

STEEL VOICE



UNITED STEELWORKERS LOCAL 1999

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Taxing Matters

Tax Day. Fox News is flogging As-troturf “tea parties” underwritten by corporate lobbyists, while its pundits warn that raising the top income tax rate to the level it was under Bill Clinton constitutes “socialism.” The Wall Street Journal editorializes about the evils of the estate tax. Ari Fleischer, Daddy Bush’s old flack, is trotted out to complain that “redistribution of income” through the tax code “is getting out of hand.”

Really? Here’s the grim reality. Since 1980, when the conservative era began, inequality has reached Gilded Age extremes - while top end tax rates have been cut. The wealthiest few captured ever more of the nation’s income while successfully lowering their tax rates.

And worse - this is still going on. This month, every Republican Senator - joined bizarrely by 10 Democrats -



Robert Borasage Co-Director of Campaign for America's Future at the Take Back America conference.

pushed for yet another tax break for the super-rich - those with fortunes over \$7 million. Apparently worried that the heirs of the Paris Hilton class might not be able to keep the yacht clubs humming, Republican Senators voted in lockstep to direct the Congress to raise the full exemption of estates from \$7 to \$10 million per couple, and drop the top rate from 45% to 35%. Over a decade when fully in effect, this represents

a bauble worth about \$90 billion to the 1 in 400 estates (one-fourth of one percent) that reach that level.

Fleischer would suggest this is a small, but inadequate step to curb the confiscatory redistribution of the tax code. But he’s peddling bull.

In 1980, as “Gilded Age Taxation,” a study by the Institute for Ameri-
See Taxes Page 6.

My View

Bruce Reed, Local Union Representative



Brothers and Sisters:

Elections!! Our Local Union elections are over, congratulations to all who were elected and thanks to all who have served in the past and given their time and efforts to help our Brothers and Sisters in the Union. I am looking forward to meeting and working with the new Officers and committees. After the installation of officers at the May meeting we will attempt to meet with all of the officers and start the process of, in some cases, giving education opportunities to new grievors and stewards, obviously there will be a period of transition and we should all work to assist our Unit and Local officers in the process. This is our Union not just a few, it is our responsibility to support and assist our Officers and committees as they represent our best interests in our shops and the political arena.

The economy left us by the last administration is affecting our Local in many ways; we have

had one plant closure (Holcomb & Hoke) one shop idled (Fabcon) and one shop that the Company has notified us is for sale and if not sold they will close (Sumco). The rest of the Local is experiencing layoffs, short work weeks and reduced hours.

The new administration in Washington is attempting to restart the economy as this newsletter goes to print. None of us know if the plan will be successful but saying there is not a problem and the trickle down plan of G. Bush has only cost many of us our livelihood. Drastic measures are necessary and the Obama administration is taking drastic measures. This is not just a problem in Indiana or the United States, this collapse is global and will not be an easy fix or a quick fix. We should all support any and all efforts by our Government to stabilize the economy and in turn stabilize our jobs.

With the Employee Free Choice Act being presented in Washington it is important that we help ourselves and support this legislation. Representative Russ Stillwell is the Indiana State House Majority Leader and also a former member of the UMW. A friend to labor, Representative Stillwell has always stood up for the working class of Indiana and now is no different. Rep. Stillwell understands why America needs the Employee Free Choice Act and is not shy about telling people.

"The opponents of this legislation, mainly big greedy corporations, think that after years of trampling all over workers rights that now we're going to believe them when they say they want to protect their employees by forcing the secret ballot election process on them, that is

just ridiculous," said Stillwell. "We know better than to trust that these corporations have their employees best interests in mind, if they did they would allow their workers to organize if they wanted to. Not to mention the Employee Free Choice Act does not do away with the secret ballot, it just lets the employees decide if they want it or not."

"I encourage all of you to get involved in this grassroots campaign," urged Stillwell. "We need to write, call, and meet with our Senators and Representatives so they know that working families are counting on them to support the Employee Free Choice Act." □



Auto Advantage

Now there's **one convenient resource** for buying, insuring and maintaining your vehicles!

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WEB 08

Key Senator, Specter, Defects From Employee Free Choice Act

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (PAI)--A key senator and past sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, Arlen Specter, R-Pa., defected from it on March 24, saying he would not vote to end a planned Senate GOP filibuster aimed at killing the bill, labor's top legislative priority.

Specter's defection potentially deprived labor, and Senate Democrats, of what would be the needed 60th vote against the talkathon. It also sent union legislative representatives into meetings to plot further strategy to get the bill past the Republican roadblock. And Specter's decision led several moderate Democrats to waver, too.

Specter frankly said he would be the key vote to break the filibuster, since he estimated the Democrats would have 59 votes by the time the legislation hits the floor, assuming Democrat Al Franken eventually gets Minnesota's open seat. The Senate is the battleground for the bill.

Then Specter wrapped himself in the flag of business' multi-million-dollar campaign against the Employee Free Choice Act.

"The better way to expand labor's clout in collective bargaining is through amendments to the NLRA (National Labor Relations Act) rather than eliminating the secret ballot and mandatory arbitration," Specter said in his floor speech.

Business drive is centered around "secret ballot elections" to determine if workers want to be union-represented -- ignoring companies'

rampant labor law-breaking before those votes. The Employee Free Choice Act preserves the elections, but also says workers can choose unionization through majority sign-up: Collection of signed union authorization cards from a majority of employees in a workplace.

The choice of sign-up or an election would be up to workers, not bosses, as it is now, the Employee Free



Senator Arlen Specter R-PA

Choice Act says. Instead of the act, Specter suggested a set of changes to the NLRA. His changes do not include majority sign-up or arbitration, but provide for mediation -- not arbitration -- if the two sides can't reach a first contract within 120 days of starting bargaining. And he proposed fast union recognition votes.

Specter's statement "is a disappointment and a rebuke to working people" nationwide, said AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney. Sweeney nevertheless vowed that unions and their allies would continue to keep up their campaign

for the law. Democratic President Barack Obama says he will sign it should it reach him.

Denise Mitchell, a top Sweeney aide, added that while union leaders were disappointed, at least Specter's statement clarified where workers stand in their campaign to win the Employee Free Choice Act.

"The Employee Free Choice Act has more support than ever -- large majorities in both houses of Congress, the president and vice president, 73% of the public. We will continue to work with Democrats and a number of Republicans to create commonsense solutions to the decades of corporate power. We do not plan to let a hardball campaign from Big Business derail the Employee Free Choice Act or the dreams of workers," Sweeney added.

"The freedom to join together and bargain with employers for fair wages and better benefits is critical to rebuilding our middle class -- and now is exactly the time to do it, as we begin to revive our economy in a way that works for everyone. In the coming weeks, we will be escalating our campaign and finding the best ways forward to a balanced, strong economy," Sweeney stated.

Change To Win Chair Anna Burger, who is also a Pennsylvanian, was more optimistic about bringing Specter around -- eventually. The senator said a recession was the wrong time to pass the Employee Free Choice Act, but that he would review his stand when conditions change.

See Senator Page 4.

Letter Carriers Set Food Drive For May 9, Aim To Beat Record

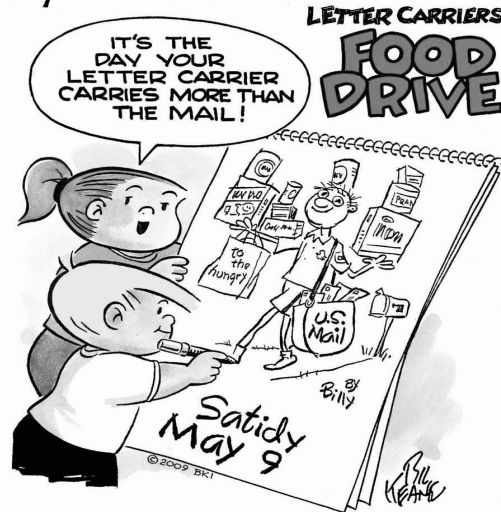
WASHINGTON (PAI)--The Letter Carriers have set the date for their annual food drive for the nation's needy as Saturday, May 9, and union President William Young wants to beat last year's record of 73.1 million pounds of non-perishable food collected.

Letter Carriers will collect the donations as they travel their routes, except for in New York and Chicago, where patrons are asked to bring food to their local post offices. Food in each community goes to local food banks, pantries and shelters nationwide.

"Millions and millions of families are suffering -- struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table. More than ever food banks, pantries and shelters need our help this year. As families count on them for support, they're counting on us and we must not back off on our commitment," Young said.

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Help "Stamp Out Hunger" with the largest one day food drive in the nation!



May 9th is the National Association of Letter Carriers "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive. Here's what you can do to help:

Put nonperishable food items in a bag by your mailbox on May 9th. Your letter carrier will pick up the food when your mail is delivered and bring it to the post office to be sorted and distributed to local food pantries and soup kitchens.

Suggested items to put in your bag:

- Canned meats like tuna, salmon, chicken, turkey & ham
- Canned, chunky soups and stews
- Canned beans, fruits and vegetables
- New, unopened plastic containers of peanut butter and jelly



Senator From Page 3.

"The Employee Free Choice Act is a vital component to restoring our economy, rebuilding the middle class and renewing the American Dream for America's workers," Burger said.

"Allowing workers the choice to join together, free from intimidation and harassment, to bargain for job security, better wages and health care will stimulate our economy and put working families back on the

path of prosperity. We will continue to work with Democrats and Republicans, including Specter, to pass this critical legislation and make our economy work for everyone," she added.

But the problem unionists face was illustrated in a conference call for reporters hosted by the AFL-CIO's pollster, Guy Molyneux of Peter Hart Research. While repeating the 73% approval figure Sweeney cited -- from a Hart poll in December -- he admitted most people are

still unaware of it. A Gallup poll published earlier in March found a 53%-39% margin of respondents saying it should be easier for workers to unionize -- and that 65% had little or no knowledge about the debate on the issue.

"Although Americans don't know a lot about this law yet, they agree with it by a 20-percentage-point margin," Molyneux said of his firm's December poll.

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Congratulations to New Officers

Chuck Jones, President

I want to congratulate all of the newly elected union officers. I do look forward to working with everyone. I will assist in anyway that I can, to help ease the transition for those that are new to the positions in which they have been elected. It is always essential that we work together as a team but in these hard economic times it is more important than ever that we stick together and support one another. As a Union we have to deal with enough negativity

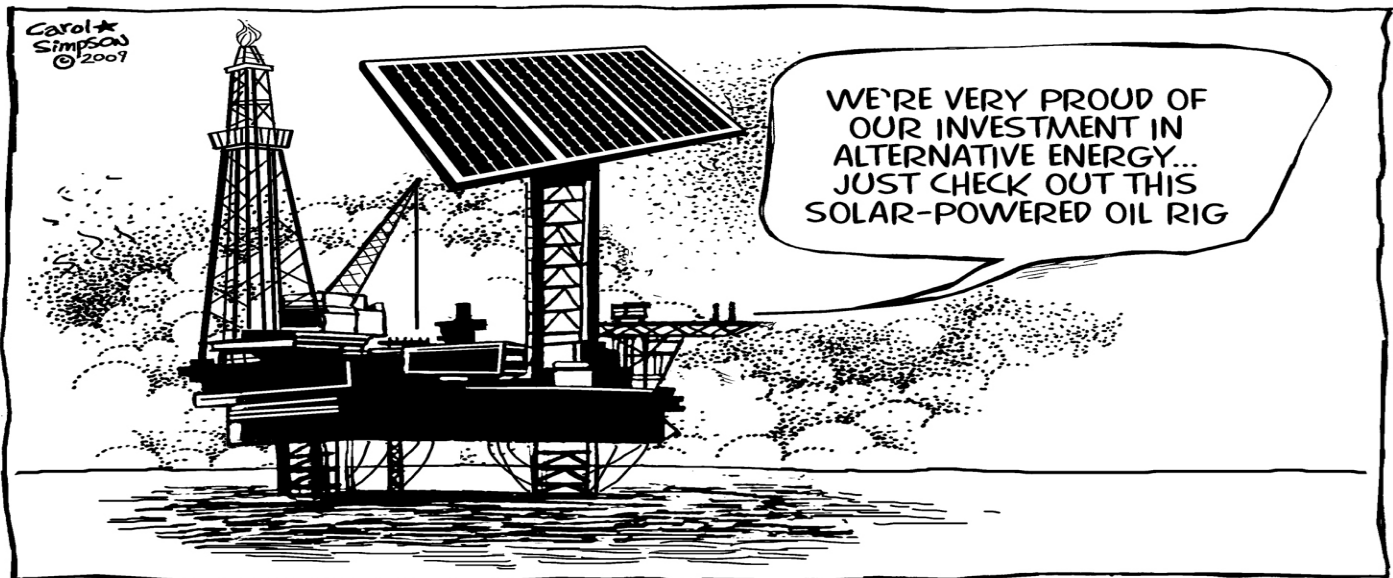


from the companies, we don't need

to be negative toward each other. So with that being said, I would like to welcome the new officers and welcome back the incumbent officers.

I also want to remind everyone about the ongoing food drive for the laid-off employees. I know times are hard on everyone right now, but all donations are greatly appreciated.

"The time is always right to do what is right" (MLK, Jr.) ☐



Election Notice.

I would like to thank Steve Morton and Kim Beckham for all their help during these past few weeks conducting the election. Also I want to thank each and every teller from all the units for their time and effort during election day. And a big thank you to Lisa Duncan for all of her help. Again to all, thank you very much.

Yours in Solidarity

Bob Garrigus
Bob Garrigus

Chairman 2009 Election Committee

Maritime Unions' Members Use Union Training To Drive Somali Pirates Off Ship

SOMEWHERE OFF THE COAST OF SOMALIA (PAI)--Members of three U.S. maritime unions who comprised the 20-person crew aboard the SS Maersk Alabama seem to have used their union-provided anti-terrorism training to drive off four Somali pirates and retake the cargo ship on April 9 in the waters of the Indian Ocean.

Reports were sketchy of what the crew, including 12 Seafarers International Union members and members of the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association and the Mariners, Mates & Pilots, did. One report



said the crew turned the ship's high-pressure fire hoses on the pirates, scattering them.

The ship's captain, most accounts said, also enabled his crew to go free by voluntarily becoming a hostage

See Pirates Page 11.

Taxes From Page 1.

ca's Future shows, the richest 1% of Americans captured fully 7.7% of the nation's after-tax income. The middle sixty percent captured about 50.9%. By 2006, the latest CBO figures show the opulent 1% — making an average \$1.3 million — captured a staggering 16.3% of the nation's income after all that tax code redistribution. While the middle sixty percent garnered only 44.1%. If class war is being waged, the rich are on the march. The Institute for Policy Studies details the staggering contrast to the Eisenhower years. In 1955, the top 400 taxpayers averaged about \$12.3 million in income (2006 dollars) and paid, after exploiting every loophole imaginable, 51.2% of that in federal income tax. A half century later, the richest 400 average a breath-taking \$263.3 million in income each, and pay a mere 17.2% of that in federal income taxes. (A lower tax rate than

paid by most of their secretaries).

If those 400 taxpayers had paid at the same rate in 2006 as a half century earlier, the federal treasury would have collected \$35.9 billion more in revenue, or enough to double the energy and transportation budget combined. No wonder Ike, clearly a stealth "socialist", could afford to build the interstate transport system.

So why do Republican Senators en masse and 10 wayward Democrats - Max Baucus, **Evan Bayh**, Maria Cantwell, Mary Landrieu, Blanche Lincoln, Patty Murray, Bill Nelson, Ben Nelson and Jon Testor - think the wealthiest one-fourth of one percent of Americans need another tax break? They wax eloquent about saving family farms and small businesses. But upon sober review, the New York Times editorial board provided a tempered evaluation of the argument: "That is swill." Opponents of the estate tax haven't

been able to dig up a family that was forced to liquidate its farm or business due to the tax because these folks simply do not exist.

The sad reality is that conservative dominance over the last decades has had profound effects. One of these is that income inequality grew to Gilded Age extremes, while top end tax rates were slashed. Fleischer is right. We did witness a lot of redistribution. But it went from the middle class to the very top, not the other way around.

(Incidentally the new tax break isn't a done deal. A conference committee will decide its fate in the next week or two. You might want to call or write Republican Senators or the wayward Democratic 10 and tell them enough already.)

*By Robert Borasage Co-Director
"Campaign for America's Future" □*

UAW Silent On GM, Chrysler Plans While Individual Workers Dissent

DETROIT (PAI)--Deep in negotiations with Chrysler and General Motors, the United Auto Workers stayed officially silent on the Obama administration's conditions for aiding the two ailing automakers. But two local UAW presidents and a pro-worker blog dissented. They wanted to know why GM and Chrysler were getting federal loans, tied to concessions, while banks got government bailouts with no concessions.

The local presidents told Associated Press the contrast was especially significant at GM, where the Obama administration forced out CEO Richard Wagoner. Meanwhile, the CEOs of banks that ran the economy into the ground -- and that received the federal bailout cash -- are still on the job. They should be shoved out, too, the workers said.

On March 30, Obama rejected the automakers' plans for reorganization, saying they did not go far enough. He demanded, and got, Wagoner's resignation, since the U.S. government has already become a major GM creditor, with its previous \$13.4 billion loan under the GOP Bush government. GM wants more federal loan dollars.

Obama gave new GM management 60 more days to come up with a viable financial plan that includes sacrifices from so-far-adamant bondholders, as well as the UAW. He gave Chrysler 30 days to produce a merger with Fiat.

In reaction, Brian Fredline, presi-

dent of UAW Local 602, a GM local near Lansing, Mich., told AP that "you have all kinds of funding available to banks that are apparently too big to fail, but they're also too big to be responsible. But when it comes to auto manufacturing and middle-class jobs and people that don't matter on Wall Street, there are certainly different standards that we have to meet -- higher standards -- than the financials. That is a double standard that exists and it's unfair."

Jim Graham, president of the local at GM's Lordstown, Ohio, Pontiac plant, added that "it would have made it a lot easier to accept that" -- firing Wagoner -- "had the CEOs of the banks also been required to give up their jobs."

One UAW blogger had no sympathy for Wagoner. The author of Joe's Union Blog, a popular site for

UAW members, noted "GM lost market share in nearly every year" since Wagoner -- a GM lifer -- became CEO in 2000. "In Wagoner's last 4 years GM has lost more than \$80 billion. We can examine the pitiful legacy he leaves behind over and over and it would be hard for anyone to genuinely believe that Wagoner did a good job, BY ANY MEASURE! I will also say that from the shop floor some of the moves have appeared dimwitted at best," the blogger said. And Wagoner is getting a \$20 million "golden parachute," too, the blogger stated.

The Lansing State Journal quoted GM's new CEO as saying the interim pact reached with the UAW in mid-February, which still must be ratified, would cut the firm's costs for workers by \$1.1 billion yearly.

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Obama Administration Weighs In On Side Of Female Workers In Wal-Mart Case

SAN FRANCISCO (PAI)--The Obama administration, represented by the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, has weighed in on the side of the female workers who filed a class action sexual discrimination suit against Wal-Mart eight years ago. The government was silent until now, but EEOC attorneys who sided with the women are career personnel, not GOP Bush government appointees.

In a friend-of-the-court brief sent March 19 to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco before that 11-judge court's March 24 trial on the case, the agency supported a lower-court ruling on how back pay could be determined, should the lawsuit ever come to trial. Six women filed the suit against the monster retailer, and asked that it cover all women presently or formerly working for Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart has tried to throw out the case twice, but lost both in the lower court and before a smaller panel of appellate court judges. This trial was before the full court.

"To achieve Title VII's key goal of providing make-whole relief to victims of discrimination, this court and others have held that class-wide relief may be appropriate where, because of factors such as the passage of time and the employer's own subjective employment practices, any attempt to reconstruct individual employment histories more precisely would drag the court into a quagmire of hypothetical judgments," the EEOC told the judges in its brief.

Title VII is the sweeping enforcement section of the Civil Rights Act, which outlaws discrimination based on race, sex, religion or other factors. Pre-trial investigation showed Wal-Mart, unlike its retail competitors, consistently paid female workers less than it paid men in the same jobs with the same experience, and discriminated against women in promotion as well.

EEOC said any court's power to determine back pay for a class of workers without individual hearings and trials on each case is "an important tool for ensuring individuals injured by systemic discrimination may obtain redress for those injuries."

That principle holds not just for class action cases the agency brings, but for private cases, too, EEOC said. "We therefore urge the court to ensure that nothing in its decision restricts the availability of these relief procedures in Title VII pattern-or-practice cases," its brief added. Its attorney called Wal-Mart's position "nonsensical."

The lawyers for the women in the case, *Dukes et al vs. Wal-Mart*, told the judges that "following two years of discovery, including review of over a million pages of documents -- including Wal-Mart's employee compensation data -- depositions of both Wal-Mart executives and our clients, testimony of statisticians, a labor economist and a sociologist, the (federal) District Court certified the class, finding that common questions of fact and law existed.

"The court also found there was sig-

nificant evidence of corporate-wide practices and policies of excessive subjectivity and gender stereotyping in personnel decisions. The class was certified for injunctive relief and punitive damages," they pointed out.

Wal-Mart stuck to saying it wanted each individual female worker to sue it for discrimination, and prove her case. It was joined by business lobbies, including the Chamber of Commerce, along with the Pacific Legal Foundation, a Radical Right organization well-known for suing for corporate property rights.

"When broad social justice goals are embedded in the law, then courts must redress these claims," the women's lawyers replied. "Title VII was enacted with the stated goal of eliminating the societal norm which relegated women and men of color to second-class status in employment, excluding them from many jobs, paying them lower wages and subjecting them to the least-desirable working conditions.

"Class actions were established as a vehicle for addressing systemic harms, and Wal-Mart and many other large businesses seek to convince the courts that justice is better served on an individual case by case basis. But given the astronomical disparity in resources between Wal-Mart and the underpaid female class members, this case presents the textbook example of why class actions have been -- and still are -- the only viable means of redressing systemic discrimination," the law-

See Wal-Mart Page 11.

Local 1999 Election Results for 2009 General Election

President

<u>Chuck Jones</u>	751	Winner
Bob Asher	570	
Anthony Whitley	292	

Vice President

<u>Linda Bennington</u>	696	Winner
Danny Mims	419	
Dwight Turner	255	
Doug White	165	

Recording Secretary

<u>Peggy S. Scotten</u>	835	Winner
Markeya McDaniel	671	

Financial Secretary

<u>Allen Johnson</u>	779	Winner
Steve Davis	693	

Treasurer

<u>Miss Vickie Clark</u>	976	Winner
Marion Qualls	459	

Trustees

<u>Bennie Porter</u>	827	Winner
<u>George Gann</u>	752	Winner
<u>Maurie Wilkerson</u>	725	Winner
Kelly Ray Hugunin	708	

Inside Guard

<u>Peggy Wilson</u>	747	Winner
Greg Rippy	716	

Outside Guard

<u>Shelly Barber Carr</u>	759	Winner
Robin J. Davis	702	

Guide

<u>Mike Hensley</u>	Unopposed	Winner
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Holcomb & Hoke Closes Doors

After over 100 years in business Holcomb & Hoke closed its doors in February. 26 members of Local 1999 Unit 18 lost their jobs as a result.

The Holcomb & Hoke Manufacturing Company in its final incarnation produced folding doors and partitions. The company also made many other products throughout its history.

When James I. Holcomb considered going into business with Fred Hoke, he had only just met the gentleman. Holcomb, a furniture polish salesman simply passing through town, approached Hoke, a hardware store clerk, with the proposition mere moments of having attended a Sunday school class he was teaching one morning in 1894. Not knowing precisely what that business would be, Holcomb vowed to return to Sullivan, Indiana, when the right business opportunity arose.

He made good on his promise two years later. With little more than the clothes on his back, Holcomb reunited with Hoke to pitch his idea about purchasing a brush business in Lafayette, Indiana. Hoke took to the notion; and with the help of a loan from his uncle, joined his friend in forming Holcomb & Hoke Manufacturing Company in 1896.

A joint venture that goes on to span a lifetime is exceedingly rare, especially when the two partners are polar opposites. Born in Warren, Illinois, James Holcomb was a dynamo of energy and natural salesman who had earned his way through two years at the University of Michigan going door to door selling furniture

polish. Fred Hoke, one of ten boys, was born in Jefferson, Kentucky. Though he had no formal education past the eighth grade, Hoke had a calming way with employees and was largely responsible for holding the operation together through rough times. Together, they founded a highly successful company following two basic principles: the first being to personally supervise the selling of whatever they make; and, secondly, to always be looking ahead for new specialized products whose market is too small to interest big companies, yet large enough to bring Holcomb & Hoke growth and prosperity.

The brush business fit this philosophy well, and a small factory was built in Sullivan. Hoke remained on site, in charge of production, while Holcomb traveled as far as New York, hiring and training salesmen to take orders. Despite the success of the operation, however, it was not long before another enterprise caught the young entrepreneurs' eyes.

Box ball was a modified version of bowling, using smaller balls in knocking down five pins set horizontally across a wooden alley. Lanes were portable and available in three sizes, providing for quick and easy installation in amusement parks, bars and other entertainment venues both big and small. Purchase of American Box Ball Company in 1903 prompted Holcomb & Hoke's relocation to Indianapolis, Indiana. Fueled by the cross-country success of their fledgling business, the two men built their first manufacturing facility in 1906. Demand for the game remained steady for the next

seven years, at which time they concluded that the box ball market was nearly saturated. And so began the next chapter in the company's storied history, as it embarked on a venture that would make their brand name synonymous with America's favorite snack.

Prior to 1913, popcorn was made in small handheld poppers over a kerosene burner and sold from carts along the street. Holcomb and Hoke, in collaboration with engineer and inventor Dan Talbert, changed all that with the introduction of an indoor/outdoor machine that would drop raw corn into the popping plate, pop the corn, discharge the popped kernels from the popper, sift out unpopped kernels while buttering those that had popped, then deposit the finished product in the bottom of the cabinet; all automatically and in full view of onlookers.

Butter-Kist popcorn machines—so



named because every kernel was mechanically and uniformly "Kist" with pure creamery butter—became hugely popular in theaters, five-and-dime stores, hotel lobbies and numerous other local businesses. Customers were magnetized as much by the intricate mechanical motion of the machine as they were by the

See Closing Page 12.

Unit 07 Carrier

Things at Carrier are better than expected with the economy in a downturn. We still have close to 300 members on layoff and we are getting a few recalled soon. We still have the food drive for laid off workers, so please try to bring in nonperishable items. We have members that have exhausted unemployment benefits and are in need of food.

The grievance load has spiked some due to FMLA and medical issues.

Elections are over and I would like to congratulate all members who were successful in being elected to a position. These are not easy jobs to fill, good luck to each one of you.

In Solidarity,
Linda Bennington
Unit 07 President

Unit 09 Quemetco

Things are still going well here at Quemetco. Work has remained steady although we have seen the Company tightening up on overtime. We will be having a furnace rebuild coming up soon making more overtime available.

Grievances have been picking up lately. But fortunately only a couple have been for discharges.

In Solidarity,
Kelly Ray Hugunin
Unit 09 President

Unit 17 Mid America Extrusion

We had a layoff of the entire second shift at the end of February. However we shipped almost the same amount of aluminum in March with one shift at just under 600,000 pounds.

We have a new general manager as of April 13. Tom Strickland has been replaced by Bill Witherspoon. Bill is committed to improving our sales and getting our laid off members back to work.

In Solidarity,
Howard W. Davis
Unit 17 President

Pirates From Page 6.

to the pirates, who escaped over the side -- with him -- in a lifeboat. The lifeboat subsequently ran out of fuel and was surrounded by U.S. Navy vessels and spy planes as negotiations continued for the captain's release. Neither crew nor the captain were injured. The pirates boarded the Alabama on April 8.

"SIU members aboard the Maersk Alabama have undergone safety training at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education," in Piney Point, Md., SIU said. Courses they took there included "anti-terrorism briefings to every student, security awareness, vessel security officer training, basic and advanced fire fighting, chemical, biological and radiological defense, vessel familiarization, small-arms training and damage control." SIU set up a toll-free hotline for crew members' families.

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Wal-Mart From Page 8.

yers declared.

"A Wal-Mart employee has a better chance of winning the Lotto than garnering the resources to sue one of the largest profit-making enterprises in the world. Wal-Mart knows if it can defeat class certification, it diminishes the likelihood it will be held accountable for its wide-spread discriminatory practices," they concluded.

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Union Plus interstate moving discount


Moving?

Your first move should be to check out the **Union Plus Moving Discount** program.

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We have partnered with two nationally trusted, full-service van lines, Allied and North American to provide you with easy access to comparison moving estimates, free in-home surveys, and special discounts on long distance moving and in-transit storage.

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Visit www.UnionPlus.org/Moving to get your free moving estimate or call **1-800-234-1159** today to speak to a knowledgeable representative.


www.UnionPlus.org/Moving
Web 08

Closing From Page 10.

sensual aroma and fresh, buttery taste of the popcorn. Merchants embraced the minimal space requirements and 65- to 70-percent profit margin.

Machines came in a variety of sizes and types, many with optional features, in appealing to the full spectrum of business owners. Depending on money and space constraints, they could choose from a full-size, multifunction floor model with storage cabinet and elaborate display signage to a compact countertop model with small backlit nameplate. Other features included peanut roasters (marketed as peanut toasters); warming compartments for pre-roasted peanuts; mechanical vendors or compartments for shelled nuts; and containers for displaying candy, chewing gum and mints.

All Holcomb & Hoke machines were

Holcomb & Hoke went on to sell some \$20 million worth of Butter-Kist popcorn machines, peanut toasters and combination units during their 21-year production run. Similar products, including lunch wagons and sandwich warmers (Butter-Kistwich machines) were also marketed during this period. One reason for their success was the lack of competition. This did not deter the company, however, from producing what was nevertheless an attractive, well-made product. All exposed metal parts were of highly polished nickel plate. Cabinets of earlier models were made of solid wood, finished in rich mahogany, natural quarter-sawed oak or ivory white enamel; those of later models were constructed of steel and painted. Use of sturdy, rubber-tired casters enabled merchants to move large machines with ease, both inside and outside their place of business.

What remained constant over the

ny continually promoted these figures—\$7 to \$16 daily, \$107 in the first week, \$1400 over the first three months—to generate sales.

Indeed, innovative marketing was largely responsible for Holcomb & Hoke's success; in time, helping it become the number one manufacturer of popcorn machines and peanut roasters in the world. Advertisements in newspapers, consumer magazines and trade journals rarely stated price. Instead, they often featured testimonials by machine owners as to the profits they were making and to the spillover effect they were witnessing; namely, greater sales of other merchandise as a result of the increased store traffic from selling Butter-Kist popcorn and peanuts. The company was among the first to hold training schools for their salesmen and to promote installment selling, the practice whereby machine owners used profits in paying for machines over a period of time.



driven by a small electric motor and required electricity for lights, signs and smaller heating elements. Many came in several models, enabling merchants to choose between electricity, natural gas or manufactured gas in powering the popping plate and peanut toaster. A few, however, could be ordered with a generator to produce gas from gasoline in operating the popping plate. All-electric units were by far the most popular.

years was the company's heavy use of glass to expose the motion of the machines' inner workings. Motion attracts the eye, J. I. Holcomb reasoned, and creates interest in the product. This interest would draw shoppers to the machine, at which time the aroma of the warm, buttered popcorn would compel them to buy. Profit on the sale of popcorn could be quite good in its day, especially for something that required only one operator. And the compa-

Revered by many as a marketing genius, J. I. Holcomb implemented bonus plans for employees and offered spectacular prizes as incentives to work hard. His articles in the company newsletter focused not only on the many benefits to owning a Holcomb & Hoke machine, but on how profits could be spent, such as toward a child's college tuition. Salesology, one of Holcomb's best known literary works, is still referenced in business schools today.

Sales of Holcomb & Hoke's popcorn machines and roasters began to dwindle with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. At the same time, many customers could no longer afford to make payments on machines they'd acquired using the installment plan. (Manufacturing of these units would cease completely in 1934.) Were it not for their multiple product lines and the ability to shift production with relative ease, Holcomb & Hoke Manufacturing might well have gone the way of so many others who were forced out of business.

Insufficient commercial refrigeration in the early 1920s proved a golden opportunity for the dynamic partnership. They initiated production of large ice tanks, units used in cooling glass meat cases, in 1921; but soon shifted focus to manufacturing freezer counters, refrigerated display cases commonly seen in butcher shops and grocery stores. Then in 1929, Holcomb & Hoke added stokers to its product line. Sold under the name Fire Tender, it was a mechanical device for feeding coal to a furnace. Both were largely seasonal products that balanced one another in demand, enabling the company to keep workers employed throughout the year. While production of Fire Tenders (15 models served both residential and commercial markets) would continue, that of refrigerated cases ended with the outbreak of World War II, as such products were not considered priority goods.

The United States' entrance into WWII signaled dramatic changes in the manufacturing sector. Rationing and other government efforts to curb consumer spending stunted

the growth of companies large and small. Many manufacturers were compelled to completely retool for the war effort. Seeing its production and sales numbers decline, Holcomb & Hoke hired an individual to find work for them. The man's chance conversation with a fellow train commuter in 1942 landed a hefty contract to produce tank arms (the piece that joined the track rollers to the tank). Agreements with other companies to do similar work soon followed.



The 1950s marked the beginning of a new era for Holcomb & Hoke. Just as a government contract to fabricate expensive back wing hinges for Korean War (1950-1953) fighter planes was being set in motion, widespread replacement of coal by gas and oil for domestic heating was sounding the death knell for their stoker production business. The search for new products gave birth to the folding door.

The decision to make accordion partitions and, in 1962, operable flat walls, fit perfectly with Holcomb & Hoke's long-time strategy

of producing specialized products with considerable growth potential that can be sold through solid distribution channels across the country. Manufactured under the brand name FolDoor, they were designed to make the best use of available area while assuring sound and sight privacy. Space consciousness, according to company research, was on the rise. The FolDoor product line provided maximum flexibility in schools, churches, hospitals, restaurants, convention centers, office buildings and the like in an imagi-

native yet cost-effective way. And it continues doing so to this day.

Holcomb & Hoke's capacity to anticipate changing times and readily adapt manufacturing operations to meet a foreseeable increasing demand—all the while maintaining set standards—are largely responsible for the growth and prosperity that spans three centuries. Not all product ideas, however, met with success. Interestingly, those that fell well short of expected sales were looked upon not as failures; but as costly lessons on the critical impor-

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Sweeney Tells Top Leaders He'll Retire In September

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

SILVER SPRING, Md. (PAI)--AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney formally told top leaders of the federation that he will retire at the AFL-CIO Convention in September.

Sweeney's statement, at the April 6 closed-door meeting of the AFL-CIO's 21-member Executive Committee at the George Meany Center/National Labor College in Silver Spring, Md., was confirmed by a federation spokeswoman.

It also came as Sweeney, Change To Win leaders and National Education Association President Dennis Van Roekel announced creation of the National Labor Coordinating Committee, a group of presidents of the nation's 12 largest unions.

In arrangements worked out by American Rights At Work President David Bonior, the committee is the first concrete step towards reunifying the labor movement all under one roof. And that includes the 3.2-million-member NEA, which is both unaligned with either labor federation and the nation's largest union.

Sweeney's retirement was expected. The former Service Employees president, who will turn 75 in May 5, has led the now-56-union group since 1995, when his slate ousted incumbent Tom Donohue, who took over from Lane Kirkland months before.

Sweeney's departure also comes at a key time for labor: Workers played a top role in electing pro-worker Democratic presidential nominee

Barack Obama to the White House and increasing pro-worker ranks in the Democratic-run Congress.

Increased political activism and mobilization, to enhance the chances of pro-worker legislation in Congress and nationwide, was and is a top Sweeney cause. The results were that unionists and their families were more than one-fifth of the electorate in 2008, almost double the share (12.4%) of union members in the workforce.



John Sweeney President AFL-CIO

But even as Sweeney leaves, problems remain:

- Labor is still split. One of the leading events of Sweeney's 14 years at the federation's helm was the 2005 withdrawal of seven unions -- the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters, the Laborers, SEIU, UNITE HERE, the Carpenters and the United Farm Workers -- to form Change To Win. CTW wanted more emphasis on organizing and less on politics, but it has joined the AFL-CIO's political efforts. The new coordinating committee is the first step to heal the split.

But Change To Win has its own

problems: UNITE HERE has divided and a majority of its board voted to talk with Sweeney on re-affiliation with the AFL-CIO. UNITE HERE also charged SEIU was trying to take it over. SEIU has an internal battle with its biggest West Coast local. The Laborers, while not back in the AFL-CIO yet, are half-in, half-out, as members of its Building and Construction Trades Department.

- The Employee Free Choice Act, labor's #1 legislative priority, which Obama supports and pledged to sign, faces a planned GOP Senate filibuster. It has yet to get the 60 committed senators it needs to break a fatal talkathon. A key senator, past co-sponsor Arlen Specter, R-Pa., defected under pressure from business and his party's Radical Right, which wants to beat him in a primary next year. Several Democrats, notably Blanche Lincoln, D-Ark., and Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., have drifted away.

The bill would help level the playing field between workers and bosses in organizing and bargaining, by writing into law that workers -- not employers -- get to choose how they want their union recognized: Through an NLRB-run election or through the agency's verification that the union collected authorization cards from a majority of employees at a worksite.

The bill would also increase penalties for labor law-breakers and mandate binding arbitration for a first contract if the two sides can't agree within 120 days of starting bargaining. The Executive Com-

mittee spent part of its Meany Center session discussing the proposal's prospects and labor's nationwide campaign for it.

- Even without the CTW unions, the number of members in AFL-CIO-affiliated unions declined by a net of 43,326 from 2007 to 2008, and by 139,474 from 2003 to 2008, the federation's own figures show.

That decline in turn has hurt the AFL-CIO's finances, which depend on remittances -- calculated on a per-member basis -- from its 56 member unions, plus payments from its affinity credit card. The federation asked for voluntary contributions last year to pay for the big political push, but the payments fell short of goals.

- Successorship questions. Until Sweeney ousted Donohue at the 1995 convention in New York City, AFL-CIO presidents were often succeeded by their #2 officers, the secretary-treasurers. Current Secretary-Treasurer Richard L. Trumka, a former Mine Workers president, is a leading candidate to succeed Sweeney. But at least one CTW union that might return to the AFL-CIO would not do so if Trumka is in the top job. And other names have been floated for Sweeney's post.

- Structure. Any new, unified labor federation must figure out its structure -- the consensus-based but sometimes-slow AFL-CIO, the leaner top-down CTW, or a mix of both. And it must figure out what to emphasize and what to leave to member unions.

Press Associates, Inc. (PAI) ☐

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tance of good market research.

The Electramuse, "a continuously playing, coin-operated musical instrument," was introduced by the company in 1928. Offered in several models, it was akin to an automatic jukebox and marketed to business owners in much the same manner as the popcorn machines. The units played any standard ten-inch record, but buyers were encouraged to obtain music through the Electramuse Record Exchange Service. Under this program, subscribers received a shipment of records every two weeks. While merchants were delighted with the opportunity to select the music of their liking at discounted prices, their patrons were anything but in having to settle for whatever song happened to be next up, rather than being able to choose. It wasn't long before "selective" jukeboxes became available. In 1930, after having lost more than half a million dollars, Holcomb & Hoke ceased production of the Electramuse.

At a time when automatic cooking utensils were unheard of, a man approached the founding partners with a self-regulating aluminum cooker. It featured three sections for food, was mounted on legs and equipped with a gas burner and thermostat. Thinking they had the world by the tail, Holcomb & Hoke manufactured thousands for distribution to department stores all across the country. When the cookers didn't sell, they were baffled. An investigation by the advertising firm hired to help with marketing discovered that the problem was in the pricing. At \$76.85, the product was too expensive for its intended buyer, the

average American working family. Those that could afford it didn't need it because they had domestic help to do the cooking. Needless to say, neglecting to understand the purchasing habits of the target market proved to be an expensive oversight.

Even prior to mechanical refrigeration, Holcomb & Hoke saw a future in machines that could dispense cold beverages into a cup. And so they fabricated one for buttermilk, which operated on roughly the same basic principles as modern-era soft drink vending machines. Within an hour of being put to the test in their factory one summer afternoon, however, the machine became engulfed in flies. Clueless as to how they could keep the flies away, the company elected then and there to shelve the invention.

Holcomb & Hoke never seemed to run short on ideas for new products. There was the man-made pollinizer, essentially an eight-foot-wide brush on two large wagon wheels that did more or less the same thing bees do. Unfortunately, the pollinizer—much like their rope-drive, buggy-wheeled automobile with one-cylinder engine developed in 1906—couldn't be made to work as well as they felt it should. Further production of both was scrapped early on. The "two-minute jelly"—a fruit juice and pectin premix, to which water was added in making homemade jelly—and a line of attic fans met with a similar fate. Each became a stellar example of how the company ultimately could not manufacture the product and make it price competitive. ☐

STEEL VOICE

Kelly Ray Hugunin
Editor

USW Local 1999
218 South Addison
Street
Indianapolis, Indiana
46222

Phone: 317-639-1479

Fax: 317-639-1138

E-Mail:
local1999usw@att.net

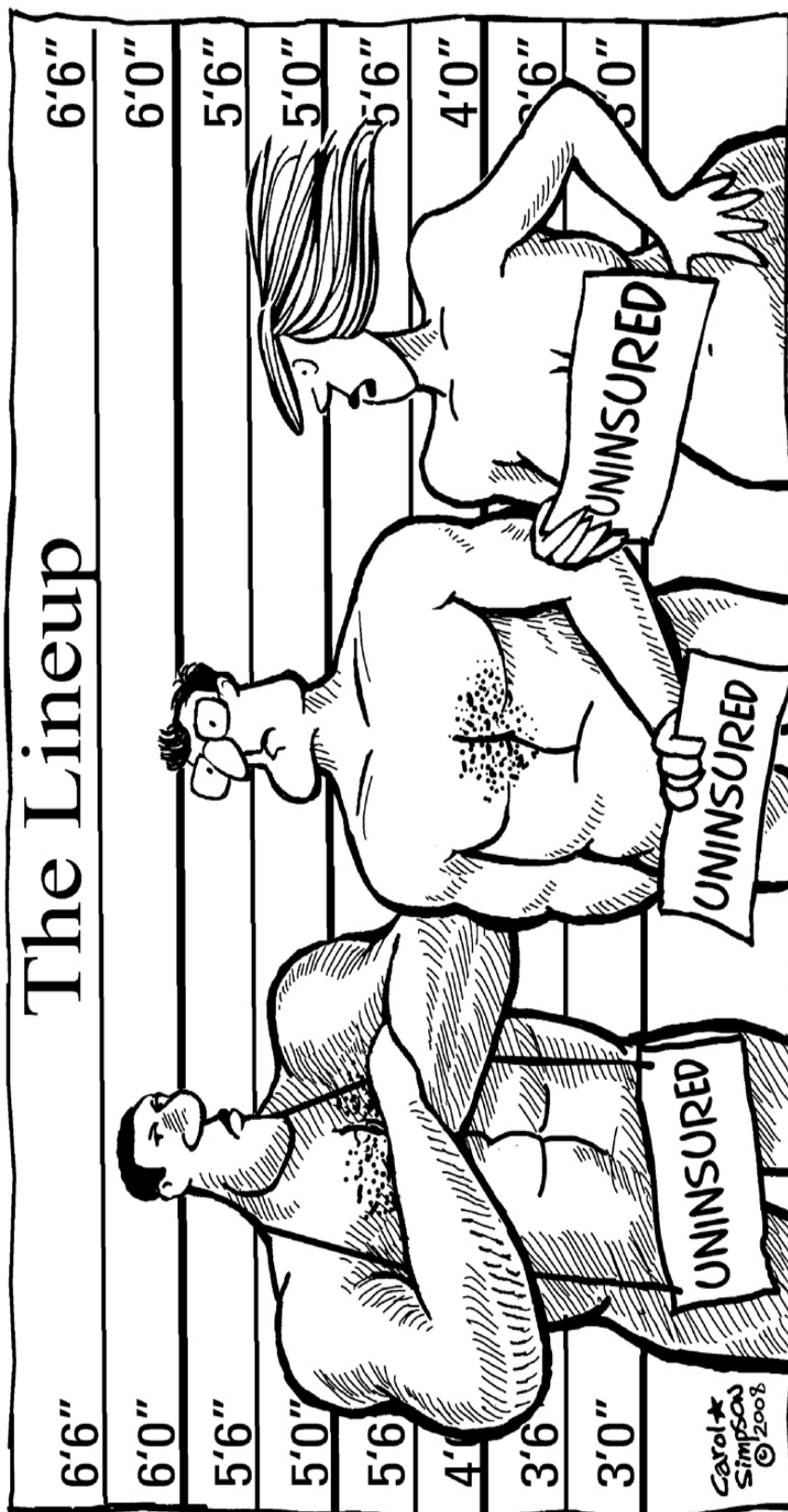
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To submit
Mail to: 218 South Addison
St. Indianapolis, IN 46222
Phone: 317-639-1479
Email: hugunin@tds.net



*If health insurance coverage were clothing...
40 million Americans would be in jail for indecent exposure.*

Carol
Simpson
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