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BCTGM *News*

VOLUME 7
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Workers Memorial Day

**GOOD
JOBS**

Protect Workers Now

**SAFE
JOBS**

April 28, 2005



the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

'Braving Changing Times'

In 1982, the theme of our International Union's Convention was, "Braving Changing Times." I look back at those difficult times and reflect on how our Union was

effectively able to meet those challenges. With the enormous changes currently taking place in our industries, the American economy and within the labor movement, it seems as if we're in the fight of our lives once again.

As workers, we all want the same things: job security, good wages and decent benefits providing health security for our families and income security after retirement. And all of us want to make sure our children have every opportunity to climb the ladder of success and achieve their dreams. Those are our common interests. Today, our challenge is to gain strength from that commonality to overcome our shared plight.

The assault on the rights and the living standards of American working men and women is in full swing. There is a degree of disrespect given to working men and women and their families by employers, by public officials, and by the news media.

We have every right to be angry with an economic policy that disinvests in workers here at home while aiding and abetting the export of good American jobs to low-wage countries that forcibly deny their workers the right to organize. Working men and women want jobs that will put food on the table and afford a decent roof over their heads. We want a world of opportunity for our kids and a chance to build for security in old age. We want access to quality health care at reasonable cost. We want a safe workplace and a decent environment.

Instead, American workers are being outsourced, downsized, subcontracted and permanently replaced. The rich are getting richer, the poor are falling further behind and the middle class is treading water, with more family members working longer and harder just to try to stay even. Working families have little money to spend, lots of bills to pay, and little time to spend with their kids.

All of these facts said, this is a great time to be part of the labor movement in the United States. Lots of people have been writing us off for years, but here we are, in the middle of one of the most vicious attacks on working people in history, battling to keep our own government from reversing more than 60 years of progress.

How do we turn this around? We organize, we mobilize, and we take this country back for working men and women. The BCTGM will provide leadership, coordination, and support. We must do everything possible to maintain the progress that our forefathers made; we must not regress to a point of complete dominance by an Administration that caters only to our detractors.

The dreams and the aspirations and the progress of North America's working men and women rely on the

dedication of those same people. We must channel the power of every working man and woman if we wish to maintain a voice on the shop floor, power on the picket line—when necessary—influence in the media and power at the polling place.

In this critical time, I ask you to join hands with me in strengthening the BCTGM to reach out and win over the unorganized workers in our industries. We must take our message to people who live in the cities and the suburbs, and in our small towns. I've said it before; our ability to survive in these difficult times depends on our strength in numbers. We must continue to organize, or our members will suffer the consequence of being forced to compete against low-wage, no-benefit workers.

We have something important to say to all those working people who are angry and frustrated and looking for the energy and the leadership we can provide. Union members understand the word "solidarity" pretty well. It means we are all in this together, this effort to build an America where all working people have a future for themselves, for their kids and for their communities.

Out of our diversity and the many different roads we've traveled, comes unity and strength and determination. In the words of the old labor hymn:

"It is we who plowed the prairies, built the cities where they trade, dug the mines and built the workshops, endless miles of railroad laid..."

I believe this country belongs to us, the working people. It's high time we took it back.

Frank Hurt

BCTGM International President





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CALM CONFECTIONERY AND LABOR MILLERS
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Regions 1 & 2 Meet at BCTGM Headquarters

Kensington, Md.—Organizing, service and contract negotiations topped the agenda of the Region 1 and 2 staff meeting held at BCTGM International headquarters February 22-23.

BCTGM International President Frank Hurt led the meeting, assisted by International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee and Executive Vice President Joe Thibodeau. In addition to all Region 1 and 2 Vice Presidents and International Representatives, the meeting included International Representatives from Tobacco.

The Executive Officers and regional staff discussed the current political climate facing workers and the subsequent attacks on workers' rights from Capitol Hill to the shop floor. "Workers in this country are living in one of the most hostile environments in recent memory," noted Hurt. "Employers will stop at nothing to undermine contracts and shift health care costs onto our members. They know they can get away with it because those in charge of the federal government these days share their beliefs. Employers want a low-wage economy and they have total support from the Department of Labor," Hurt added.

Both Hurt and Durkee stressed the vital importance of organizing—both internal and external—to build the union. "We must continue to do everything possible to grow the BCTGM, despite the enormous difficulties posed by the current political climate," said Durkee.

The group discussed strategy for 2005 negotiations, including



Region 1 and 2 Intl. Vice Presidents and Reps meet with Exec. Officers.

those with Kellogg and Hershey. "There will continue to be relentless pressure by employers on health care as well as efforts to take our work and give it to non-union, low-wage workers," noted Hurt. "We refuse to participate in the race to the bottom and we'll fight this tooth and nail. Defending our contracts and our members' jobs is our top priority and we will not back down."

Also addressed at the meeting

were local union mergers and the merger of the former Biscuit and Candy Councils. Hurt noted the retirements of Executive Vice President Larry Barber, Tobacco Vice President

T.J. Warren, and Regional Vice Presidents Richard Johnson and Shawn Grimm. A discussion of maintaining high-quality service to locals and the reassignment of International staff to meet membership needs. "We will not miss a beat. Our focus will remain on protecting and enhancing the lives of our members through quality contracts and outstanding service," concluded Hurt.

Region 6 Staff Outlines Plans

Las Vegas—BCTGM International Executive Officers met with Region 6 Vice Presidents and Representatives in Las Vegas March 3-4 to outline goals and strategize for 2005.

International President Frank Hurt, who led the meeting, noted a "heavy bargaining schedule for the sixth region" in 2005 and reviewed contract negotiation schedules with Ghirardelli, Bimbo and retail stores. "Our focus—as always—is to negotiate quality contracts that maintain the high standards our members deserve," said Hurt.

International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee provided an overview of the economic conditions in BCTGM-contracted industries and led an extensive discussion on internal organizing in the Right-to-Work states in the region.

Hurt urged closer coordination of the Vice Presidents and Representatives throughout the region. "We are one union and synchronized communication among staff in all sectors across the country will enable us to be more effective in organizing, servicing and bargaining."

Officers and staff also discussed the current anti-worker/anti-union political climate in Washington, local union mergers, and the Union Industries Show in Portland, Ore. April 29-May 2.

R E T I R E M E N T S



Executive Vice President Larry Barber

After more than 31 years of active union membership, BCTGM International Executive Vice President Larry D. Barber retired on February 1.

"We appreciate the contributions Larry has made on behalf of the International and the Grain Miller workers he has represented for so many years. The entire BCTGM International wishes him a long, happy and healthy retirement," said International President Frank Hurt.

Barber went to work as a sugar boiler at the American Crystal Sugar Company in Renville, Minn. in 1974. In 1975, while working as a sugar end foreman in the factory, Barber helped organize American Federation of Grain Millers (AFGM) Local 369 (Renville) and was elected as the local union's charter president.

In 1978, he was named as an AFGM International Representative. Barber served in that position until the 1983 Constitutional Convention where he was elected vice president of the AFGM's North Central District.

At the AFGM's 22nd Constitutional Convention in 1991, Barber

was elected executive vice president, a position he held until the union's next convention in 1995 when delegates approved the elimination of the executive vice president position and unanimously elected Barber as secretary-treasurer.

Barber was named as a BCTGM Executive Vice President on January 1, 1999, as called for by the BCT-AFGM merger agreement. He presided over the union's Grain Miller locals. He was elected to a full four year term to that position by delegates to the BCTGM's 36th Constitutional Convention on July 19, 2002.

During his BCTGM tenure, Barber helped negotiate several of the union's most important contracts, including agreements with Kellogg, General Mills, Pillsbury, ConAgra and American Crystal Sugar.

"It has been an honor and privilege to work for the BCTGM," notes Barber. "I want to wish all of you the best in your continuing work on behalf of the members of the BCTGM and the labor movement as a whole."



Tobacco Vice President T.J. Warren

After 38 years as a trade unionist, BCTGM Tobacco International Vice President, T.J. (Thaddeus Jeffries) Warren retired on April 1.

"T.J.'s long history of dedication to this union's tobacco workers has been an important asset. We thank him for all of his work and wish him a healthy and happy retirement," said BCTGM International President Frank Hurt.

Warren began his union career in September 1966 when he went to work at Lorillard Tobacco Company and joined Tobacco Workers Local 317 (Greensboro, N.C.). He became a shop steward, a position he held until he was elected president of the local in 1979.

Warren was appointed International Representative in 1982, a position he held until he was elected International Vice President by the union's General Executive Board on October 14, 2000 to complete the unexpired term of his predecessor Bobby Curtis. He was elected to his first full term as Vice President at the BCTGM's 36th Constitutional Convention in 2002.

In reflecting on his retirement from the International Warren said, "Thanks to all my union brothers and sisters for all that you have done to make my last thirty-eight years working for the BCTGM the best years of my life. In my retiring years I will have the time to reflect back on all of those great memories."



Region 1 Vice President Shawn Grimm

On April 1, after 33 years as a union member, BCTGM Region 1 International Vice President Shawn Grimm retired.

Grimm joined the American Federation of Grain Millers (AFGM) Local 36 (Buffalo, N.Y.) in June 1971 when he went to work at the General Mills plant in Buffalo. He served as shop steward from 1972 until 1976 when he was named Mill Representative for Local 36. In 1983 Grimm became an AFGM International Representative, a position he served until 1987 when he was elected as a AFGM International Vice President.

Upon the merger of the BCT and the AFGM on January 1, 1999, Grimm became a BCTGM International Vice President, as called for by the BCT-AFGM merger agreement. He was re-elected to that position by delegates to the BCTGM's 36th Constitutional Convention on July 19, 2002.

A 1976 graduate of Canisius College, Grimm plans to enjoy his retirement with his wife, Kathleen, in Orchard Park, N.Y. and his children Andrew, Kerry and Ryan. "My thanks go out to all the union members in the U.S. and Canada who I have had the privilege of working for during my labor career," Grimm concludes.



After more than 31 years as a union member, BCTGM Region 3 International Vice President Richard Johnson retired on March 1.

A native of West Terre Haute, Indiana, Johnson joined the American Federation of Grain Millers (AFGM) Local 331 in 1973 when he went to work for Pillsbury. Johnson was elected as local union president in 1978, a position he held until January 1991 when he became an AFGM International Representative.

In 1998, Johnson was appointed as an AFGM International Vice

President. Upon the merger of the BCT and the AFGM on January 1, 1999, Johnson became a BCTGM International Vice President, as called for by the BCT-AFGM merger agreement. He was re-elected to that position by delegates to the BCTGM's 36th Constitutional Convention on July 19, 2002.

Johnson and his wife, Paulette, reside in Avon, Indiana. He notes that in his retirement he plans to continue to be politically active. "I would like to wish all my union brothers and sisters' good health, happiness and the strength to keep up the fight against President Bush and his anti-union agenda," Johnson concludes.

Dedicated

BCTGM DAD

Defines Volunteer Spirit

Escondido, Calif.—BCTGM Local 315 (San Diego, Calif.) member Miguel Aguilar is the kind of parent a teacher loves to have involved. Dedicated and energetic, Aguilar is a full-time baker who works the swing shift at the Bimbo Bakery and doesn't get home from work until 2 a.m. After a brief slumber, this hard-working father reports to Rose Elementary School at 8 a.m. every day for several hours of volunteer work.

When Aguilar's son, Miguel Jr., started kindergarten in September 2003, Aguilar started, too, figuring he could be more involved in his son's classroom. He asked teacher Jan Lenhart what he could do to help, and she gave him enough work to keep him busy for a couple of hours. Aguilar came back the next day and picked up where he left off. Soon he was a classroom fixture, spending at least two hours every day assisting in a variety of ways.

The help was definitely appreciated by Lenhart and the students. Last year, Aguilar was recognized as the school's volunteer of the year.

When Miguel Jr. moved into first grade, Aguilar transferred too, offering assistance to his son's new teacher, Kim Morton. Plus, he continued to volunteer with Lenhart, who now teaches first grade with many of the students Aguilar came to know last year.

The students in both classes enjoy the interaction of Aguilar,

who keeps a sharp eye on whether they have completed their homework assignments and takes note of any sloppiness in the preparation of those assignments. He'll ask the students questions about books they are supposed to read, and if the answers are unsatisfactory, Aguilar tells them, "You need to take it home and read it again."

Aguilar places colorful stickers on students' work folders for homework completed properly and neatly, awards much coveted by the youngsters. "Everybody wants to get other stickers," said Aguilar, who buys some himself and gets some from other parents who bring them in. "They get really excited."

Aguilar's help in the classroom extends to making copies, organizing packages of the students' work, keeping track of books taken home by students and providing an extra set of adult eyes that allows the teachers to give more individual attention to the students.

"Anything I have to do that would take me out of the classroom, he does. He's great," said Morton. "He told me, 'Anything I can do to help so teachers can teach, I want to do.'"

Aguilar's concern for the students extends beyond the classroom, according to Lenhart.

"I have heard him talking to other parents. He asks them how their kids are doing, whether they did their homework," she said. "He's a model for the other parents. They get the point that they need to be an active part of their child's education."



Local 315 member Miguel Aguilar (right) helps a first-grader with his spelling words.

Photo by North County Times/Don Boomer

Hanging on the wall at Aguilar's home is a poster decorated with handprints of the Rose Elementary students he has helped. The children also made him a book of notes reading, "Thank you, Mr. Aguilar" they presented to him for Valentine's Day.

"All those things make it seem like I'm doing them a lot of good," he said.

Editors Note: This article was adapted from a recent North County Times article by Jeff Frank.

Wal-Mart's recent announcement that it will close down its store in Jonquiere, Quebec, is much more about its hostile labor relations strategy than its bottom line. The company says the store will close because it hasn't turned a profit. But, a closer look at Wal-Mart's practice of opening and closing locations suggests its anti-union stance might be a more accurate reason for its decision.

Wal-Mart operates over 3,600 stores, and opens as many as 60 new stores every month in the United States. It is rare for a Wal-Mart to close its doors. In fact, during the past two fiscal years Wal-Mart has closed only one of its stores without opening a bigger one in its place.

However, when faced with the prospect of having its Jonquiere store operate under a union contract, Wal-Mart decided to close down the third North American store in the chain's history where workers organized a union.

The Jonquiere store workers organized their union through a commonly-used process known as majority verification, in which a majority signed cards authorizing the union to bargain with Wal-Mart. When workers asked the Canadian government to act as an arbitrator in contract negotiations in early February, Wal-Mart responded by announcing it would close the store.

Wal-Mart asserts the store wasn't profitable, a claim the corporation first made just weeks after the store's union was recognized in September 2004. However, there have been no previous reports of North American Wal-Mart stores shutting down for lack of profitability since FY 2003.

Nearly 200 workers will lose

WAL-MART PUNISHES WORKERS *and Leads the Way to* LOW STANDARDS

their jobs simply because Wal-Mart has chosen to shut its doors in Jonquiere rather than negotiate fair and decent terms of employment. Wal-Mart's announcement sends a clear message to its employees worldwide: unionize and you will lose your job. Wal-Mart is developing a habit of closing down unionized sections of its workforce. When 11 meat cutters at a Texas Wal-Mart voted to form a union in 2000, the company suddenly eliminated meat-cutting positions in all of its stores nationwide, an illegal but effective move that stopped union organizing dead in its tracks.

More recently, the National Labor Relations Board ordered a hearing to examine claims that Wal-Mart intimidated and bullied workers at a Loveland, Colo., store to vote against joining the United Food and Commercial

Workers. Wal-Mart added new workers to the Tire & Lube Express to dilute union support, UFCW said, and no union representative was allowed to observe the February 25 election.

As the largest company in the world, Wal-Mart's labor relations strategies are emulated not just among its competitors, but also among its vendors who are cutting costs on the backs of their workers to meet the retail giant's demands. In a handful of towns and cities, concerned community members, small and socially-responsible businesses, and public interest groups are demanding that Wal-Mart meet

Wal-Mart & Unions...by the numbers

Number of Wal-Mart stores:	3,600+
Wal-Mart Supercenters built in the U.S. each year:	130
U.S. stores Wal-Mart closed in FY 2003 & 2004:	1
North American Wal-Mart stores where workers are struggling for a union contract:	2
Number of these Wal-Mart Plans to close:	1
Jonquiere Wal-Mart workers punished for exercising their democratic rights to form a union:	190
Wal-Mart employees who got the anti-union message:	1.2 million

American Rights at Work, February 2005

certain standards as a good employer and corporate neighbor before entering their communities. Wal-Mart's hostile labor relations strategy is a choice, not a fiscal necessity. Workers and communities across the country will continue to remind Wal-Mart that "everyday low" wages and benefits are no bargain at all.

This article was adapted from a "Wal-Mart Punishes Workers for Standing Up" published February 15 by American Rights at Work. For more information visit www.americanrightsatwork.org.

Ignores Painful Reality ON THE JOB

The role of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is to protect workers when they are on the job. The laws regulating health and safety in America's workplaces are spelled out in the OSH Act. If employers followed the letter of the law there should, theoretically, be a low number of workplace fatalities. And yet this is not the case.

“If the Administration truly wanted to protect workers on the job they would enforce the laws on the books, and make corporations responsible for their actions.”

BCTGM Intl. Pres. Frank Hurt

For 2003, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that there were 5,559 workplace fatalities, an increase over 2002. That means that on average, 15 American workers die each day on the job. The fact that this many workers die in their workplaces would seem to suggest a major public policy challenge. In another report, the Bureau reported that there were 1.4 million recorded injuries in 2002 that required workers to miss time away from their job.

And yet, in President Bush's

FY 2006 budget, funding levels for OSHA are severely insufficient to maintain the current activities of the regulatory agency. According to the AFL-CIO, OSHA's 2006 budget, adjusted for inflation, is \$6.7 million lower than in 2005.

Also of concern to workers in high risk industries, like food processing and grain milling, is that OSHA's staff has dramatically declined during the last four years. During this period over 160 full time positions were elim-

inated, many of whom were responsible for the enforcement of the actual standards.

According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, the Bush Administration talks about saving lives and yet has seemingly turned its back on working Americans. “If the Administration truly wanted to protect workers on the job they would enforce the laws on the books, and make corporations responsible for their actions,” notes Hurt.

Other “Lowlights” of the 2006 Budget

- ➔ The Bush budget will make cuts to trade enforcement by roughly 5 percent (\$7 million) over last year's funding. In addition, despite the loss of millions of factory jobs, the Bush budget proposes a 60 percent funding cut for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership, a nationwide program with a proven track record in helping manufacturers modernize, increase productivity and create and retain jobs.
- ➔ The president's budget proposes to slash more than a half billion dollars in Education Department funding.
- ➔ The Bush budget calls for cuts of more than \$550 million in real dollars to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Employment Service (ES) programs. Since taking office, Bush has asked Congress to slash nearly \$2 billion in real dollars from WIA and ES programs. Bush also wants to cut the Trade Adjustment Assistance program that retrains laid-off workers, even as American corporations continue to export jobs overseas.
- ➔ Proposed cuts in child care funding would eliminate assistance for 300,000 children by 2009.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act), promising every worker the right to a safe job. Unions and our allies have fought hard to make that promise a reality, winning protections that have saved hundreds of thousands of lives and prevented millions of workplace injuries. Nonetheless, the toll of workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths remains enormous. Millions of workers—including BCTGM members—are killed or injured unnecessarily every year.

**GOOD
JOBS**
Protect Workers Now!
**SAFE
JOBS**

In 2003, more than 4.3 million workers were injured and 5,559 workers were killed due to job hazards. Another 60,000 died due to occupational disease. Unfortunately, since taking office in 2001, the Bush Administration has done

little to address this pressing problem and other key safety concerns. Instead, the Administration has turned its back on workers and workplace safety. Dozens of important workplace protections have been overturned or blocked. Voluntary compliance has been favored over issuing new protective standards and enforcement. And in the next four years, renewed assaults on the OSH Act and job safety programs are almost certain.

At the same time, good jobs—jobs that pay decent wages and provide health care benefits and pensions—are disappearing. Corporations are looking to export jobs and cut pay and benefits. Workers are considered more expendable than ever. Worker safety and health protections, rarely a priority for most companies, will be further threatened in a low-wage economy.

On April 28, the BCTGM together with all the unions of the AFL-CIO, observes Workers Memorial Day to remember those who have suffered and died on the job and to renew the fight for safe workplaces. We will fight to make workers' issues a priority and to keep and create good jobs in the United States. We will fight for the freedom of workers to form unions and, through their unions, to speak out and bargain for safe jobs, respect and better futures. We will keep fighting until the promise of safe jobs for all workers is a reality.

Workers Memorial Day April 28, 2004

“Mourn for the dead.

MOTHER JONES' most famous quotation has been at heart of each Workers Memorial Day, a day each year when America's workers and their unions honor the thousands of men and women killed on the job and the hundreds of thousands more hurt or made ill by workplace hazards.

On this Workers Memorial Day, April 28, events and actions around the nation also will celebrate the more than a quarter of a million working men and women alive today because of the far-reaching and

successful workplace safety battles workers and their unions have won.

Successful worker action resulted in passage of the 1969 Coal Mine Health and Safety Act, the establishment of the 1970 Occupational Safety and Health Act as well as hundreds of job safety and health initiatives, from cotton dust laws to needle-stick regu-

*Fight like
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* SAFETY & HEALTH UPDATE *

SINCE TAKING OFFICE in January 2001, the Bush Administration has turned its back on workers and workplace safety. Siding with its corporate friends, the Administration has overturned or blocked dozens of important workplace protections and weakened job safety programs, leaving workers in danger. Additionally, Congress has made attempts to weaken the OSH Act. Here are some of the highlights of the Bush Administration's record of failure on workplace safety and what we need to be prepared for on the legislative front:

Moved to Slash the Job Safety Budget

President Bush's budgets have all moved to reduce the federal government's commitment to protecting workers' safety and health. The FY 2006 budget freezes OSHA's and MSHA's enforcement programs.

Tried to Dismantle Worker Safety and Health Training Programs

While expanding outreach to employers, the Bush Administration has tried to gut the training and education programs for workers, previously proposing to slash the worker training budget by 75 percent and eliminate funding for union-run programs. For FY 2006, the President's budget eliminates the worker training and education program all together.

Shut Down All New Workplace Safety and Health Rules

The Bush Administration killed dozens of worker protection measures under development at OSHA and MSHA, including rules on cancer causing substances, reactive chemicals and infectious diseases. They have even refused to issue a rule requiring employers to pay for personal protective equipment.

Favored Employer Voluntary Programs Over Enforcement and Excluded Workers and Unions

The Administration has made expanding voluntary programs and outreach to employers a top priority. Bush's OSHA has set up partnerships and alliances with dozens of employers, largely excluding unions.

Killed Workplace Ergonomic Protections

The Bush Administration started its assault on worker safety soon after taking office joining with anti-worker business groups to repeal OSHA's ergonomic standard. The Administration's promised "comprehensive plan" to address ergonomic hazards has turned out to be a sham.

Repealed Recordkeeping for Ergonomic Injuries

Adding insult to injury, the Bush Administration repealed the OSHA rule requiring musculoskeletal disorders to be identified on the workplace injury log.

Safety and Health Legislation

During the 108th Congress, the House passed four Republican sponsored bills that would erode worker protections under the OSHA Act.

In the 109th Congress, with Republicans in control of the House and Senate, we expect renewed attempts to weaken the OSHA law.

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lations. The result: Since 1970, the nation's workplace fatality rate has dropped more than 70 percent, from 18 deaths per 100,000 workers to 4.3 deaths per 100,000 in 2001, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the National Safety Council (NSC). In 1970, 13,800 workers died on the job, compared with 5,900 in 2001.

hell
the living."

Labor Board Fails Workers

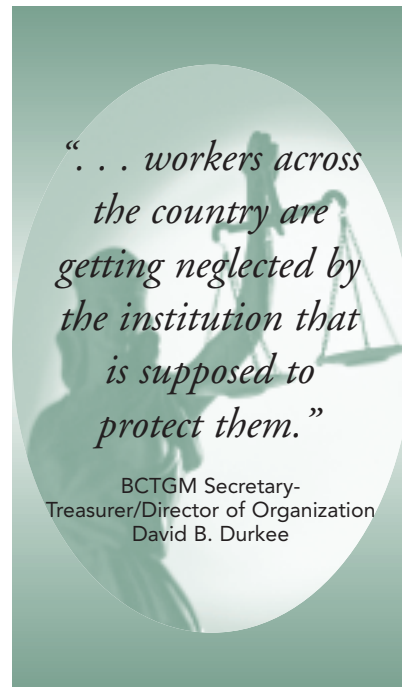
For many workers and their union representatives, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has represented a beacon of justice against intransigent employers. In years past, the Board ensured that companies would negotiate fairly with their unions; that organizing drives were not derailed by illegal anti-union company campaigns; and that collective agreements were followed according to the law. However, five years into the Bush presidency, it appears those days are a thing of the past.

In the summer of 2001, a few months after George Bush was elected President, workers from Sara Lee's Redding French bakery in Redding, Calif. began their effort to gain a voice at work with BCTGM Local 85 (Buena Park, Calif.). The BCTGM won the organizing election in 2001, however in subsequent years, the company challenged the election and tied up the union in court. In late 2004, the union received official notice from the NLRB certifying the union. After winning two elections and two administrative judge trials, the 48 workers are now certified members of Local 85. Workers are presently bargaining over their first contract.

This is but one example of the way in which the Board has failed to protect the rights of workers as spelled out in the Act. In 1935, Congress did not envision organizing campaigns lasting three to five years. In the 1930's the government wanted labor peace and a more equitable relationship between labor

and business. In the seventy years since, the law has slowly, and recently more rapidly, been tilting toward the side of employers.

For example, in the past five years, the Board, now dominated by Republicans, has made several important rulings that have



eaten away at the rights of workers and their ability to organize. One such ruling has made it more difficult for temporary workers, who now make up a large part of the employment pool, to unionize. Another makes it more difficult for union negotiators to get financial information from an employer that “cries poor” during negotiations on a new contract. Other rulings have made it easier to lock-out workers, ban graduate-student employees from organizing, and over-turned a decision that granted non-union employees

“Weingarten Rights” (the right to have a fellow employee present during a disciplinary hearing).

In addition, the enforcement arm of the NLRB has been severely handicapped by understaffing and under-funding, and has suffered from a change in philosophy by the new Republican leadership. The result is less enforcement of the law, and thus, fewer organizing victories. Numerous studies have found that workers truly fear for their jobs if they support unionization efforts.

During the BCTGM's ongoing organizing campaign at Consolidated Biscuit, the NLRB ruled that seven employees had been illegally fired from their jobs because of union activity. According to BCTGM Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee, in almost every organizing campaign the union is involved in, there is some form of employer interference. “The NLRB does not have the necessary staff to investigate and properly adjudicate all the violations that occur. Add into that mix a pro-business philosophy, and workers across the country are getting neglected by the institution that is supposed to protect them,” stated Durkee.

Despite the odds, BCTGM International President Frank Hurt remains confident the tide will turn. “We will continue to organize, we will continue to protect the interests of all workers and we will work to elect politicians that believe in following the law that protects workers rights,” said Hurt.

Union Generosity

During the 2004 holiday season, BCTGM Local 203T (Richmond, Va.) collected \$23,225 for the WRVA/Salvation Army Alden Aaroe Shoe Fund. According to Local 203T President Oscar Giles, the outpouring of support by members continued and late donations of \$452 pushed the local's donation to \$23,667.

Pictured here, Giles (center) and Local 203T members present the Salvation Army representative with the fund collections. Giles extends a special thanks to all those Local 203T members who participated in the program, as well as the following members who collected the donations: Carolyn Anderson, Denice Dabney, Deborah Davis, Gayle DeFibaugh, Lucille Edwards,



Shirlene Jeter, Sadie Scott, Larry Stanley and Sally Thurston.

Alden Aaroe, a former Richmond talk radio host, established the annual shoe fund with the Salvation Army in 1970 to provide shoes for Richmond-area children in need. Parents of children registered to receive assistance are provided with vouchers from The Salvation Army to use for purchasing

shoes at participating stores. More than 2,500 children will be supplied with shoe certificates this year due to this program. The program also funds back-to-school items for shelter and other youth each fall.

Drug Website Helps Consumers

In partnership with the AFL-CIO and other organizations, Consumers Union has launched a public education campaign and free website to help people save money on prescription drugs.

Reports on the website, www.CRBestBuyDrugs.org, compare a variety of prescription drugs on price, effectiveness and safety to help consumers and their doctors identify the most effective and affordable medications.

BCTGM International President Frank Hurt said the project "is a much-needed contribution to addressing the national crisis on skyrocketing prescription drug costs."

The first reports look at drugs in three widely used categories: cholesterol-lowering medication, heartburn and acid reflux treatments and anti-inflammatories commonly used to treat arthritis. Consumers Union, which publishes Consumers Report magazine, eventually plans to compare about 20 different types of drugs and, when justified by the evidence, will choose a "best buy" drug in each category.

"One of the most serious problems in health care today is that tens of millions of Americans aren't taking the medicines they need, in large part because they can't afford them," said Joel Gurin, executive vice president of Consumers Union. "By identifying lower-cost medicines that are every bit as effective, we hope to change that."

Gurin said further he hopes the website will lead drug companies to compete more aggressively on price as "consumers begin to migrate to effective and safe drugs that are also more affordable."

A detailed news release about the program and the initial drug reports are available on the Best Buy website. Links are also provided on the AFL-CIO site, www.aflcio.org.

LOCAL UNION MERGERS

Since we last reported on BCTGM local union mergers in the July/August 2004 issue of the *BCTGM News*, the following locals have merged:

Local 600 (Columbus, GA) into Local 42 (Atlanta, GA), with an effective date of August 1, 2004.

Local 54G (Albany, NY) into Local 50 (New York, NY), with an effective date of October 5, 2004.

Local 356 (El Paso, TX) into Local 351 (Albuquerque, NM), with an effective date of October 29, 2004.

Local 143G (Rapid City, SD) into Local 433 (Sioux City, IA), with an effective date of January 1, 2005.

Local 356G (Enid, OK) into Local 65 (Tulsa, OK), with an effective date of January 1, 2005.

BCTGM Members Join Congressional Forum Examining CAFTA's Impact

ST. CLOUD, Minn.—Emphasizing that passage of the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) would have negative effects across the state, BCTGM members joined representatives from agriculture and environmental groups to submit testimony to U.S. Representative Collin Peterson (D-Minn.) on March 5.

Peterson, who is leading opposition to the proposed trade deal, said the forum is part of an effort “to keep the CAFTA issue in front of the American people.”

The Bush Administration negotiated the CAFTA deal to include the United States, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic (which actually is in the Caribbean, not Central America). Speakers at the forum said they support trade, but want fair trade that raises living standards for people around the world.

Minnesota's beet sugar industry, the largest in the United States, could be nearly destroyed under CAFTA, Peterson and other speakers said. Currently, the sugar industry receives no subsidies, but imports are controlled to keep a floor under U.S. sugar prices. Under CAFTA, millions of tons of imported sugar would be “dumped” on the U.S. market—sold here at less than the cost of production—making it impossible for U.S. farmers and sugar producers to compete.

BCTGM members from Locals 266G (Moorhead, Minn.) and 405G (Wahpeton, N.D.) who are employed in the sugar beet industry attended the forum. Local 266G Community and Education Director Tony St. Michel, told the panel that hundreds of workers employed at sugar factories in Minnesota and North Dakota

Minnesota AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Steve Hunter described the many problems created by the 10-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and said people do not want more of the same.

No vote is scheduled on CAFTA, but one could come in April or May, Peterson said.

Currently, the Bush Administration lacks the votes to pass the trade deal. Now the ranking Democrat on the U.S. House of Representatives' Agriculture Committee, Peterson said he has seen a significant change in his colleagues over the many years he has served in Congress. For years, Agriculture Committee members rubber-stamped free

trade deals, he said. But in the past two or three years, many members have come to realize that such deals only help giant agribusiness companies and hurt farmers.

Due to growing Congressional opposition, a hemisphere-wide trade deal—the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA)—appears to be “dead in the water,” Peterson said. The Bush Administration is now pursuing smaller agreements such as CAFTA and bilateral deals with individual countries.

“I feel good about the momentum” to stop CAFTA, Peterson said. “I think it's on our side. But we can't give up for one minute.”

Below, L. 266G Comm. and Educ. Dir. Tony St. Michel (left) and L. 405G Vice Pres. Dist. to Sugar Ed Papa (right) discuss CAFTA with Rep. Collin Peterson (D-Minn.).



L. 266G's St. Michel provides testimony to the panel.

would lose their jobs under CAFTA. Addition-

ally, many small businesses wouldn't be able to survive.

“If CAFTA is allowed to go through, we will have farmers and workers standing shoulder to shoulder in the unemployment line,” St. Michel said. “When these people lose their jobs—good jobs, jobs with health insurance, jobs with a pension, jobs with benefits—what is to become of them and their communities?”

As proposed, CAFTA contains no provisions to protect labor, human rights and the environment.

OFL Pushing Ergonomic Legislation



The Ontario Federation of Labour unveiled a comprehensive campaign that is designed to pressure the Ontario government to enact new health and safety regulations that would prevent serious repetitive strain injuries. These injuries, which affect the muscles, nerves and tendons, can progress into crippling and permanent disorders that can prevent people from working or leading normal lives.

The current legislation that regulates Ontario's workplaces was written over 25 years ago, many years before terms like "carpal tunnel syndrome" and "ergonomics" were part of the regular health and safety vernacular. But today, with improved monitoring of the affects of repetitive actions in the workplace, medical professionals have clearly identified the link between repetitive actions and possible disability.

BCTGM members in food processing and grain milling suffer some of the highest incidence rates of repetitive strain injuries. Repeating the same actions continuously—whether sorting cookies hunched over a line, shifting heavy or awkward packages, or pulling levers—can lead to severe muscle-related problems. The purpose of ergonomic legislation is to ensure that workplaces do all they can to protect workers from this type of strain.

The objective of the OFL's campaign is to educate the public about the reality of repetitive

strain injuries in Ontario's workplaces, and to pressure elected officials to pass legislation that would alleviate this problem. Both Saskatchewan and British Columbia have enacted ergonomic legislation, and both have seen a large decrease in repetitive strain injuries. In addition, both provinces have also seen a decrease in the amount of lost time claims due to these injuries. Clearly it is in the best interests of both workers and

corporations to embrace ergonomic legislation.

According to Sean Kelly, BCTGM International Vice President, the new legislation is long overdue. "For too long politicians have ignored this very real problem. It is time for them to step up to the plate and protect the workers in this country from a very preventable injury," stated Kelly.

For more information go to www.bctgm.org and click on *Canada News*. Follow the links.

2005
AFL-CIO
UNION
INDUSTRIES
SHOW

Hundreds of BCTGM-made products will be on display at the only all-union product and skills trade fair, the Union Industries Show, April 29–May 2 at the Portland, Ore. Convention Center.

According to the Union Label and Service Trades Department, AFL-CIO, which produces and manages the event, more than 300 exhibits covering an area equal to four football fields

will bring to life the Show's theme, "Good Jobs Build Strong Communities."

The free show features everything from finely designed BCTGM cakes to union-made blue jeans, motorcycles and glass works. Attendees can win free raffle prizes including BCTGM-made cakes—decorated on the spot by union cake decorators as part of the BCTGM's exhibit—and large bags filled with BCTGM-made goodies. Other raffles are held for union-made prizes including new cars, a Harley Davidson motorcycle, electric ovens, refrigerators and more. Additionally, students and job seekers can meet training and apprenticeship coordinators and representatives from dozens of different industries.

Hours for the show are 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Friday, April 29 through Monday, May 2.

Information about the event, is available at www.unionindustriesshow.org.





Steward Education Tops Priorities of Tennessee Local

From learning how to investigate a grievance, to how to enforce workplace rights, Local 25 (Chattanooga, Tenn.) places a high priority on educating shop stewards.



Early this year the Local demonstrated

its commitment to providing quality training for its stewards by sponsoring two separate shop steward educational conferences that covered everything from state health & safety regulations to how to mobilize workers for collective action. Both sessions were led by International Representative James Rivers.

On January 26, a training program was held in Knoxville that included 21 stewards from Interstate Baking Corp. (IBC), White Lily Foods and Sara Lee. According to Local 25 Business Agent/Financial Secretary Tommy Kelly the training was very important. "Getting these different groups of workers together for this mass education session will help us as a local grow closer and stronger," Kelly said.

On February 18, Local 25 sponsored a second shop stewards conference for Russell

Stover workers in Cookeville, Tenn. Eighteen stewards successfully completed the training that included investigating possible contract violations, political action, plant health & safety and more.

According to Rivers, both locations, Local 25 does an excellent job keeping its members educated and informed. "A steward's work is different in every plant. Some stewards take on the role of educating new employees on the union contract while others represent co-workers in disciplinary meetings, grievances and more. It is important to give them the training to handle every situation they may be asked to handle as a steward."



INTRODUCING

Your Union Power—Every DaySM

the *NEW* BCTGM POWER Union Plus MasterCard

Using the purchasing power of 13 million union members, Union Privilege, the AFL-CIO's member benefits organization, recently announced a new Union Plus Credit Card program that gives cardholders benefits designed exclusively for union members and their families.

In addition to an all new look, prominently featuring the BCTGM union label, the new BCTGM Power Credit Card Program offers an expanded set of benefits, including:

PROTECTION

- 100 percent fraud protection
- Support for a union member's right to strike with skip payments and credit protection in the event of a lockout
- Special help for members facing extreme financial hardship through a new Lifeline Trust, Disaster Relief Fund and Layoff Helpline
- Extended warranties giving cardholders up to one year of extra coverage over an original warranty

SERVICE

- Union Plus Credit Card has one of the highest customer satisfaction ratings in the industry
- All customer service calls are answered by representatives in the United States, 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week.
- Union member advocates to assist in disputes

VALUE

- No annual fees and very favorable balance transfer rates that remain fixed until the balance is paid off
- Discounts on eye care, prescription drugs and movie tickets



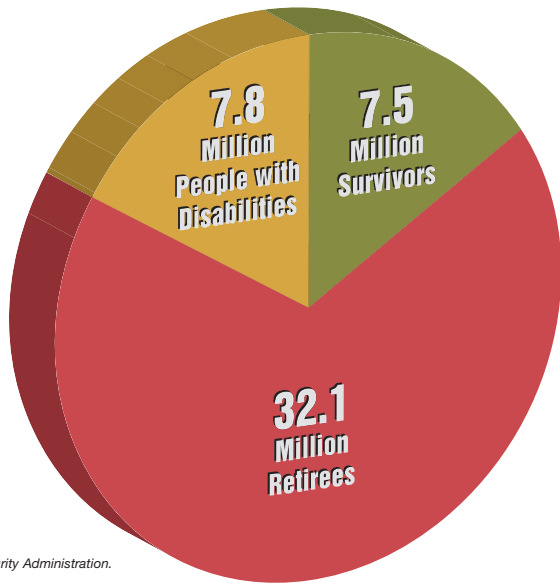
For information about the new BCTGM Power Union Plus Credit Card, union members may call the BCTGM Research & Education Department at (301) 933-8600 or visit www.unionpluscard.com.

Social Security: The Backbone of Retirement

President George W. Bush, his Republican allies in Congress and Big Business want to privatize Social Security, which would destroy the most important family security effort in America's history. Their privatization plans would replace guaranteed benefits with risky private accounts, cut benefits drastically and saddle our children with \$4.9 trillion in debt in the next two decades alone. Working families are fighting back against Bush's privatization scheme.

47 Million Americans Depend on Social Security Today

Since President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Social Security into law in 1934, millions of America's workers have earned benefits by paying into the system, creating a safety net that keeps retirees, survivors of workers who die young and people with disabilities out of poverty.



Source: Social Security Administration.

Sign the BCTGM's online petition to save Social Security:
www.unionvoice.org/campaign/BCTGMSSPetition

Social Security is NOT Going Broke

Contrary to Bush's scare tactics, Social Security is not going broke. Modest common sense measures, such as lifting the cap on the amount of income taxed for the Social Security fund, would strengthen the program. Right now, the cap is set so low upper-wage earners do not pay Social Security on most of their incomes.

2005

Until 2018, the Social Security trust fund runs a surplus.

2018

The Social Security system begins to redeem interest from its surplus assets to pay benefits. The Social Security Trust Fund holds Treasury notes, which are the same debt notes held by other countries.

**2042
OR
2052**

Social Security remains able to pay 73 percent of promised benefits.*

*The Social Security Trustees calculated the 2042 date. Using a slightly different method and set of assumptions, the Congressional Budget Office arrived at the 2052 date.

Sources: Social Security Trustees, *The 2004 OASDI Trustees Report*, and Congressional Budget Office, *The Outlook for Social Security*, June 2004.