing offices. Subscription to new members only. Postmaster: Send address changes to BCTGM News, 10401 Connecticut Avenue, Kensington, MD 20895-3961.

# Sweet Seeds *of* Tradition

Depending on whom you ask, the Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Joyva Corporation is best-known for its halvah. Or maybe it's known for the turbaned sultan that crowns its cans of tahini. Perhaps it's for the raspberry jell rings, which are as popular at the Passover table as they are on deli counters. However, for the BCTGM, Joyva is best loved for the hard work and dedication of the Local 102 (New York, N.Y.) members who make the company's products that can be found in supermarkets and specialty stores throughout the world.

The fact that Joyva products have undergone few changes in nearly 100 years may be the secret to their staying power. Joyva was started in 1907 by

*Local 102-made treats include halvah, tahini, sesame candy bars and small sesame crunch candies.*

Nathan Radutzky, who brought a recipe for halvah with him from Kiev, Ukraine. Nathan's four sons all joined the company. Milton Radutzky, 83, the company's president and the last surviving son, still goes to work at the plant every day.

Halvah, still Joyva's signature product, is a confection made from crushed sesame, corn syrup, sugar and oil. And while other brands of halvah, from

Lebanon, Turkey and Greece, can be found in Middle Eastern grocery stores, Joyva is the largest halvah producer in the United States.

Joyva also produces tahini, a sesame puree often used in hum-

mus and bab ghanouj. In addition to being sold in North America, the tahini and the sesame crunch are exported to most of Western Europe and parts of South America. The company imports anywhere between two and three million pounds of sesame seeds a year to make tahini, an ingredient essential to halvah.



The New York Times/Yoni Brook

**BCTGM Local 102 members make halvah bars at the Joyva plant. They are, from left, Maritza Saavetra, Rosa Gomez and Maria Gonzalez.**

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According to Joyva, the family owned and operated business is perhaps the largest single importer of sesame seeds in the country. The 200 to 250 bags of seeds used daily at the factory come from China, India, Ethiopia, Sudan and various South American nations. The

also make chocolate-covered jellies and marshmallow candies. The market for those specialties peaks at Passover, and the factory gears up in November or December so it can meet that demand.

The entire operation takes place in three buildings: one with offices and a production facility for halvah and confections, another for warehousing and shipping, and a third dedicated solely to sesame seed processing.

Joyva remains decidedly old-fashioned. Most of the halvah-making process remains unmechanized; the bars are cut by machine, but the mixing is still done by hand by BCTGM members.

# Union Members Aid Tsunami Victims

The International labor movement and union members across the globe are mounting relief efforts, donation drives and recovery and rebuilding missions to help the millions of survivors of the December 26 tsunami that devastated coastal communities in Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Indonesia and other Indian Ocean nations. More than 200,000 people were killed by the massive tidal waves and tens of millions of survivors are in desperate need of clean water, food, medical supplies and shelter.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) is working with unions around the globe and in the tsunami-struck regions to bring immediate and long-term help. Additionally, the International Union of Food and Allied Workers (IUF)—of which the BCTGM is an affiliate—has started collecting information from its affiliates in Asia and sent regional representatives in

to aid in the relief effort. The IUF is an international trade union federation composed of 337 trade unions in 118 countries representing workers in the hotel, food and restaurant industries.

The AFL-CIO American Center for International Labor Solidarity (Solidarity Center) has established a Tsunami Relief Fund to which unions and individuals can donate. The Solidarity Center is a nonprofit organization that assists workers around the world who are struggling to build democratic and independent trade unions.

The BCTGM International has contributed to the relief efforts and is encouraging councils, locals and individual members to consider making donations as well. “In the same way that the BCTGM supports the workers of North America, we want to help those devastated by the tsunami tragedy in Asia. People face unimaginable hardships and the loss of not only their liveli-

hoods—but their entire way of living,” notes International President Frank Hurt.

The Solidarity Center operates offices in Sri Lanka, India, Thailand and Indonesia, and is working with local unions and officials to develop and deliver relief. In addition, hundreds of private relief agencies are receiving record amounts of contributions. The U.S. Agency for International Development has a list of relief agencies on its website, [www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov).

Visit [www.solidaritycenter.org](http://www.solidaritycenter.org) to learn more about the Solidarity Center. To make a tax-deductible contribution, please send your check, marked Tsunami Relief in the memo and payable to the Solidarity Center Education Fund, to:

**Tsunami Relief Fund  
Solidarity Center  
1925 K Street, N.W.,  
Suite 300  
Washington, DC 20006-1105**



## OPERATION FAMILY REUNION

The Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) recently launched a program to help U.S. military service men and women wounded in the line of duty reunite with their families.

The program, Operation Family Reunion, is a nationwide financial outreach initiative that makes it possible for wounded and disabled servicemen and servicewomen from all branches of the U.S. Military to be reunited with family members when they are receiving medical rehabilitation care at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC.

Operation Family Reunion was launched by the UWUA in cooperation with Army Fisher Houses, a non-profit organization located on the grounds of the Walter Reed Medical Center that provides comfortable lodging at no cost to the families. The program pays for lodging, meals and all transportation costs so that the wounded can be reunited with their loved ones while they recover.

Army Fisher Houses have been serving military families during their time of need since 1991. Keeping the family unit together—spouses, children,

parents, siblings—is particularly critical to the physical and emotional recovery of wounded servicemen and servicewomen. The trust so far has donated \$125,000. Because the UWUA is absorbing all of the program’s administrative costs, every donated dollar goes directly to the Fisher Houses.

The BCTGM encourages all members to help support our wounded servicemen and women by making a contribution to Operation Family Reunion. As this protracted war against terrorism inevitably produces greater numbers of wounded, the program can allow The Fisher House to help every family be reunited.

For more information, call 781-848-1106, or, mail check payable to: UWUA Operation Family Reunion, Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO, c/o Gary Ruffner, National Secretary-Treasurer, 815 16th St. N.W., Washington DC 20006.

# Local 125: *A Local in ACTION!*



The Local 125 office in San Leandro, Calif.



Local 125 Fin. Secy. Donna Scarano (left) and Pres. Michael Fouch (right) review contract proposals prior to negotiations.



Local 125 Vice Pres. Ken Young handles a call from a union member.



Intl. Rep. Marco Mendoza (left) stops by the office to discuss an organizing campaign with Local 125 Bus. Agt./Organizer Guy Jacobo.



Local 125 Office manager Hazel Wells prepares union correspondence.



# Moving Forward

# in

**IN 2005**, the labor movement will be faced with many challenges. We can expect direct assaults on workers' rights, efforts to dismantle retirement security and escalating corporate greed that destroys jobs and the quality of our livelihoods. We face uphill battles to restore workers' freedom to form unions and get health care to every working family. Meanwhile, North America's unions must organize more than ever and take the steps necessary to strengthen the labor movement for the future.

In the coming months, expect to see major action in the following important battles for America's working families.



## GOOD JOBS

**W**orkers will have to fight for their livelihoods this year, battling to keep good jobs in the U.S. and to maintain and improve the quality of jobs that remain here. We'll take these fights to Congress and to state legislatures, using every opportunity to ensure work can sustain families and a strong middle class—for today's workers and for our children.

Millions of good jobs have disappeared since George W. Bush took office in 2001—and they aren't coming back. Those jobs include some 2.7 million U.S. manufacturing jobs, 1.78 million of which were lost due to the explosion in the U.S. trade deficit since 1998.

Companies such as Wal-Mart are fueling the exodus of American jobs with their massive purchases of goods from low-wage countries and decreased demand for U.S.-made products. Wal-Mart is also fueling a major corporate "race to the bottom," using its status as the retail behemoth to lower standards for corporate practices and workers' wages and benefits.

Addressing the Wal-Marting of America must be a key component of the union movement's efforts to restore good jobs and strengthen the nation's middle class.

A multi-pronged, union-movement-wide campaign will challenge the policies of corporations such as Wal-Mart that sap taxpayer dollars from communities, deny workers family-supporting wages and benefits and drastically lower employment standards throughout whole industries.

Labor will demand congressional action to close tax loopholes that benefit job exporters. Labor must also work with governments and industries to address health care and pension funding crises that threaten basic benefits for millions of workers and retirees and make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for U.S. manufacturers to compete on level playing fields with international counterparts.

At the same time, unions must take on the Bush administration's drive to enact more NAFTA-like trade deals that fail to protect workers, U.S. jobs and the environment.

# 2005

## WORKERS RIGHTS

### HEALTH CARE

The nation's health care crisis continues unabated, with approximately 45 million Americans not covered by health insurance. Meanwhile, those with coverage face sky-rocketing premiums, deductibles and co-payments as costs rise and employers shift more of the burden to workers. This year, unions must continue fighting to make health care more affordable for workers and employers, improve health care quality and extend coverage to more Americans. Labor will continue to fight sham proposals that would further erode good coverage.



During his first four years in office, President Bush used a combination of executive orders and heavy-handed White House pressure on Congress to launch an all-out assault on workers and their jobs, rights, safety and wages.

With larger Republican majorities in the U.S. House and Senate, Bush now has even fewer restraints to keep him in check. The intense grassroots activism that built the largest-ever working family political mobilization in 2004 must be tapped to hold lawmakers on both sides of the aisle accountable. Among the biggest battles, the labor movement will challenge the ongoing attacks by Bush and his allies on overtime pay and workplace health and safety standards.

### SOCIAL SECURITY

President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security would subject millions of retirees to the uncertainties of the stock market while giving an unprecedented windfall to Wall Street. Financial firms charging fees to administer private retirement accounts would reap \$940 billion over 75 years, according to economists.

In addition to fighting to protect existing defined-benefit pensions and greatly increasing protections for workers' existing retirement accounts, union activists will fight proposals to replace Social Security's guaranteed defined benefits with individual investment accounts. Funding private individual accounts would require such massive start-up costs, experts predict it would force large cuts in both Social Security's guaranteed benefits and workers' total retirement income as well as raise the retirement age. Replacing Social Security's benefits with risky individual accounts will cut the vital family protections on which so many depend.



### VOICE @ WORK

The legislative campaign for passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) will be the centerpiece of ongoing efforts to help workers win a voice at work. The legislation would ensure when a majority of employees in a workplace decides to form a union, they can do so without the obstacles employers now use to block workers' choice. As the new Congress convenes, the labor movement is stepping up its long-term campaign for fair labor laws, ensuring the bill is re-introduced and a bipartisan group of elected officials again co-sponsors the legislation.



# THE RED RIVER VALLEY SUGAR BEET HARVEST

▲ In delicate, synchronized motion, the beet lifter and truck move in tandem across the field. The lifter harvests the beets and a conveyor belt feeds them into the truck.



▲ As the sun sets over farmer Bill Hejl's field near Casselton, N.D., he (left) and BCTGM Local 135G member Mark Froemke (right) discuss the status of the 2004 harvest.



▲ Trucks shuttle the beets from the piles to loading bins at the factory. These specially designed trucks can open their sides to dislodge the beets.



▲ At storage sites that dot the countryside and at sugar processing plants, the trucks drop off the beets, which are piled high with the use of conveyor belts.



◀ Inside the plant, the beets are sliced and juice is extracted which is turned into sugar. The remaining pulp is processed into livestock feed. A variety of sugars are produced, including granulated and powdered. *Workday Minnesota* Videographer Howard Kling (above, with camera) films sliced beets moving along a conveyor belt at American Crystal Sugar's Moorhead plant, as a shift supervisor looks on.



## Moorhead, Minnesota

Along the 250 miles of the Minnesota-North Dakota border, the sugar beet harvest is one of the busiest times of the year for farmers, field workers and BCTGM members employed at sugar beet processing plants.

Each fall, for two or three weeks, the fields are alive with activity, as farmers, truckers and beet processing workers work around-the-clock, getting beets out of the fields, storing and processing them.

Nearly 10 million tons of sugar beets will be harvested this year—which will produce more than one million tons of refined sugar. Processing continues into the spring at plants operated by American Crystal Sugar Co. and the Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative. Beets are also grown and processed in central Minnesota at the Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative in Renville.

Members of BCTGM Local 266G are employed at the Moorhead American Crystal Sugar Co. plant featured here while a total of 4,427 BCTGM members work in sugar beet industry.



▲ Boxes are filled with bags of sugar and moved along an assembly line where they are loaded onto pallets for shipment.



◀ Local 266G member Bill Gregg examines beet pulp pellets.

▼ The entire sugar-making process is controlled electronically, with workers able to use computers to make adjustments as needed. Pictured here is Tim Dorn of Local 266G.



▲ Local 266G member Dave Dahlin lifts a pallet of powdered sugar, which will be taken to the loading dock. Next stop for the sugar: a store near you.



◀ In the packaging area, a machine fills five-pound bags with granulated sugar while Local 266G members, Kristi Erickson (left) and Val Kauk (right), check the line.

Photos and the material used for this feature were provided by Barb Kucera, editor *Workday Minnesota*, [www.workdayminnesota.org](http://www.workdayminnesota.org).

# New Officers Visit Meany Center for Training

Newly-elected BCTGM local union officers converged on the George Meany Center in Silver Spring, Maryland for the second new officers training program of 2004. The week-long educational program, administered by the BCTGM Research & Education Department, is designed to provide new officers with a foundation of knowledge they can use on a daily basis. In addition, this particular session featured a special emphasis on financial record-keeping for local union financial secretaries.

The program featured guest speakers, small group activities, lectures and presentations on a wide range of topics. Some of the subject matter covered included labor law, health and safety, financial reporting, contract writing and enforcement, and communications. There was also a

special group exercise that tested the participants' ability to research a selected company, and develop an organizing strategy around a specific plant within that company.

According to International President Frank Hurt, the group exercises and the full class discussions on a range of different issues is what makes the sessions so important. "It is heartening to see these new local officers, from all across North America, and from different industries, come together and discuss issues that are common to all of them," said Hurt.

Terry Lansing, Financial Secretary for Local 114 in Portland, Ore., noted after the program that there was a great mix of experience amongst the



New officers review health and safety laws during the training.

participants. "I learned a lot and even though I have been around for awhile, I find there is always so much more to learn," stated Lansing.

Graduates of the winter session include: John Hudock (Local 2T, Wheeling, WV); Robert Davis (Local 9, Seattle, WA); Stephen Simon (Local 58G, Toledo, OH); Terry Lansing (Local 114, Portland, OR); Earl Reed (Local 351, Albuquerque, NM); Angiello Hamilton (Local 352G, Memphis, TN); Sherry Reinhardt (Local 466, Billings, MT); Ronald Norris (Local 242G, London, Ontario); and Norris Gillen (Local 364T, Aylmer, Ontario).

## 2004 Steward Training Programs

(44 programs for 47 locals with approximately 905 participants)

4 (St. Louis, MO)	111 (Dallas, TX)	261T (Quebec City, QC)	358 (Richmond, VA)
25 (Chattanooga, TN)	116 (Syracuse, NY)	264 (Toronto, ON)	365T (Mayfield, KY)
36 (Davenport, IA)	125 (Oakland, CA)	280 (Evansville, IN)	382 (St-Lambert, QC)
42 (Atlanta, GA)	132 (Columbus, IN)	300 (Chicago, IL)	387G (Lancaster, PA)
50 (New York, NY)	149 (Memphis, TN)	317T (Greensboro, NC)	433 (Sioux City, IA)
54G (Albany, NY)	196T (Owensboro, KY)	333 (Montreal, QC)	406 (Moncton, NB)
55 (Montreal, QC)	203T (Richmond, VA)	334 (Portland, ME)	407G (Memphis, TN)
68 (Baltimore, MD)	227 (Montreal, QC)	346G (Martel, OH)	480 (Ste-Marie, QC)
69 (Port Chester, NY)	235 (Springfield, MO)	347G (Danville, IL)	550 (Montreal, QC)
70 (Grand Rapids, MI)	235T (Montreal, QC)	350 (Montreal, QC)	719 (Fairlawn, NJ)
103G (Decatur, IL)	252G (Memphis, TN)	350T (Granby, QC)	802 (Buffalo, NY)
110G (Buffalo, NY)	253 (Cincinnati, OH)	352G (Memphis, TN)	

## ATTENTION!

### 2005 BCTGM Scholarship Program Application Deadline

The deadline for applications to the BCTGM 2005 International Scholarship program has passed. All those who submitted an application prior to the January 31 deadline date are reminded to submit the following requirements prior to the March 31 deadline:

- ◆ **Personal Profile** — completed by the applicant
- ◆ **Academic Report** — completed by the high school (or college, if a member). The report should reflect the first semester grades for the senior year (or more recent academic performance, if a member).
- ◆ **Essay** — Each applicant is required to write and submit an essay (250-500 words) to demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. Your essay may be one of the following:
  - Same essay as the essay requirement from your college application.
  - Same essay as the Union Plus Scholarship application (U.S. applicants only).
  - Essay on “Organized Labor’s Contribution to the Welfare of the People of North America.”
- ◆ **SAT or ACT Scores** (if applicable)

For more information contact—The BCTGM International Scholarship Office at 301-933-8600.



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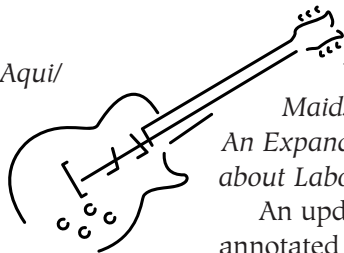
#### MUSIC

*Siempre He Estado Aqui/ I Have Been Here Forever* (CD \$15)

Songs of the heroes and legends of the Chicano/Latino experience. In Spanish with English translations.

*Forgotten: The Murder at the Ford Rouge Plant* (CD \$10)

Five selections from the original jazz opera by Steve Jones with vocals by Laurel Blaydes, Elise Bryant, Pam Parker, Steve Jones and Mike Wheaton.



#### BOOKS

*Working Stiffs, Union Maids, Reds and Riffraff: An Expanded Guide to Films about Labor* by Tom Zaniello  
An updated and expanded annotated guide to 350 labor films. (\$25)

*Three Strikes* by Howard Zinn, Dana Frank, Robin D.G. Kelley  
Stories of miners, musicians, salesgirls, and the fighting spirit of labor’s last century. (Hardcover \$16)

#### POSTERS

(Most images can be viewed at [www.laborheritage.org](http://www.laborheritage.org))

Martha Tabor Silk Screen Prints (\$20)

Ralph Fasanella Posters (\$25)

University of Massachusetts Labor History Murals (\$16)

Mother Jones by Richard Kees (\$11)

Joe Hill by Carlos Cortez (\$16)

#### VIDEOS

*American Dream*  
Barbara Kopple’s second Academy award-winning documentary

focuses on the 1984 Hormel plant strike in Austin, Minn. (DVD \$22)

*Christ in Concrete*

Based on Pietro di Donato’s prize-winning novel about an Italian immigrant bricklayer and his family in New York City. (DVD \$25)



#### ORDER ONLINE!

The Complete Labor Heritage catalog is available at [www.laborheritage.org](http://www.laborheritage.org)

## Region 5 Staff Meet at BCTGM Headquarters



At the invitation of International President Frank Hurt, Canada's International staff met with the Executive Officers at the BCTGM headquarters in Kensington, Maryland in mid-January. Attending the meeting from Region 5 were Vice President Sean Kelly, International Representative Daniel Rondou, and International Organizers Karl Walker and Steeve Bégin.

The purpose of the meeting was to strategize over various organizing projects, discuss the current political environment facing the labour movement in the different provinces, and to update



the International officers on local bargaining news and highlights.

According to International President Frank Hurt, the meeting provided a chance for the executive officers to work with the Canadian staff on planning and strategizing for the upcoming

Region 5 staff listens as Intl. Pres. Frank Hurt outlines the 2005 contract negotiation schedule.

Pictured here, from left to right, is Intl. Organizer Steeve Bégin, Vice Pres. Sean Kelly, Intl. Rep. Daniel Rondou and Intl. Organizer Karl Walker.

year. "We have had great success in Canada over the past three years in the plants that we have organized, and the contracts we have bargained. We want to continue that first-class effort," noted Hurt.

## Local 264 Educates Stewards



Continuing its long-time focus on education, Local 264 (Toronto) conducted its annual two-day educational conference in downtown Toronto in late November 2004. The weekend seminar included featured speakers, interactive small group role-playing, question and answer periods and open discussion forums. Attendees at the conference included members from Canada Bread, Concord Confections, Dare Foods, and W & H Voortman Ltd., amongst others.

The conference was opened by Local 264 Business Manager Ron Piercey who started the session off with a discussion regarding the current state of the labour movement in Ontario. Giselle Nichols, Program Coordinator for the Ontario Ministry of Labour, gave a detailed presentation on the Employment Standards

Act. According to Piercey, understanding the union contract in relation to Ontario's employment laws is essential for union leaders. "It is crucial that our stewards are as well versed in the applicable laws as our employers are," noted Piercey.

The conference also included a grievance handling seminar put on by Local 264 Business Agent Tim Rock, Piercey, and International Organizer Karl Walker. The participants focused on writing and investigating grievances, communicating with management, and working with affected members. According to Walker, the small group activities, and the real-life subjects, kept the participants engrossed in the topics. "We challenged them, and they kept asking for more. That's what these conferences are all about," said Walker.

## Local 406 Ratifies Two First Contracts



In Moncton, New Brunswick, two newly organized units of Local 406, ratified first contracts in late-November and early-December, 2004. Under the guidance of a conciliation officer from the New Brunswick Labour Board, a first contract was reached for the approximately 50 workers at Bonte Foods. The new five-year agreement provides for yearly wage increases, a paid sick leave policy, nine paid holidays, the establishment of a joint union-management health and safety committee, and a schedule of paid vacations.

In addition, the workers at Canada Bread's Woodstock, New Brunswick facility ratified a four year agreement. The workers, who were organized in 2003, had to endure a lengthy dispute with the company and the Labour Board before negotiations could begin in the spring of 2004.

*"Without the dedication, patience and collective will of the workers, we never would have gotten these contracts."*

LOCAL 406 BUSINESS AGENT  
MARK ROBAR

According to Sean Kelly, BCTGM Vice President, the workers at Bonte Foods and Canada Bread will now get to fully enjoy the benefits of unionization. "For the first time, these workers will have their rights etched in stone," said Kelly. "More importantly, these workers have seen the benefits of working together to improve the lot of everyone," continued Kelly.

Like their counterparts at the Woodstock facility, Bonte Foods workers were originally organized

in 2003, but the sometimes contentious negotiations delayed both the certification and the first contract. Local 406 Business Agent Mark Robar, who helped negotiate both new agreements, says the solidarity of the workers at both plants is what allowed this contract to happen.

"Without the dedication, patience and collective will of the workers, we never would have gotten these contracts," said Robar.

In other news at Local 406, after a very quick organizing drive, the Canada Bread workers in Grand Falls, New Brunswick were certified in November, 2004. The campaign, led by Robar and BCTGM International Organizer Steeve Bégin, began in October and ended quickly after a majority of workers signed authorization cards. The unit was certified without a Labour Board hearing. Negotiations are due to begin in February.

### Former Canadian Vice President Dies

Alphonse DeCesare, retired BCTGM Canadian Vice President, died in his sleep on December 19, 2004. He was 81.

DeCesare was a descendant of Italian immigrant parents who arrived in Montreal, Quebec at the beginning of the 20th Century. In 1953 he went to work as a bread salesman at the Christie Company in his native Montreal. Poor working conditions led DeCesare to organize his co-workers into Local 333. He was a member of the local's negotiating committee and helped to obtain many gains for Christie's workers.

When negotiations at Local 333 became too numerous, some of the officers of the local moved to form a new local union for members in Montreal's bread indus-

try. DeCesare was hired as a business agent of the new Local 55, a position he held from 1958 to 1972.

He was appointed as an International Representative in 1972 and performed those responsibilities until he was elected the Regional Vice President by the General Executive Board in 1983. DeCesare served as the Canadian Regional Vice President until his retirement in March 2000.

His wife of 59 years, Laurette Tremblay DeCesare, passed away four months prior to his death. He is survived by four children and several grandchildren.





Local 372A Bus. Agt. Don Webb (right) presents Kroger Retiree Ralph Reed (left) with a copy of the arbitrator's decision.

## Local 372A Wins Arbitration Case

Indianapolis, Ind.—BCTGM Local 372A won an important victory on October 10, 2004, when an arbitrator ruled in favor of a grievance filed by the union against the Kroger Company for unilaterally changing its Retiree Health Care Plan.

In January 2004, Kroger transformed the local's retiree health care plan to include higher benefit premiums and prescription drug co-payments while lowering the plan's annual cap on prescription drug costs. The Retirees Health Care Plan was negotiated and established by a 13-year past practice.

The arbitrator ordered Kroger to reinstate the contracted health care plan as it existed prior to January of 2004 and to reimburse retirees for any expenses in prescription drug costs and premiums paid in excess of what were specified under the company's plan prior to the unilateral change.

According to BCTGM Local 372A Business Agent Don Webb, "The arbitrator's ruling spells financial relief for our retirees—some of whom will be paid back thousands of dollars," he said. "This decision is of importance to every BCTGM local, their members and retirees. We work hard to negotiate these benefits and we must continue to fight company attempts to shift the costs back into our wallets," Webb concludes.



## Solidarity Action

In November, the BCTGM joined other trade union activists to rally in support of CWA Mailers Local 29, who have been working at *The Washington Post* without a contract for more than 18 months. The workers are asking *The Washington Post* to increase wages and preserve pension and health care benefits. Pictured here is International staff members Matthew Clark, Ray Scannell and Charlie Rogers.



## BCTGM-PAC

BCTGM Local 362T (Macon, Ga.) Fin. Secy-Treas. Mark Yancey (right) presents U.S. Rep. Jim Marshall (D-Ga.) with a BCTGM-PAC donation in support of his re-election campaign. Marshall, who won his campaign, has a long record of voting in support of labor issues.



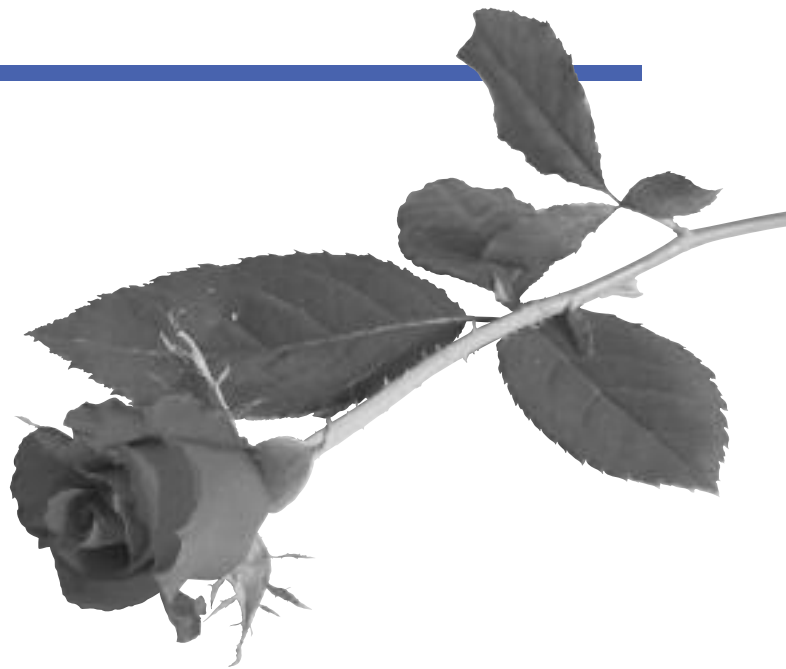
## Sweet Retirement

After more than 20 years as a baker at Svenhards Swedish Bakery in Oakland, Calif., Frederick L. Evans (right) is presented with a retirement certificate and his first pension check by Local 125 Pres. Michael Fouch (left) at the union hall in San Leandro, Calif.

BCTGM

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# 10

## Reasons Why Privatization Destroys Social Security

Social Security is financially sound today and will be for the next four decades. There are ideological and political differences, however, over the best way to accomplish the stability and longevity of this popular program. Some believe that Social Security needs to be dismantled and replaced with personal retirement accounts that would invest payroll taxes in the stock market. Read 10 reasons why these privatization plans will do more to destroy Social Security rather than strengthen it.

- 1** Drains trillions of dollars from the Social Security Trust Fund to risky private retirement accounts.
- 2** Costs more—not less—than preserving traditional Social Security.
- 3** Results in huge Social Security benefit cuts for retirees, disabled workers and survivors.
- 4** Explodes the national debt and creates new debt.
- 5** Active workers have little to gain... alleged benefits won't be felt until after everyone paying into the system today is dead.
- 6** Creates an immediate financial crisis for Social Security that did not previously exist.
- 7** Will hurt generations of Americans by substantially reducing benefits to future retirees.
- 8** Creates financial hole that must be filled by slashing benefits, providing large financial transfers from the rest of the government or both.
- 9** Every American taxpayer will subsidize those electing to invest in private accounts.
- 10** The one source of guaranteed, life-long benefits will disappear.

For more information on the risks associated with privatizing Social Security, visit [www.retiredamericans.org](http://www.retiredamericans.org).