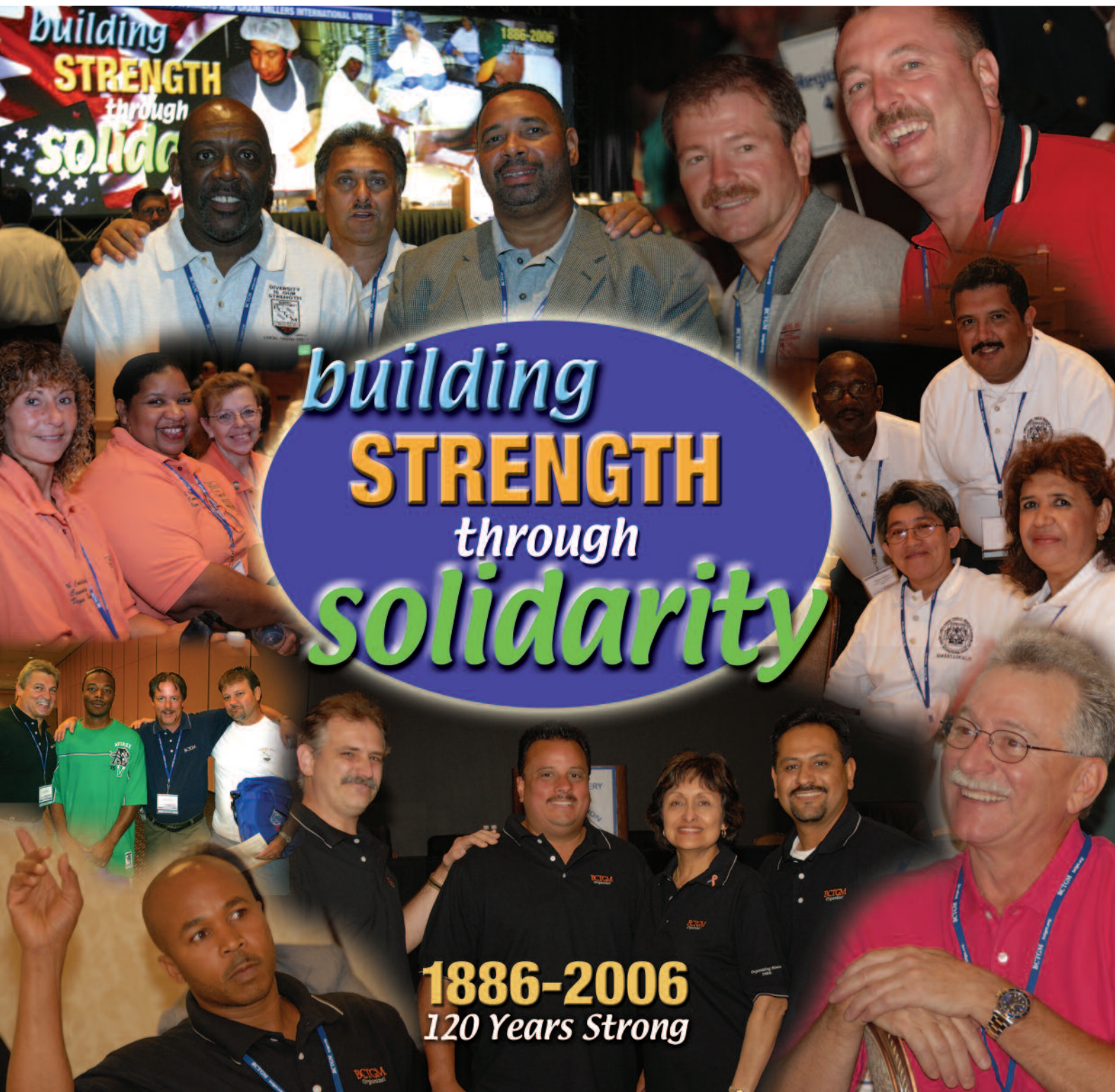


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building
STRENGTH
through
solidarity

1886-2006
120 Years Strong

The President's Keynote Address to 37th Constitutional Convention

The following is excerpts are from BCTGM International President Frank Hurt's Keynote Address to Convention Delegates on July 19th.

We come together at a truly momentous time in the history of the labor movement in North America. Workers and their unions in both the United States and Canada face challenges to our vitality and even our very existence unlike anything we've seen in over 70 years.

The BCTGM has always held a significant and respected seat in the House of Labor, in part, because we continue to represent workers at the most prominent food and consumer products corporations in the world. We are successful and effective because we have stayed true to the principles upon which this Union was founded 120 years ago.

Among some of our largest and richest employers, Kraft/Nabisco, Kellogg/Keebler and General Mills, we have negotiated new, outstanding master agreements during the past four years. As long as our employers know that this Union is strong and unified and that we will do everything possible for our membership, it will serve as a deterrent to their relentless efforts to further their "cost-sharing" goals.

Brothers and Sisters, the attitude and practices of employers today are not new. For those younger members—and you are now a substantial part of our Union—it is useful to visit some of the proud history of the labor movement. Each one of us is here today because of the hard work and accomplishments of those in our Union who came before us.

So, for a moment, let us go back some 70 years to the time of the birth of the modern labor movement. In that period during the organizing campaign of the Congress of Industrial

Organizations, the CIO, there were many bitterly fought strikes, most notably in the industrial centers of the Midwest.

Violence stalked the streets of Detroit as the auto workers refused to vacate the factories leading to the historic "sit down"



strikes. The National Guard was mobilized and goons were hired to beat down the workers.

The great labor leader John L. Lewis, who was President of the United Mine Workers and the CIO, spoke out in defense of the Auto Workers' actions. Mr. Lewis said then, "*The United States Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers and similar groups representing industry and financial interests, are rendering a disservice*

to the American people in their attempts to frustrate the organization of labor in their refusal to accept collective bargaining as one of our economic institutions."

He went on to say, "*No Tin Hat Brigade of vigilantes or mob of corporation-paid scoundrels will prevent the onward march of labor or divert its purpose to play its natural and rational part in the development of the economic, political and social life of our nation.*"

That was 70 years ago. Of course, much has changed since then. But much has stayed the same.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers and their bought and paid for politicians continue on as front groups for



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employers bent on denying workers their rights and fair share of this nation's economic prosperity. The Tin Hat Brigade Lewis spoke of is now a slick brigade of corporate lawyers, labor relations "consultants" and human resource "specialists." They don't carry guns or clubs or brass knuckles. But they are every bit the thugs as their predecessors were 70 years ago.

Their goals and tactics are the same—keep workers' wages and benefits down, break the union where possible and intimidate, threaten and coerce workers who want to organize. Today's corporate thugs do not come cheap and they do not let the law stand in the way of achieving their goals. Companies like R.J. Reynolds and Consolidated Biscuit Company spend millions of dollars and run roughshod over the law of the land to defeat the will of their employees to organize and improve their standard of living.

As if the cards were not stacked enough against working people, over the past five plus years, big business has cultivated a powerful new ally—the very people who are elected to represent all of us in Washington.

Not in the past 100 years has there been such a tight bond between corporate America and the politicians running our country. This insidious alliance between the corporate elite and government leaders has taken a heavy toll on working people. Together, they have turned tax laws, labor laws, pension laws, bankruptcy laws and health care and energy policies into vehicles for enriching corporate bosses beyond anything we have seen in this country since the days of the robber barons at the turn of the last century.

Together, they have conspired to harass and weaken unions because they know the labor movement remains the single biggest obstacle to their goal of corporate dominance over the political, economic and social fabric of our country.

Brothers and Sisters, if we do not change the politicians and bureaucrats running this country, all that we believe in, every thing we have worked to build in our lives, can be lost.

Do we have the strength to lead this change on behalf of our members, our Union and this great nation? Do we have the tenacity? Are we willing to

stand tall and stand strong for as long as it takes to change the direction of this nation?

The answer to each of these questions is a resounding YES!

In our Union, "Building Strength through Solidarity" is not just a Convention theme. It is our daily mission. So brothers and sisters, if you believe that we must forge ahead in solidarity on behalf of our Union and our members, then stand with me and stand up for political change in this country.

And, if you believe that we must work day and night to bring the benefits of trade unionism to the unorganized workers in our industries, then stand with me and stand up for political change in this country.

And, if you believe that we must never give in to corporate greed and renegade employers, then stand with me and stand up for political change in this country. And, if you believe that we must change the anti-union, right-wing political leadership in Washington and replace it with honorable men and women who put working people first, then stand with me and stand up for victory beginning this November.

It is labor's time. As it has throughout history, the labor movement will lead the way in ushering in a new era of opportunity and hope and promise for working men and women. The BCTGM will stride proudly at the front of this parade.

Brothers and Sisters, you are part of a movement. You are the bright beacons of hope at the end of this deep, dark tunnel working people have been stuck in for far too long. Together, we will harness the great strength that comes with our unbreakable solidarity to secure a more prosperous future for our members, our Union and the nations we love.

building STRENGTH through solidarity



building **STRENGTH** through *solidarity*

Shaping Our Future!

The theme of the third day of the Convention, July 21, was “Shaping Our Future” and was devoted to the election of the BCTGM International Officers. Reflecting on the day’s theme in his opening remarks, President Hurt said, “Today, we celebrate each of you. As elected representatives of your respective locals at this convention, you are in fact, all leaders of this great union. With leadership comes responsibility. We all have a responsibility to do the best possible job we can do to ensure that this union prospers over the next four years,” said Hurt.

For the election of the International Executive Officers, Hurt called on retired Secretary-Treasurer Rene Rondou as the Temporary Chair of the convention. Upon accepting the Temporary Chair position, Rondou delivered brief remarks in both French and English. “It is a privilege and an honor to be here with you. I signed my first card to become a union member 63 years ago when I was just 16 years old. I remember how proud I was on that day. I am as proud of this union today as I was all those years ago. I am proud to be among you and together we will continue to fight and win because of our solidarity,” Rondou said.

DELEGATES UNANIMOUSLY ELECT HURT



In accordance with Article IV, Section 3 of the Constitution of the International Convention, entitled Nominations, Rondou declared nominations for the office of President.

Upon opening nominations, Rondou called on Vester Newsome, Financial Secretary of

Local 57 (Columbus, Ohio), who nominated Frank Hurt.

“The man I am placing in nomination embodies all that is good about the labor movement and the BCTGM. He has wisdom, strength, compassion and vision, His firm and steady hand has kept the BCTGM on the right course for the last 14 years.

“I have probably known Frank Hurt longer than anyone in this room, except perhaps his wonderful family. He is the same man today that he was when I first met him more than 25 years ago. Frank Hurt has never forgotten where he came from or what it is like on the shop floor. He knows how tough it is for working men and women to provide for their families and that is why he works day and night to keep our Union strong.

“Frank Hurt is the best person to lead our Union for the next four years. The BCTGM is truly blessed to have him as our President during these difficult and challenging times. With Frank Hurt at the helm, our members have a leader who fights for their best interests every single day.

“I am proud and humbled to place in nomination the name of our leader, a member of Local 57 and my close friend, Frank Hurt, for the President of the BCTGM,” concluded Newsome.

Hurt was unanimously elected by delegates, who honored him with a standing ovation and thunderous applause.

Hurt thanked the Executive Officers and



Hurt, Durkee, Thibodeau Re-Elected

International staff and recognized his family. "This is truly a great Union and I will continue to fight every day for you. Every one of you is important to me and I will do my best to make you proud," Hurt concluded.

DELEGATES RE-ELECT DURKEE



Nominating David B. Durkee for the office of International Secretary-Treasurer of the BCTGM was Jethro Head, President of Local 1 (Chicago).

"The talents of this candidate were evident over 30 years ago when he was called upon by the Union President to

become a member of the Youth Involvement Task Force.

"His service to the International began when he was tapped by the President of the Union to be an International representative in 1986.

"By this time, David had won the respect and trust of others because of his unflinching loyalty and dedication. He proved himself with his willingness to accept any assignment, and many of these required long hours of work every day and separations from his family.

"David is a man of uncommon dedication to family and union work, and I am pleased to call him my personal friend. But I also know that he is the friend of every working man and woman in the BCTGM International Union, and for that you can be assured that he will serve all the members of every local union," concluded Head.

Delegates unanimously elected Durkee to a new four-year term and gave him a standing ovation.

He accepted his nomination by thanking President Hurt and Vice President Thibodeau. He continued by



thanking all of the international vice-presidents, representatives and headquarters staff for their hard work and dedication.

Durkee said to the delegation that "it is an honor to serve you all and to fight alongside of you." He concluded his acceptance by declaring that despite all the challenges the labor movement faces, "I wake up every morning full of fight."

DELEGATES RE-ELECT THIBODEAU



Ray Aquilino, the Secretary-Treasurer of Local 102 (New York) nominated Joseph Thibodeau.

"I have the proud honor to nominate a man who I feel symbolized what the trade union movement should be. He's a man who taught me what it takes

to be a good labor leader—hard work, always being prepared and the willingness to fight the fight to the end—no matter what the results.

"There are two things he has always stressed: to have the ability to stay calm, cool and collected, especially when dealing with employers and to always be honest and direct with our membership.

"Some men teach by the book—this man teaches by example. He has been with this great union for over 41 years, and he's our most senior executive officer.

"I am proud to nominate my friend, my mentor—Joseph Thibodeau, for the office of Executive Vice President of the BCTGM," concluded Aquilino.

Upon accepting the office of Executive Vice President, Thibodeau delivered a moving acceptance speech.

"Make your individual voices heard. Participate. Your partner on the line needs your support, your Local needs your support, and your International needs your support. And whether they know it or not, the North American worker needs the support of unions, because we Union members make a difference in what happens in all work places. Thank you for your continued activism and thank you for allowing me to continue to help in that struggle," concluded Thibodeau.

Delegates Elect **Vice Presidents, GEB**



Following is a list of International Vice Presidents who were elected by the convention delegates.

Region 1: Art Montminy

Region 2: Bob Oakley

Region 3: Jeanne Graham

Region 4 & Grain Milling Sector: Tony Johnson

Region 5: Sean Kelly

Region 6: Randy Roark

Grain Milling Sector: Harry Guildner

Grain Milling Sector: Mike Konesko



The following is a list of General Executive Board members who were elected by the delegates.

Region 1

Joyce Alston, Local 50

Narcisco Martas, Local 3

Region 2

Paul LaBuda, Local 19

William Sprandell, Local 464

Region 3

Edward Burpo, Local 300

Bradford Schmidt, Local 218

Region 4

Johnny Jackson, Local 42

Richard Lewis, Local 111

Region 5

Ron Piercey, Local 264

Danny Murphy, Local 406

Region 6

Donna Scarano, Local 125

Doyle Townson, Local 31

Tobacco Sector

Randy Fulk, Local 317T

William "Frankie" Pearce: Local 203T

Around the **Convention** Floor



building **STRENGTH** through **solidarity**

Organizing, Political Action

More than 400 delegates attending the 37th Constitutional Convention, the union's highest decision-making body, helped chart the BCTGM's course for the next four years.

Each of the 143 Local Unions represented at the Convention, as well as the International General Executive Board, was given an opportunity to submit resolutions to the Convention delegates.

Over the course of the convention, delegates considered 48 resolutions, including 16 from local unions. Prior to the Convention, the Committee on

Committees assigned each resolution to a specific committee. In addition to the Committee on Committees, other Convention committees included the Constitution, Finance, Organizing, Political Action, Resolutions, and Union Label and Education. The Committees were made up of local union delegates and advised by an International Vice President.

Committee meetings were held throughout the course of the week while the Convention was in recess. During these working sessions, each resolution was thoroughly discussed and debated. Once each group reached a consensus on their assigned resolutions, a report was submitted to the Convention body, with a recommendation for action. Delegates were then given the opportunity to debate the committee recommendation and vote for or against the adoption of each resolution. In addition to setting



the agenda for the next four years, this procedure provides the membership with a voice in the policy-making process of the International Union.

The resolutions presented to the delegates covered such topics as healthcare, organizing, political action, trade, health & safety, and collective bargaining. In addition, there were several resolutions concerning the BCTGM Constitution.

The following highlights several of the resolutions adopted by the delegates, including what they pledged to accomplish over the next four years.

BCTGM-PAC AND POLITICAL ACTION: ENGINE FOR POLITICAL CHANGE

The local union PAC committees will take all necessary and appropriate steps to ensure that all contracts have BCTGM-PAC check-off clauses, or, in cases where the employer uses political check-off to facilitate contributions to its PAC by its shareholders and/or managerial employees, that those locals assert their right to demand BCTGM-PAC check-off.

UNITING OUR POWER TO ORGANIZE AND GROW

We will unite our energies and resources to help workers organize by mobilizing a larger, more active constituency in support of their fundamental freedom to form unions and bargain collectively to gain a voice at work. Every local union will work to help win public and community support for restoring the right to organize. We will take the real experiences of workers struggling to organize in the face of pervasive intimidation and coercion to elected officials and other opinion leaders.

Top Delegates Four-Year Agenda

FREEDOM TO FORM UNIONS

The BCTGM joins the entire labor movement in an aggressive campaign to pass the Employee Free Choice Act. The BCTGM will continue the fight at every level of government to restore the freedom of America's workers to form unions and bargain collectively. Our union is committed to growing our movement by restoring workplace justice and creating a climate in which all employees have the opportunity to join a union.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE

The BCTGM will step up pressure on the companies where our members work, recruiting them to join us in our fight for universal health care.

PROTECTING BCTGM TOBACCO INDUSTRY JOBS

So long as tobacco remains a legal product in the United States and Canada, the BCTGM will vigorously defend our members' right to a good job and continue to forcefully present our position on issues affecting workers in the tobacco industry to public officials at all levels of government.

SUPPORT FOR A CANADIAN NATIONAL CHILD CARE SYSTEM

The BCTGM will promote the creation of a National Child Care Act that guarantees standards and the principles of quality, universality, accessibility, developmental programming, and inclusiveness.



AMERICANS NEED AFFORDABLE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The BCTGM recognizes the importance of efforts to reduce the price of prescription drugs by legislative action in the several states, and that the BCTGM encourages local unions to give full support to such campaigns.

REBUILDING THE GULF COAST AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA

That the BCTGM demand of all Congress that they ensure those who reside below the poverty line, particularly those in the Gulf States region, that our measures and goals are one to uplift people from the senselessness of poverty, to empower people to obtain the American Dream of opportunity in this country, and call upon this body and the BCTGM as a whole to continue its historic role to eliminate the gap's in economic inequality.

GLOBAL SOLIDARITY AND A CALL TO ACTION

The BCTGM will challenge the corporate trade agenda and insist that our governments negotiate enforceable provisions ensuring workers' fundamental human rights and environmental safeguards are included in the core of all new trade and investment agreements. We will oppose all agreements that do not meet this standard. We will work through the IUF and AFL-CIO, CLC to defeat additional flawed trade agreements based on the NAFTA model and, multilateral negotiations that weaken our trade laws and neglect workers' rights.

The Convention delegates also adopted resolutions on strengthening Medicare, ensuring a safe and healthy workplace, restoring the right to vote, fighting bad trade deals, supporting immigrant rights, defending the Davis-Bacon Act, and supporting veteran's healthcare facilities, among oth-



building **STRENGTH** through *solidarity*

Speakers Highlight **Workers'**

GIRAUDO, BROWN ADDRESS DELEGATES

The Honorable Willie Brown, former mayor of San Francisco, addressed the delegates on July 19th. Brown was introduced by Lou Giraudo, owner of the famed Boudin Bakery in San Francisco. When introducing Giraudo, Hurt noted that Giraudo “is a singular example of an investor and



manager with a progressive view of labor management relations.” In his introduction of Mayor Brown, Giraudo recalled the leadership skills that he so admired in his father, a former master baker, and member of the BCTGM. He then noted that Brown exemplified very similar attributes and this is what made him a true leader. Giraudo commended Brown for his leadership both as mayor and prior to that, as Speaker of the California Assembly.

Brown spoke about his tenure as Speaker and how challenging the transition was to becoming mayor. He discussed how he rose to the chal-

lenge of city management and how he worked with a unionized workforce to make San Francisco a model of productive local government.

Brown also spoke about the importance of card check neutrality and how he put pressure on San Francisco hotel owners to accept it. He said that these companies finally figured out that you need to provide quality wages for quality workers.

Brown urged delegates to continue to stand up and fight against politicians who are not deserving of working people’s support. He noted that the labor movement “must out-organize” those interests that look to keep unions down. In a passionate statement, Brown stated emphatically that “we need a labor movement more than ever before.”

ACUFF GIVES REASON FOR OPTIMISM

In a rousing speech, Stewart Acuff, organizing director of the AFL-CIO, challenged the BCTGM to continue its fight for working people.

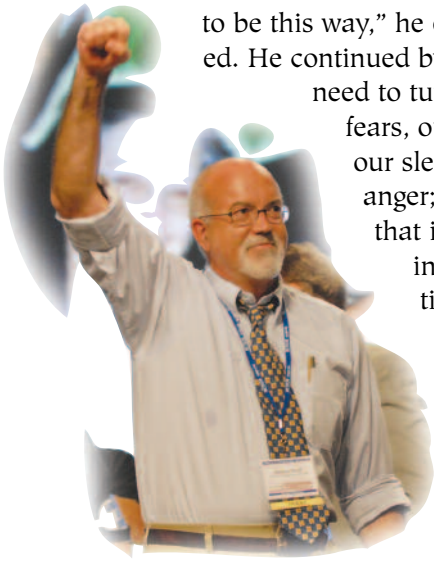
Acuff began by thanking the BCTGM for being a leader in organizing. He highlighted the recent organizing win at Fiesta Mart in Houston. “Thank you for running a great community campaign there in Houston; reaching out to members of the clergy, community and political leaders,” he said. He also commended the union’s tenacity in its fight with Consolidated Biscuit. “That fight shows exactly why we have to change America,” said Acuff.

He then discussed some of the challenges facing American workers. “Workers in America are caught in a terrible squeeze, a policy trap that is shrinking our middle class, ruining our futures, de-valuing work, victimizing kids, and pushing our country toward corporate domination,” he declared.

He said that with the current Administration’s attack on unions, union density has suffered. “The decline in density has cost us bargaining power, the ability to win gains in wages and benefits for workers at the bargaining table. In addition, the decline in density has cost us power and voice in our workplaces, our communities, our cities and states, and in our nation,” he said.

Acuff stressed that the labor movement must come out swinging if it wants to be successful in transforming America. “We’ve got to have a fight about it. And it is a fight we can win. It doesn’t have

Rights, Political Change and Solidarity



to be this way,” he emphatically stated. He continued by saying that “we need to turn our despair, our fears, our securities, and our sleepless nights into anger; and then turn that individual anger into public, collective rage.”

He then laid out a way in which workers can take back the control they have lost. He highlighted the

importance of pass-

ing the Employee Free Choice Act, so that workers could have more control over their workplaces. He stressed the need to educate co-workers, family members and friends, about what is at stake in this fight. He said that labor needs to “unite with our allies, engage the policy makers, turn out on election day, and make the right to organize and bargain collectively the number one issue in this election year”.

He concluded optimistically by proclaiming, “our nation has stepped backward. It is our responsibility and obligation. We will. And we will win!”

JOHN SWEENEY ADDRESSES CONVENTION



The President of the AFL-CIO, John Sweeney, began his address by thanking President Hurt for his hard work on behalf of the U.S. and Canadian labor movement. Hurt serves as an AFL-CIO Vice President and a member of the fed-

eration’s Executive Council.

Sweeney briefly reflected on the recent departures of International Union’s from the AFL-CIO and thanked Hurt and the BCTGM for their continued solidarity. “I can’t think of a time when we were in difficulty that I couldn’t turn around and find you backing me up. This is a standup union with a standup President and I thank you all from the bottom of my heart,” Sweeney said.

Reflecting on the day’s theme of organizing Sweeney said, “Building strength through organizing and using that strength to build political power are what the work of our movement is all about and what the AFL-CIO is increasing. Our belief is that you can’t win at one without winning at the other. The troubles we’re having right now with the National Labor Relations Board dramatize how correct we are,” he said.

Sweeney commended the recent organizing victory by the BCTGM at Fiesta Mart bakery in Houston.

“You proved that when we work together and stand together and fight together we can overcome the raw power of union-busting employers,” he said.

“Our political work is so important this year—not just the future of organizing and our movement— but to the future of our country,” Sweeney said.

Sweeney pointed out that the U.S. is very close to being divided into two societies: one for the rich and one for the poor with the middle class slowly and surely eliminated. He noted that with the election of George W. Bush in 2000, the conservatives and their corporate supporters finally gained control of all three branches of our federal government—the White House, the Congress and the Supreme Court.

“And they’ve wasted no time in trying to destroy all the things we’ve created over the past 50 years to make sure every worker has a good job, every child has a free public education, every family has affordable health care and every senior citizen has retirement security,” Sweeney said.

Looking ahead to the fall elections, Sweeney urged delegates to “Work together, stand together and fight together to take back control of the Congress and overcome the perverted political power of the Bush Administration.

OFL PRESIDENT URGES UNITY

Wayne Samuelson, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, gave a stirring speech to the delegates.

He began by acknowledging the role of the BCTGM in organizing workers in Canada. “You have established yourself as a smart and strategic organization that has negotiated agreements that are the envy of many in my country.”



continued on next page



Speakers continued

He then pointed out the similarities between Canada and the United States. As an example, he used his twenty years of experience as a rubber worker at a tire plant in Kitchener, Ontario to highlight this. He said that the same employers work on both sides of the border. “They use the same chemicals, they have the same time study stooges, and the tires always came out black and round. As a production worker, my hopes and dreams were the same as any of the thousands of tire builders here in the United States: to come home safe, to get a decent pension and make a better life for my kids.”

He then focused on the fact that workers are doing their share; that they are holding up their end of the bargain. He told delegates that the Imperial Tobacco workers in Guelph and in Quebec made that company extremely profitable, and yet both plants were closed while production was moved to Mexico. “These workers will join close to 100,000 workers that have lost their jobs in the Ontario manufacturing sector in the last few years. And in this case, as in many plant closures, the companies are not losing money, but are in fact extremely profitable,” stated Samuelson.

He continued by saying that “it is not corporations that build our communities and countries. It is workers like you and those that have gone before you that for decades walked through those gates that built our nations. We have every right to a decent income and safe workplaces.”

He concluded by saying that workers on both sides of the border needed to initiate changes. “We need to change politicians that do not respect the rights of workers. We need to change politicians that place corporate profits ahead of our families and communities. And we need to change the politicians that think our pensions are their sandbox. Once we make these changes, it is then that we will win!”

IUF GENERAL SECRETARY ADDRESSES DELEGATES



In his convention address, Ron Oswald, the General Secretary of the IUF (International Union of Food Workers), reflected on the need for political change in the United States.

“The tragedy of the Bush Administration’s second term is unfolding domestically and internationally before our eyes, as the predictions many made of an economy built on a house of cards and a more dangerous and unstable world are coming true,” reflected Oswald.

Noting the endless media coverage on the global war on terror, Oswald said it is rare that we ever hear nothing from those in power about the undeclared war on working people. “A war that is systematic and strategic. It’s strategy is built on first disarming us. That gets done by taking away or never granting the rights workers need to defend themselves. It’s done with smart bombs in the form of corporate lobbyists who work on national governments and on the global institutions that set the rules—rules that increasingly aim to systematically roll back existing labour rights and anything that regulates business,” Oswald said.

He noted that the number of men and women around the world who are either unemployed or underemployed now stands at one billion. This fact—rarely, if ever, reported as a crisis in the media—ultimately represents the biggest weapon unions face. “For when the right to work is violated on this kind of massive scale, and hundreds of millions are engaged in a frantic competition for a dwindling number of jobs, all other workers’ rights become vulnerable,” added Oswald.

“The world needs the labour movement and its values if it is not to plunge totally into barbarism. A world without the labour movement would be a far more brutal world. We bring dignity to people in this world as much as anyone does and more than most and we need to be prouder and more vocal in saying that out loud more often than we do today. And the dignity of the human spirit has never been extinguished even through the darkest of times,” Oswald said to rousing applause from delegates.

JACK MARCO ADDRESSES DELEGATION



Jack Marco, Chairman of the Marco Consulting Group, spoke to the delegation Thursday morning about the challenges that current retirees and upcoming retirees are facing. Using a PowerPoint presentation

to help illustrate his points, Marco began by going over the history of the current retirement system in the United States.

He discussed the creation of Taft-Hartley pension plans, the establishment of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and the creation of the Pension Benefit Guarantee Corporation.

He then talked about the state of retirement for Americans. Using a well established analogy, Marco said that “the three legged stool has long been a picture that represents the foundation of a secure retirement: Savings, Social Security, and Pension Plans. With those three legs strong, the stool will not falter. But remove just one and it falls.

“As those three legs have been weakened in recent years, a new leg has appeared: Work. In my mind, work is not an element of Retirement security but evidence of its failure. Recent reports tell us that 20 percent of the average retiree’s support comes from employment. This failure of retirement security makes it necessary for seniors to go back to work and take jobs away from younger workers.”

He continued his presentation by using several charts and graphs to highlight the fact that Americans are not saving enough, that the disparity between CEO and worker pay is skyrocketing, and that current and future retirees do not have enough capital to survive on. Marco told the delegation that “this is a very dire picture. It is estimated that 46.7 percent of Americans age 65 and older would have income below the poverty level if it were not for Social Security. Imagine what that number would be if this trend continues? I predict we could have levels of poverty among the elderly equal to the 1930’s.”

He concluded his eye-opening presentation by telling delegates to get out to vote in November. “Let them know that retirement security is your priority. If it is not their priority, you need to do everything in your power to see that those politicians experience what retirement means, very soon,” Marco concluded.

KOURPIAS ENERGIZES DELEGATION



George Kourpias, President of the Alliance for Retired Americans, delivered an inspired speech to the Convention

Kourpias started his remarks by saying, “I’ve been fortunate to serve in a number of different positions in labor and govern-

ment over the years, but there is no title that has ever meant more to me than being called ‘brother’. And that is because over these past five decades as a union member, I’ve seen us stand together, fight together, and put everything on the line for one another. Solidarity isn’t just some cheap slogan for us; it is how we live,” said Kourpias.

“The labor movement built the middle class in this country. We have been leaders in demanding safer workplaces. We have marched side by side with the civil rights movement to demand justice on the job and in our communities. We have accomplished so much.”

Kourpias described the manner in which the Bush Administration has implemented policies that have drastically hurt working people. According to Kourpias, “his economic policies have divided our nation, taking money from working Americans and giving tax breaks to the wealthy and to giant corporations.” He cited several examples including the way the Administration has lost three million manufacturing jobs, slashed funding for the Labor Department, weakened federal health and safety laws, watched helplessly as college tuition has risen dramatically, and weakened federal agencies.

Kourpias spoke to the delegation about the Alliance for Retired Americans and its fight to keep Social Security out of the hands of Wall Street. He also critiqued the new Medicare Prescription Drug Plan. “Instead of expanding Medicare to help more Americans be able to afford the prescription drugs they need, the White House, the Republican Congress, and the pharmaceutical and insurance lobbyists all teamed up for the mother of all corporate welfare,” said Kourpias.

He then talked about the need to vote in November’s elections. “As union members, we are uniquely equipped to meet this challenge. We are natural born organizers. We believe in collective action. We believe that if people are armed with the truth-and given a chance to take action-then our side will prevail.”

He concluded his energetic speech by saying, “this fall we are going to do what labor has always done: we will educate, we will organize and we will mobilize. And we will not rest until we win,” concluded Kourpias.

Committees of the **BCTGM 37**

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION



COMMITTEE ON UNION LABEL & EDUCATION



COMMITTEE ON C



COMMITTEE ON FINANCE



7th Constitutional Convention

COMMITTEE ON ORGANIZING



COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL ACTION



COMMITTEES



COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS



BCTGM: Organizing Since 1886!

"Organizing is the lifeblood of the labor movement. Either we do it and thrive, or we neglect organizing and slowly breakdown. Each one of us here today must understand how vital organizing is to our union, the future of the labor movement and the prosperity of every working family in North America," BCTGM International President Frank Hurt told delegates to the BCTGM 37th Constitutional Convention.



Pictured here are the 236 organizers from 60 local unions who were honored at the Convention for their organizing efforts—which brought 10,060 new members into the BCTGM since 2002.