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# BCTGM

*News*

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*Putting  
It All  
Together*



## the PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# A Pivotal Year for Our Union and Nation

As you receive this issue of the *BCTGM News*, preparation will be well underway at our International Headquarters and in our local union halls for the

BCTGM's 37th Constitutional Convention in July, in Las Vegas. Our International Convention is always energizing—an opportunity that comes every four years to rededicate ourselves to our Union's mission of improving the lives of our members and bringing more workers into the BCTGM family.

While the Convention will set the course for our Union for the next four years, the American people will be setting the course for our nation in the November Congressional elections.

As in the past, the BCTGM will be joining the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations to elect U.S. Representatives and Senators who will vote and act on behalf of working people. Though the elections are nearly nine months away, the groundwork has already begun for the most comprehensive and effective labor political action program ever. Given that corporations outspent labor 24-1 in the 2004 elections and are desperate to maintain their grip on power, we can demand nothing less of labor's 2006 political program. There is no time to waste.

Ultimately, the people will decide the future. Between now and Election Day, our members and local union leaders must take a hard look and ask the tough questions about the past as well as the future:

"Are we better off now after five years of the current political leadership in Washington than we were before they came to power and ushered in a new era of big business-controlled government? Have our political leaders' decisions over the past five years been in the best interest of working families or their bosses? Is the standard of living of working people headed in the right direction? What do we as working people and their representatives want for future generations? Are we confident that our children and grandchildren will realize a better quality of life and greater level of economic security than we have? Are the freedoms and rights we enjoy as citizens and workers secure or in jeopardy? Do we have the courage and will to seize the unique opportunity provided by our democracy and force the political changes necessary to defend our livelihoods and secure a brighter future for the coming generations?"

For me, the answers to these questions are straightforward. For five years, I have seen our government leaders turn their backs on working people and the least fortunate among us in order to reward the corporate interests that put them in power.

Instead of policies to create more high-wage jobs, we get lousy trade deals that reward employers who close plants and ship hundreds of thousands of good American jobs to low-wage countries.

Instead of policies to ensure that every American has quality, affordable health care coverage, we get record profits for the drug companies and HMOs and an ever larger portion of workers' paychecks going to pay for health care.

Instead of policies to strengthen retirement security, we get a Social Security privatization scheme that is a windfall

for a handful of Wall Street insiders but cuts benefits for seniors, bankruptcy judges wiping out workers' pensions with a stroke of the pen and corporations freezing or eliminating workers' retirement benefits earned over a lifetime of hard work.

Instead of policies designed to improve workplace safety and health, we get cutbacks in government inspections and enforcement, elimination of vital standards and regulations and more senseless death and injury on the job.

Instead of policies that make it easier for working families to send their kids to college, we get cuts in federal scholarship and grant programs and tax policies that force states to raise the cost of public colleges and universities.

Instead of policies that give workers a fair shot at joining a union in order to live a better life, we get an understaffed and under-funded Labor Board that is virtually powerless to stop corporate outlaws that harass and intimidate unorganized workers.

Instead of a rising economic tide for all Americans, we get more and more families struggling to make ends meet, a growing gap between rich and poor, a rising poverty rate in our country and a staggering national debt growing at one million dollars a minute that our children and grandchildren will be forced to pay.

This is not the America we were promised when the current political leaders came to power five years ago.

I do not believe that working Americans have become so complacent that we will continue to accept this course for the future.

Rather, I believe we will answer the last question posed earlier with a resounding YES! We will show the courage and seize the opportunity to change direction because we love our country and want a better life for our children and our grandchildren.

**Frank Hurt**  
BCTGM International President





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# Restore Workers' Freedom TO JOIN UNIONS

Every day, workers are harassed, intimidated and even fired for exercising a basic human right—uniting with co-workers to form a union for a better life.

During the week leading up to December 10, 2005, International Human Rights Day, BCTGM members joined workers across America and around the world to demand workers are guaranteed a fundamental human right: The freedom to have a union voice on the job. At rallies, town hall meetings, candlelight vigils and teach-ins across the world, union members and their allies highlighted the obstacles workers face when seeking to join a union at work and showcase strategies for the overcoming those obstacles.

International Human Rights Day commemorates the



BCTGM International Executive Vice President Joseph Thibodeau, International President Frank Hurt, and Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization David B. Durkee (pictured above, left to right) were among more than 2,000 union members and allies gathered at the AFL-CIO building in Washington, D.C., Dec. 8 for a rally and march to the White House. As workers marched in a massive picket line in front of the White House chanting, "Union busting is disgusting," a delegation of union leaders delivered to the White House gates the petition signed by 100,000 workers calling on the president to honor workers' freedom to form a union.



anniversary of the ratification of the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, which established the right of people in every nation to come together into unions and bargain contracts.

The U.S. government had rec-

ognized those rights 13 years earlier with the National Labor Relations Act. But today, many workers say those rights exist only on paper. Workers may have the legal right to form unions to negotiate for better benefits, pay and safety standards—but employers

across the country routinely block their efforts with threats, coercion and intimidation.

To strengthen protections for workers' freedom to choose a union, the union movement worked with a bipartisan coalition in creating the historic Employee Free Choice Act. Introduced into Congress in April 2005, the act (S. 842 and H.R. 1696) would require employers to recognize a union after a majority of workers signs 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.

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AFL-CIO PRESIDENT SWEENEY:

# What if **BUSH** Told the **TRUTH** About the **ECONOMY**?

**S**topping the senseless slaughter of good American jobs is the most critical challenge facing the United States, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told a National Press Club audience January 18 in Washington, D.C.

“The senseless slaughter of the good American job has been going on for the past 25 years. It’s at the core of a corporate-driven strategy to compete in the global marketplace by degrading work and workers, rather than compet-

Bush makes his State of the Union speech this month, he is expected to paint a rosy picture of the nation’s economic future. “But what if he told the American people the truth?” Sweeney asked.

Sweeney said Bush won’t do that because the truth would involve admitting “we are barely creating enough new jobs to match the growth in our workforce—and increasingly, the jobs we are generating are dead-end alleys. Our trade policies have

just today, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics revealed that U.S. workers’ inflation-adjusted average hourly earnings declined 0.5 percent in 2005.

To stem the flood of job loss, Sweeney said the nation must reverse its trade policies and demand that rights for workers receive the same protections as corporate interests in all trade agreements. In



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*“We are barely creating enough new jobs to match the growth in our workforce—and increasingly, the jobs we are generating are dead-end alleys.”*

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ing through ingenuity—competing through privatization, deregulation and de-unionization, rather than by innovation,” he said.

Speaking as part of the Press Club’s Newsmakers series, Sweeney decried the destruction of good U.S. jobs, jobs that once created “the largest middle class, the most dynamic economy and the strongest democracy in the history of the world.” Instead, America’s workers face a huge loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs, shrinking health care coverage, stagnant incomes and insecure retirements as a growing number of corporations such as IBM and Verizon drop pension plans.

There is no shortage of issues facing working families in our country.

When President George W.

translated into over two million lost manufacturing jobs...just since 1998, our debt to other countries is rising by more than \$1 million a minute and almost \$700 billion in U.S. Treasury notes are held by China alone.”

According to *The New York Times* writer Louis Uchitelle, author of *The Disposable American*, due out from Knopf in March, more than 30 million workers were involuntarily displaced from their jobs between 1980 and 2001.

“Far more than in the past, America lives with a chronically floating, low-wage workforce, one that would not exist if the deterioration in pay and training, and the acquiescence to layoffs, had not made inroads into the dignity of work,” Uchitelle writes. And

addition, new laws should be enacted to make it illegal for companies to buy or sell merchandise or services manufactured or provided under sweatshop working conditions.

Also, Sweeney said tax laws that encourage corporations to send jobs overseas should be repealed and all goods and services paid for with tax dollars should be produced or provided in this country.

Sweeney said some 150 major U.S. corporations “are using the bankruptcy courts to abandon their commitments to provide guaranteed pensions to the workers who have enabled them to grow and profit.”

He pointed to Cheryl Burns, a 28-year veteran flight attendant with United Airlines, who, before

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the air carrier's bankruptcy, was due a \$3,000 a month pension.

"A backroom deal cut that pension payment to \$1,200 a month and now she's threatened with further wage and benefit cuts at a time when her CEO is being assured total compensation of more than \$50 million a year," he said.

Sweeney called for universal health coverage so workers can live secure lives and corporations can compete in the global market-

National Labor College to train union leaders of the future and has stepped its Voice@Work campaign to expose employers who interfere with workers' right to form and join unions and improve their workplaces.

"If I were President, I would ask every member of the House and Senate to sign on as a sponsor to the Employee Free Choice Act, which guarantees the freedom of America's workers to come together in unions and bar-

tion in California to defeat four anti-worker ballot initiatives.

He also outlined the federation's political and legislative mobilization on the state and local levels, which played a key role in overriding Maryland Gov. Robert Ehrlich's (R) veto of a Fair Share Health Care bill and his leading the fight for similar legislation in more than 30 states.

With Congress refusing to raise the federal minimum wage since 1997, union-backed cam-

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*"Working families can't count on the corporate-influenced and anti-worker Congress and the Bush Administration to change the course of the country so they are turning to their unions to help steer in a new direction."*

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place; for corporations to invest more in workers and less in their executives; for doubling funding for job training and skills development and education; and for raising the federal minimum wage.

"Working families can't count on the corporate-influenced and anti-worker Congress and the Bush Administration to change the course of the country so they are turning to their unions to help steer in a new direction," Sweeney noted.

He pointed to the success of the AFL-CIO community affiliate, Working America, founded in 2004, that now includes more than one million members and which has "worked hand-in-hand with our collective bargaining members to defeat Social Security privatization, and in November they helped break the bonds of ex-urban county politics to bring home a win for Tim Kaine in Virginia."

In addition, the AFL-CIO is investing significant funds in the

gain for a better life," Sweeney said. "It will stop American employers from taking advantage of our laughable labor laws to destroy the unions that keep our middle class healthy and growing. It will make it possible for workers to join unions and add their voices to our campaign for the good jobs that guarantee economic equality and a strong democracy."

In July, at the AFL-CIO Convention, Sweeney said, "We made an historic decision to increase our emphasis on helping new members organize so we can build the strength we need and working families deserve. We also decided to devote more resources to legislative and political advocacy and to fold up our election-cycle model and replace it with a new grassroots program that works year-in and year-out to build a vibrant movement and hold our elected representatives accountable. That model was used in November's special elec-

paings are under way to increase state and local minimum wages.

"Someone once said, there are two things we must give our children. One is roots and the other is wings. When I was growing up in the Bronx, our family and our church provided the roots, and my dad's union provided the wings—in the form of a good job with decent benefits so he and my mom could lift up my sisters and brother and me.

"Unions are also the wings for our communities and for our entire way of life, because we help guarantee a level of prosperity for everyone, because we fight the abuse of corporate power, and because we provide a real voice for workers in politics. The AFL-CIO and our unions are committed to be the wings of hope for working families and for America, and we will continue to spread them wide on behalf of good jobs, fairness and economic and social justice," concluded Sweeney.

As you receive this issue of the *BCTGM News*, the second session of the 109th Congress will be getting underway. Working families can only hope that this session is not nearly as negative as the last.

In its first session, 2005, the Republican-led 109th Congress, took numerous actions that hit workers and their families hard.

In a very close vote, Congress passed the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), another flawed trade deal like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), that will lead to the loss of hundreds of thousands of good American jobs. CAFTA poses a unique threat to our BCTGM brothers and sisters employed in the sugar industry. A unified and forceful effort by the labor movement could not overcome the strong-arm tactics of the Congressional leadership used to pass the legislation.

Last year, Congress continued to back the Bush Administration budgets which resulted in cuts for important programs for workers and their families such as job training, workplace safety and health and student loans. At the same time, this Congress continued its march toward lowering taxes for the wealthiest Americans and largest corporations, leaving working families with higher tax burdens at the state and local level.

In order to reward their friends in the banking and credit card industry, the leadership of the 109th Congress forced through harsh bankruptcy reform legislation that unfairly increases the financial burden on working families. In most

# 109th CONGRESS HAS FAILED WORKING PEOPLE

cases, these families are trying to recover from severe financial setbacks that result from circumstances largely out of their control such as layoffs or enormous health care bills. Once again, corporate interests were put ahead of workers' interests.

Twice in 2005, worker-friendly legislators attempted to pass in increase an the minimum wage, which has been stuck at \$5.15 an hour for nearly a decade. Virtually unanimous Republican opposition in the Senate killed a labor-backed proposal to increase the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour. Despite record corporate

*Congress continued to back the Bush Administration budgets which resulted in cuts for important programs for workers and their families . . .*

profits, the growth in the gap between rich and poor and the dramatic increase in poverty in the United States, the 109th Congress would not pass in increase in the minimum wage to help low-wage workers have a better chance to succeed.

Last year also saw another session of Congress pass by without any meaningful attempt to reform the nation's crumbling health insurance system. Congressional leaders continue to let the health insurance and drug company lobbyists determine the health care policy of this country. All the while, workers spend more and more of their paychecks just to pay for health care.

Unfortunately, working people can expect more of the same this year in the second session of the 109th Congress. And, if there is no change in the leadership of Congress in the 2006 elections this November, there is every likelihood that the 110th Congress will be no better for workers than the 109th.



# LOCAL 192T SENDS *Solidarity to Soldiers*

In early November, BCTGM Local 192T (Reidsville, N.C.) set out to do something meaningful to bring holiday cheer to American soldiers deployed in Iraq.

"You don't have to support the war, but I think we should all support the young men and women fighting in Iraq," Local 192T Financial Secretary Rick Shreve, who organized the letter-writing campaign, told his members. And that is all it took, said Shreve. The local gathered the names of thousands of soldiers currently serving in Iraq and sent Christmas cards to as many as they could.

Shreve, a machine operator at Commonwealth Brands in Reidsville, utilized **www.anysoldier.com**, a Maryland-based non-profit organization designed by an Army veteran, to obtain the names of soldiers. He then distributed the list among his members and the community.

"From the website, I printed out a list of about 500 names and posted them in all the break rooms at the plant," recalls Shreve. "The local newspaper also helped our effort by printing a list of names for those in our community who didn't have internet access. I know of at least one seventh grade class that participated. The teacher contacted me and I was

able to email her a list of 100 names for her students."

In the plant, workers selected a name, checked it off the list then obtained a holiday card from their stewards. They filled in holiday sentiments and thanked them for their work in Iraq. In two weeks time, the local collected hundreds of cards that were stamped

to use the holiday season to rally their community behind those facing various kinds of struggles. "It's that time of year when generosity is vital and giving back to



(Above) L. 192T members Judi Vaughn (left) and Dale Moore load food donations for the Salvation Army. Union members gathered more than 300 canned goods for the holiday food drive. (Left) L. 192T members address holiday cards to soldiers deployed in Iraq.

and addressed at the union's membership meeting and mailed on December 1.

"It was important to us to let the troops know we're thinking about them," notes Shreve.

The local also organized a community food drive to aid those in need during the holidays. Shreve said that the local wanted

others defines the true spirit of the season," Shreve said.

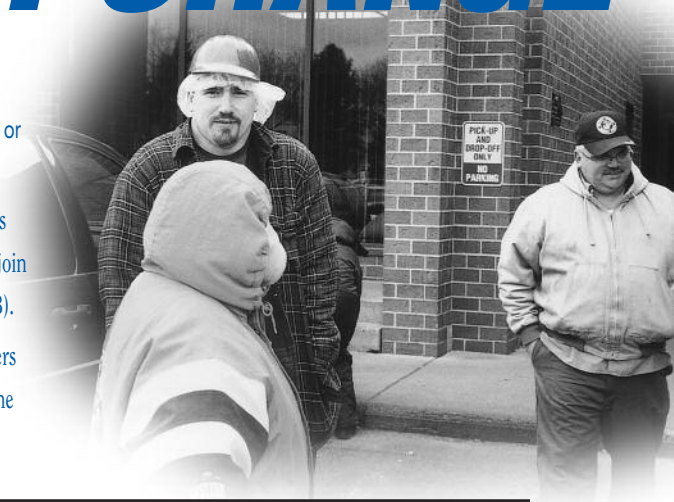
The local was able to collect more than 300 non-perishable items to donate to the Salvation Army. Their effort was commended by the agency in a letter to the local noting, "BCTGM Local 192T helped us tremendously. Without your generous giving and thoughtfulness, some children would have had a very bleak Christmas. Your group blessed many in our community."

# CBC Workers' Struggle Shows **Why** U.S. Labor Law **MUST CHANGE**

For years, Patti Wickman worked in the packing department of McComb, Ohio's Consolidated Biscuit (CBC) production plant as a skid loader, stacking crates up to six or seven feet high. "I just tossed them up when the stack got taller than I am," she says.

But three years ago, when Wickman and her colleagues sought a voice at work to address CBC's ill-treatment of its workers, Wickman and six others were illegally fired for supporting an effort to join the BCTGM, according to an administrative law judge of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Wickman's struggle to form a union at Consolidated Biscuit illustrates why thousands of workers and their allies mobilized in events across the nation in early December to highlight the need for the freedom to form unions without employer harassment and intimidation. (See page 3).



## **'STAND UP FOR YOURSELF'**

"People were being treated bad," says Bill Lawhorn, 49, a 12-year-veteran in CBC's receiving department and the first worker fired for union activity. "There was lots of yelling at employees and no respect." Lawhorn, who now hauls trash for his neighbors and family to try and make ends meet, says he wouldn't go back to Consolidated without a union. "Sometimes you have to stand up for yourself," he says.

Despite a 56-page ruling by an administrative law judge in January 2004 ordering the company to rehire the seven workers, management at CBC continues to fight workers' efforts to

form a union at its plant in McComb. Consolidated, whose largest customer is Kraft-Nabisco, produces \$320 million in cookies and crackers annually.

Although firing employees for exercising their freedom to join a union is illegal in the United States, in 25 percent of organizing campaigns, private-sector employers illegally fire workers because they want to form a union, according to Cornell University scholar Kate Bronfenbrenner.

Seeking to change ineffective U.S. labor law that doesn't adequately address the barriers workers face when forming unions, workers are urging their U.S. Representatives and Senators to co-sign the Employee Free Choice Act.

Back in McComb, a depressed northwest corner of Ohio, Wickman has been out of work for two years. She has lost

her truck and is about to lose her house. But she continues her fight for a union.

"I'm all the time out handbilling at the plant," she says. "I know what happens with a union—my dad is a proud member of UAW," says Wickman. "Unions are a big part of my life. To get the benefits you deserve, you have to say, 'Yes,' to the union and stand up for your rights," she says. "I want to see my friends get good benefits. I don't want them to die there."

## **HARASSMENT & UNION-BUSTERS**

The Consolidated Biscuit workers' struggle began in May 2002, when they sought help from the BCTGM in forming a union. In less than a month, some 600 of the 840 eligible employees signed union authorization cards. After the cards were verified, both sides agreed to a union election set for August 2002.

But in the months leading up to the election, the company's owner, James Appold, hired three union-busting consultants and held dozens of mandatory captive audience meetings.

"They told us that the unions only wanted our dues money," Lawhorn says.

As a result of Consolidated Biscuit's intimidation and harassment, workers

**More working people than ever—some 57 million—say they would join a union if they had a chance.**



lost the election. The next day, Appold fired Lawhorn, who had been a key union backer. One day after he was fired, Lawhorn says his CBC ID photo was posted on the McComb Police Department's "Most Wanted" bulletin board for no reason.

Over the next six months, six other workers who supported the union were fired. The BCTGM filed more than 35 unfair labor practice charges along with objections to the election. The NLRB regional office issued more than 40 complaints against Consolidated Biscuit and an administrative law judge heard the charges in the fall of 2003, more than a year after the election.

In January 2004, Administrative Law Judge Arthur Amchan ruled that Consolidated Biscuit's "egregious and widespread misconduct," demonstrated "a general disregard for the employees' fundamental rights," and required the company to cease and desist from infringing in any other manner on employees' rights guaranteed by federal labor laws.

Amchan cited numerous illegal actions by Consolidated Biscuit, including firing employees for union activity, instructing security personnel to call police at the first sign of union activity, erecting signs indicating video surveillance in areas where union supporters met, threatening to go bankrupt if workers voted for the union and requiring employees to remove messages supporting the union from their clothing.

"This company has a callous disregard for federal law," notes David B. Durkee, BCTGM International Secretary-Treasurer/Director of Organization. "It's lawless there," Durkee adds.

## DELAYS IN NLRB PROCESS

Consolidated Biscuit immediately filed exceptions to the 2004 decision, but the national NLRB has not acted on the appeal for more than two years.

Since the first trial and the administrative law judge's decision that the company violated the National Labor Relations Act on 40 complaints, the union has continued to file charges on behalf of the CBC workers. Recently, the regional NLRB issued 43 new complaints (for violations January 2004-December 2005) against the company and scheduled a trial for April 4, 2006. In this latest complaint, the regional NLRB alleges that two additional workers were unlawfully fired for union activity.

"If ever there was a case for a bargaining order issued by the NLRB—this is it," says BCTGM International Representative John Price, who has been assisting the CBC workers in their efforts to join the union since 2002. "It is getting to the point where a free and fair election cannot be conducted at this location due to the company's egregious behavior and total disregard for the workers' rights under federal law," Price concludes.

Despite their struggle, the workers remain committed to the union. John Green, another fired union supporter, was terminated after he couldn't work as a machine operator because of multiple injuries sustained when he fell into a machine. The machine, which runs at 3,200 revolutions per minute, left him with injuries to both shoulders and knees and ruptured his back. But the administrative law judge found the company fired him for union activity. Green, who now is fighting for worker's compensation for his injuries—Consolidated Biscuit doesn't want to pay—says he and the other workers continue to back the union.

"This company would spend \$10 million to save \$10," he says. "We've got to keep fighting. We're going to take it all the way."



## CBC Workers Speak Out!

BCTGM members and more than a dozen CBC workers traveled from McComb to Toledo, Ohio to participate in discussions and testimonials of workers who attempted and/or still trying to form a union at their place of work. The event was held at Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) headquarters the week of December 10 in recognition of International Human Rights Day.

A special Employees' Rights Board was commissioned to hear the workers' stories. The meeting was chaired by the President of FLOC, Baldemar Velasquez. The Board was represented by Reverend Chester Chambers of the Methodist Church, a worker rights advocate. Also present was Theresa Morris Ramos, a representative of Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur's (D-Ohio) office; Dave Beckwith, a representative of the Needmor Foundation—an outreach organization for communities seeking dignity, justice and respect; and Reverend Michael Szpak of the AFL-CIO, who coordinates worker rights campaigns with religious, community, and labor leaders.

For more than two hours, workers told horrendous stories about their fight for the right to organize in the United States. CBC worker Gracie Heldman (pictured above) addressed the crowd in both in English and Spanish, detailing the egregious violations by CBC against workers trying to exercise their "so called" protected right under U.S. Federal Law to form and join a Union.



# BCTGM Joins The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership



**A**fter assessing the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership (TRCP) and its work with the AFL-CIO to **guarantee citizens adequate access to places to hunt and fish**, the BCTGM has decided to endorse and officially join with the TRCP.

TRCP combines forces with habitat groups and supports the 2nd Amendment and citizen's rights to own and use guns. At the same time, it knows that even if we have unprecedented numbers of deer, turkey, and elk, and rivers and lakes teeming with fish, and closets full of guns, bows and fishing rods, it won't matter if we don't have access to places to go hunting and fishing. For this reason, TRCP



has pulled together the country's leading hunting and fishing organizations in a partnership to focus on, **"Guaranteeing Us All Places to Hunt and Fish...Now and Forever!"**

In announcing the BCTGM's support for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, BCTGM International President Frank Hurt notes, "The BCTGM International is very pleased to join with the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations to

support the Partnership. The TRCP is a highly effective advocate for the millions of working Americans who enjoy hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation. The BCTGM looks forward to building a productive relationship with the Partnership on behalf of our members."



TRCP's conservation policy work is diverse. It encompasses issues including sportsmen's access, fish and wildlife management funding, energy development and transportation infrastructure. All of the work is aimed at elevating conservation to the forefront of the American political agenda. The bottom line is that TRCP wants to assure the continuance of our hunting and fishing traditions and an outdoor way of life long cherished by generations of Americans. TRCP embraces Teddy Roosevelt's philosophy of, "The greatest good,

for the greatest number," and uses it as its guiding principle.

The TRCP provides its partners with vital information on important issues and provides them with easy ways to join in taking action to make their voices heard and help assure a bright future for hunting and fishing.

The past year has proven to be a particularly exciting one for the TRCP due in part to the great success of its TV show, *Life In The Open*. The show began airing on the Outdoor Life Network

(OLN) in October of 2005 and followed host, Ken Barrett, and guests, including several Union members, as they hunted and fished in places ranging from Teddy Roosevelt's public lands, where everybody is welcome and access is free, to exclusive destinations reserved for once in a lifetime trips. At season's end, *Life In The Open* was OLN's top rated TV show. A second season of *Life In The Open* has been filmed and will start airing in October of 2006.

**Membership in the TRCP is free. Individuals can join by logging on to [www.trcp.org](http://www.trcp.org) or by calling toll free**

**1- 877-770-8722**

# UNION DAUGHTER

## *Strives to Improve* Health Care for Latinos

Every year, Dr. Yvette Martas leads a group of five New York medical students to Yamaranguila, a remote region high up in the mountains of Honduras, where clinics are set up in one-room adobe shelters in each of the villages they visit. The group brings medical supplies and provides obstetrical, gynecological, pediatric and adult care to about 80 patients a day.

"We are grateful for the love she has shown for our people," says Norman Vazques, a Honduran community leader who has been working with Dr. Martas since she first visited Yamaranguila in 2002. "We are aware of her commitment and love for those who do not have the opportunities to receive adequate health care."

The success, hard work and dedication displayed by Dr. Yvette Martas can be traced back to her roots as the daughter of a union baker, who came to New York from Puerto Rico in the 1950s. Her father, Narciso Martas, has been a union member for 52 years and serves as the president of BCTGM Local 3 in New York. Raised with union values in the Mitchell Projects of the South Bronx, Dr. Martas contributes her success to her parents.

"My parents taught me to persevere, and to be respectful of the people who serve you, and to be compassionate, never forgetting where you came from," she recalls.

Dr. Martas, 46, is an assistant professor at the New York University School of Medicine and a staff doctor at the adolescent prenatal clinic at



**Dr. Yvette Martas credits her parents for her strong values and commitment to improving Latinos' access to health care.**

Victor Matos for VIVA New York/Daily News

Bellevue/NYU, which each month provides free treatment to more than 80 girls between the ages of 12 and 18. In her spare time, she mentors high school and medical students, and leads a campaign to build a clinic in Honduras.

The doctor's desire to help fellow Latinos became evident back when she picked Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. "I never wanted to be in a place

*"My parents taught me to persevere, and to be respectful of the people who serve you, and to be compassionate, never forgetting where you came from."*

where there was no access to Latinos." Martas regularly takes time to work with her interns and medical students and she even allows aspiring high school students to shadow her at the clinic. She says much remains to be done for Latinos in health care, including increasing the number of doctors that speak Spanish and training them to be culturally sensitive.

"If you want to be a physician, nothing should stop you—use your family, your community as a role model. Our level of success is based on our cultural ways," advises Martas.

**Editors NOTE: The above article was adapted from a feature in the December 2005 issue of VIVA New York/Parlante Inc.**

# Building Strength Through Education in 2005

From Montreal, Quebec to Twin Falls, Idaho, shop stewards from local unions throughout North America attended education training programs designed to strengthen and build their skills as union representatives.

In 2005, the International



Union co-sponsored 44 local union programs for 60 locals with approximately 954 participants in the U.S. and Canada. The training programs are

primarily conducted by International Vice Presidents and Representatives.

Stewards focus on developing their union skills in grievance

handling, arbitration, health & safety, collective bargaining and organizing. Working collectively, the stewards brain-storm common problems in the work place and develop strategies to take back to their shop floor following the program's conclusion.

Pictured on this page are scenes from some of the training programs held in 2005.

## Local Unions Take Part in Stewards' Training Programs

*The following BCTGM local unions completed shop stewards training seminars in 2005:*



- |                          |                       |                           |                         |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 (Chicago, IL)          | 68 (Baltimore, MD)    | 264G (E. Grand Forks, MN) | 351 (Albuquerque, NM)   |
| 3 (Long Island City, NY) | 69 (Port Chester, NY) | 266G (Moorhead, MN)       | 365G (Battle Creek, MI) |
| 3G (Battle Creek, MI)    | 70 (Grand Rapids, MI) | 267G (Crookston, MN)      | 369G (Renville, MN)     |
| 13G (Hastings, MN)       | 110G (Buffalo, NY)    | 282G (Heyburn, ID)        | 372G (Hillsboro, ND)    |
| 22 (Twin Cities, MN)     | 116 (Syracuse, NY)    | 283G (Twin Falls, ID)     | 382 (St. Lambert, QC)   |
| 25 (Chattanooga, TN)     | 118 (Washington, DC)  | 284G (Nampa, ID)          | 401G (Muncy, PA)        |
| 33G (Louisville, KY)     | 118G (Duluth, MN)     | 290G (Nyssa, OR)          | 405G (Wahpeton, ND)     |
| 36 (Davenport, IA)       | 125 (Oakland, CA)     | 316G (West Chicago, IL)   | 406 (Moncton, NB)       |
| 36G (Buffalo, NY)        | 132 (Columbus, IN)    | 317T (Greensboro, NC)     | 426 (Toronto, ON)       |
| 55 (Montreal, QC)        | 149 (Memphis, TN)     | 326 (Detroit, MI)         | 433 (Sioux City, IA)    |
| 55G (New Prague, MN)     | 196T (Owensboro, KY)  | 326G (Drayton, ND)        | 466 (Billings, MT)      |
| 58G (Toledo, OH)         | 203T (Richmond, VA)   | 333 (Montreal, QC)        | 480 (Ste-Marie, QC)     |
| 59G (Lodi, CA)           | 229T (Concord, NC)    | 334 (Portland, ME)        | 531 (London, KY)        |
| 62G (Mankato, MN)        | 232 (Phoenix, AZ)     | 343G (Naperville, IL)     | 550 (Lachine, QC)       |
| 66G (Battle Creek, MI)   | 242G (London, ON)     | 350 (St. Leonard, QC)     | 802 (Buffalo, NY)       |

## Conservatives Win Election, but Not Mandate



During the run-up to the January 23rd federal election in Canada, candidates from all four major political parties made frequent overtures to working Canadians. In what was predicted to be a very close contest, the votes of working families would be extremely important. And they were.

While the Conservative Party, lead by Stephen Harper, eked out a small minority government in Parliament, the effect of labor's influence in the election was very evident. In highly unionized portions of the country, people voted overwhelmingly for either the Liberal or NDP parties. The NDP, long the political voice of the Canadian labour movement, increased their number of seats in Parliament by one third, and their popular vote total to almost 20 percent of the electorate.

Canadians also expressed that they were not altogether sold on Mr. Harper's agenda by giving him only 36 percent of the popular vote. According to BCTGM International Vice President Sean Kelly, the Conservative Party did not win a mandate from Canadians, especially working families. "We know that major portions of the Conservative Party agenda would hurt workers in this country. As a union we will do all we can to work with those politicians in opposition to protect and expand legislation and regulation that benefit working Canadians," notes Kelly.

After the election, Paul Martin announced he would resign as leader of the Liberal Party. This opens the door for a leadership race that the labour movement must be active in.

According to BCTGM International President Frank Hurt, workers on both sides of the border are

in agreement about the kind of politicians and leaders they support. "We need politicians in power that will protect our pensions, not gut them; expand

healthcare, not limit it; increase citizens' rights, not eliminate them; and improve our education systems, not use band-aids on them," says Hurt.

Hurt notes that the candidates talked a lot about education, childcare and healthcare leading up to the election. He expressed hope that

BCTGM members in Canada will hold their politicians accountable to ensure working people were not forgotten by those in Ottawa.

### PERCENTAGE OF POPULAR VOTE\*

Conservative Party ...	124 seats (36.3%)
Liberal.....	103 seats (30.2%)
Bloc Quebecois .....	51 (10.5%)
New Democratic Party .....	29 (17.5%)
Other .....	(5.6%)
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>308 seats (100%)</b>

\*Preliminary results as of January 25, 2006

## A T T E N T I O N

### APPLICANTS TO THE 2006 BCTGM SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The deadline for applications to the BCTGM 2006 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 for requirements:**

- ✓ **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.**

## LABOR FOR KIDS



BCTGM Local 19 (Cleveland, Ohio) believes in teaching children labor history in school. That is why Business Agents Doug Schuetz and Mike Helm recently visited the Grade Four class at Maple Leaf Elementary School. The union officials discussed how labor unions won the benefits that today's workers enjoy: the eight-hour day, overtime pay, vacations, etc. For two hours, the Local 19 representatives answered questions and reviewed important struggles by labor. Pictured here with the students is Schuetz (left) and Helm (right).

Workers from BCTGM Local 369G (Renville, Minn.) helped raise more than \$2,500 in 2005 for the National Guard Family Readiness Group (FRG). The FRG is composed of local families who have a loved one deployed to Iraq. The group sends soldiers snacks, magazines, toiletries and many other items not readily available through the military. Local 369G has two union members currently serving in Iraq, one union member preparing to leave, and two other members who returned safely in 2005 from the war. "We are all extremely proud of these union members and all of our troops serving our country," notes Local 369G Pres. Randall Billmeir. Billmeier is pictured here (left) presenting a check to the FRG representative at a fundraiser.



## SUPPORT AMERICAN TROOPS

## LOCAL 114 HONORS ACTIVIST



BCTGM Local 114 (Portland, Ore.) member Earl Cox (holding plaque) was recognized for his 38 years of membership and participation in the local during a recent meeting of the local's executive board. Cox, who retired Oct. 1, 2005 from the Safeway Clackamas bread plant, served the union as a shop steward, executive board member, and, most recently, as vice president of the local. Pictured from left to right are Local 114 Pres. Georgene Barragan, Secy.-Treas. Terry Lansing, Cox, and Bus. Agt. Gene Beaudoin.

### **Since we last reported on BCTGM local union mergers in the March/April 2005 issue of the BCTGM News, the following locals have merged:**

- Local 142G (Ada, OK) into Local 366G (Oklahoma City, OK) with an effective date of April 1, 2005.
- Local 205G (Indianapolis, IN) into Local 372A (Indianapolis, IN) with an effective date of June 1, 2005.
- Local 64G (Sherman, TX) into Local 111 (Dallas, TX) with an effective date of June 1, 2005.
- Local 8G (St. Joseph, MO) into Local 16G (Kansas City, MO) with an effective date of May 24, 2005.
- Local 346G (Martel, OH) into Local 57 (Columbus, OH) with an effective date of August 1, 2005.
- Local 99G (Wichita, KS) into Local 218 (Kansas City, MO) with an effective date October 1, 2005.
- Local 180G (Washington Court House, OH) into Local 57 (Columbus, OH) with an effective date of October 1, 2005.
- Local 110G (Buffalo, NY) into Local 36G (Buffalo, NY) with an effective date of October 1, 2005.
- Local 365T (Mayfield, KY) into Local 280 (Evansville, IN) with an effective date of December 1, 2005.
- Local 360G (Worthington, Minn.) into Local 433 (Sioux City, Iowa) with an effective date of January 1, 2006.
- Local 108G (St. Louis, Mo.) into Local 4 (St. Louis, Mo.) with an effective date of January 1, 2006.



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This BCTGM Power program offers:

-  **15% discount per order**
-  **Unconditional 100% satisfaction guarantee**
-  **Additional savings for online orders**  
*(\$1.00 off service and transmission fee)*
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-  **Same-day flower delivery service**  
*(if ordered before noon in recipient's time zone)*
-  **International service** *(with three-day delivery guarantee; orders for delivery outside the U.S. and Canada taken by phone only.)*
-  **Secure site with a password-protected section that can also send gift reminders**

ONLINE: [www.bctgm.org/benefits/discounts/savers.htm](http://www.bctgm.org/benefits/discounts/savers.htm)

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**Strength**  
**THROUGH**  
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**BCTGM INTERNATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION**