



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As we enter the month of March we're still in the process of re-establishing ourselves in our dealings with the local plant management group. We're not alone in that, as every other Goodyear local union has also struggled with the management at its plant. Those managers spent three months apart from us, running their plant without a labor agreement and doing as they pleased with the replacement workers. In every location the local union has bumped heads with local management about honoring the labor agreement in areas of contracting out, work rules and other language that we have limiting management rights to do as they please.

Added to that general situation is the one we face here, regarding whether the plant will shut down right after the end of 2007 or not. Every day someone calls the union hall with the latest rumor going around in the plant. In fact, until November we will not know when it will shut down or if it will shut down. As soon as I know anything I will get that information to you, either in an article in THE STRETCH, the plant newspaper, in a mailout or by posting on the union bulletin boards in the plant. In the meantime, you should make it a point to attend the monthly union meetings and ask any questions you may have. It is at those meetings that information can be shared and questions and concerns addressed in full.

It's painfully obvious that Goodyear intends to stop tire production here unless something changes their mind. The tire market could do that, which is what happened in Gadsden. Our ability to build more high value added (HVA) tires could affect when it would happen. The more HVA tires we can produce the harder it will be to stop production here. Those are the variables as I see them today. We will stay in contact with the state, with the Tyler Economic Council, and with anyone else we need to in order to take advantage of any opportunity that may present itself. Though there are lots of rumors out there about other tire companies buying our plant, I know of none who have expressed an interest at this time.

Meanwhile, we are doing our local contract negotiations. We have quite a few housekeeping items to address, most of them coming from the Master Contract. While neither side intends to make a long, complicated deal out of the local negotiations, we do see the opportunity to correct some prob-

lems. I am hopeful we will finish our local negotiation before the middle of March.

lems. I am hopeful we will finish our local negotiation before the middle of March.

There are a lot of rumors out there about the entire plant going to the Monday through Friday work schedule (S-Team). I have heard nothing at this time that indicates it will happen before July. If I do hear any different, I will get it to you immediately.

Again, I appreciate your support and solidarity in this most difficult of times.

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## Helen Retires



Helen Young, Local 746L's secretary has decided to call it quits. She has worked at the union hall for 14 years. Helen says that she has really enjoyed the time she has worked at the union hall but now she is really going to enjoy her retirement. She and her husband Freddie Young plan to do some traveling and stay involved with S.O.A.R. Freddie is a retiree of Goodyear, he worked in the plant as an electrician for 6 years.

Thank you Helen for all that you have done for everyone over the past 14 years. We wish you well on your retirement.

## New Face at the Union Hall



Since Helen Young retired, a new secretary had to be hired to replace her. Tressa (TREE-SA) Hawkins is that person. She has been around the union hall quite a bit during the last year, filling in for Helen during her vacation and such. Tressa also worked with the Strike and Assistance Committee during the strike keeping the records filed where they could be easily found.

Tressa grew up working in her family's business (Powell's Pizza Burger) has lived in the Tyler area all of her life. She and her husband Kim have one grown daughter.

She was secretary to the pastor at Marvin United Methodist Church for over 11 years then was Office Administrator for Lloyd James Funeral home. Tressa is a notary public and will be glad to notarize any documents that you bring to her.

Welcome aboard Tressa. We hope you have a long and happy employment at the union hall.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr. Wyatt,

**I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people that worked the strike. I have a degree in social work and I observed people that were true social workers. The entire effort was so well organized and worked like a well oiled machine. Thank the union and the especially the persons that worked at the church. During the time when things were really uncertain for everyone they were there to make everyone feel better and to make a difference for a lot of families. This group of people must be commended and God Bless each and everyone one of them. Maybe those that worked the strike committee should consider returning to school and pursuing degrees in Social Work. Again we would like to thank you all for all the care and concern when people really needed it most.**

**Donnie Gaines (spouse of James E. Gaines)**

## Pension and Insurance Notes

by Sherrell Brown

### 401k Workshop

**In last month's Stretch, I ask for the membership to contact the union hall regarding a 401k workshop. We were going to have some financial advisors to supply some guidance in this area. However, due to the lack of interest from the membership, the 401k informational workshop has been cancelled.**

## Court To Bush Labor Dept.: Explain Delay In Protective Equipment Rule

WASHINGTON (PAI)—A federal appellate court has ordered the Bush Labor Department to explain, within a month, why it has taken eight years to impose a rule that requires companies to buy protective equipment and clothing for their workers.

The ruling, disclosed Feb. 20, but handed down four days before, orders Labor Secretary Elaine Chao and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to take no more than 30 pages to explain their stalling. Then the United Food and Commercial Workers and the AFL-CIO, which sued to get the agency to move, get 40 days—also starting Feb. 16—to file new arguments about why the administration should act.

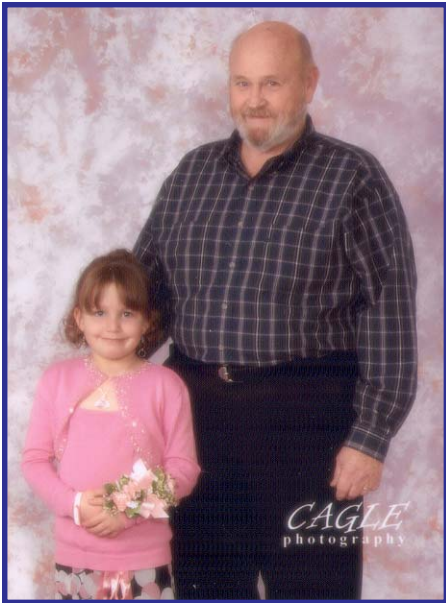
The court ruling is a positive move for the millions of workers whose employers refuse to buy them protective equipment—such as goggles, hard hats and gloves—because OSHA does not require them to do so. OSHA has such requirements for some specific industries, but not for industries overall.

And the agency had been working on a rule since 1999 to get all industries to buy the protective equipment for their workers, and had taken all but the final step—actually issuing the federal rule forcing them to buy personal protective equipment (PPE) for their workers. That laggardness pushed UFCW and the AFL-CIO to sue on Jan. 3.

“The Bush administration's failure to act is putting workers in danger,” UFCW said in hailing the latest ruling. “By OSHA's own estimates, 400,000 workers have been injured and 50 have died due to the absence of this rule.

“Workers in some of America's most dangerous industries, such as meatpacking, poultry and construction, and low-wage and immigrant workers who suffer high injury rates, are vulnerable to being forced by their employers to pay for their own safety gear because of OSHA's failure to finish the PPE rule.

“The new rule would not impose any new obligations on employers to provide safety equipment. It simply codifies OSHA's longstanding policy that employers, not employees, have the responsibility to pay for it,” UFCW said.



## UNITED STEELWORKERS **SOAR** STEELWORKERS ORGANIZATION OF ACTIVE RETIREES

### RETIREES' CORNER

by  
**Tennie Hulsey & Carol Swanson**

Larry Van Deman escorted Casey Egan, 8 years old, to a Valentine Dance. Casey is the granddaughter of Jack and Carol Swanson. Larry, does this mean you like younger women? Did

Lockie really drive you and Casey to the dance?

March 12, 2007, 11 a.m. will be a 42 tournament at the John Nash Activity Building. For more information call Roy Stanley at (903) 592-3260.

Reminder! Be sure to bring an item for the Hospice of East Texas Homeplace Family Room.

**Ladies Auxiliary**  
Ladies Auxiliary will meet March 6, 2007, 10 a.m. at the John Nash Activity Building. Ladies are to bring finger foods.

### S.O.A.R. Fund Raiser

The meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2007, 6 p.m. at the John Nash Activity Building. A fund raising is planned for the meeting. Hamburger Supper is scheduled with a \$5 donation. Meal includes a dessert. The public is invited. For additional information, contact Lockie VanDeman at (903) 469-3764.

## Retirees' Banquet

It's that time once again, Retirees. "Banquet Time"! The Banquet will be on Monday, March 26, 2007, at the Harvey Hall Convention Center, 2000 W. Front ST., Tyler, Texas at 5:30 p.m.

We don't have a theme this year, so we can make up our own theme. You can dress casual, or really dress up, this year anything goes.

Catering will be provided by Hickory Fare Bar-be-cue.

## USW, Arkansas Wire Firm Workers, Facing Labor Law-Breaking, Take Fight Overseas

By Mark Gruenberg, PAI Staff Writer

STAR CITY, Ark. (PAI)—The Steelworkers and the 56 workers they represent at National Wire Fabric Company in Star City, Ark., are taking their fight overseas.

Specifically, they've enlisted unionists in the Netherlands and Belgium to get NWF's parent firm in Holland to acknowledge their U.S. subsidiary's labor law-breaking in what is now an almost 19-month long struggle, after NWF forced the workers to strike.

And they now have at least a preliminary charge by the National Labor Relations Board on their side, converting their strike from an economic strike to an unfair labor practices strike—after NWF in January refused USW Local 1671's offer to return to work.

As the legal maneuvering, which the company admits it planned, continues, and as the European unionists mount a publicity campaign against NWF's parent, Gamma Holding NV, the determined Arkansans are cutting back and making do, but it's a struggle.

"Almost all 56 of us were ready to go back" after the local's Jan. 9 vote to unconditionally return to work, Local 1671 Vice President Dan Morrison said in a telephone interview. A few took early retirement, but the rest want jobs back.

But after the vote is when NWF really broke labor law, by refusing to take them back, as U.S. law requires. "They snubbed their nose at us and said they're not going to do that, and that they don't care what the (NLRB) charges are," Morrison added.

The Arkansas workers were forced to strike July 23, 2005, when they rejected company demands to abolish seniority and grievance procedures, along with a demand that workers pay a share of their health insurance premiums. But NWF wouldn't say what that share would be.

What they really wanted to do, through the refusal to take the workers back, was to "destroy the union," Morrison said. That included using scabs to replace the workers. And in the last bargaining session, NWF said the scabs would come first for jobs.

The company's decision to not only ban the workers from returning but to defy the board has set up a March 19 NLRB hearing

in Arkansas on eight counts of soliciting striking employees to cross the picket line and a failure to bargain in good faith with the union, USW said. It's trying to get the unfair labor practices ruling retroactive to September.

USW also brought over European union colleagues to investigate the company's action against the Star City workers, and to build a case to take to Gamma, said union bargainer Barry Strange, who is working with the local. USW has an advantage under European laws in the presence of "works councils" the company must meet with.

That requirement let the Belgian and Dutch unionists go to Gamma's management and board with evidence of NWF's labor law-breaking. "They said to us, 'They're not violating any laws,'" Strange said of his meetings with the Dutch company. "They were shocked when we gave them documents"—the NLRB charges—"that shows the U.S. government says: 'We don't believe you.'"

Just to make sure, Strange says the European unions started a publicity campaign to let consumers know Gamma, through NWF, is breaking the law against the Arkansans.

Meanwhile, the 56 workers are getting along on USW strike benefits, whatever other jobs they can scrape up and donations from unionists elsewhere in Arkansas, a right-to-work state with a small union presence, especially in rural areas such as Star City, "I don't know if anyone is in trouble of losing their mortgage, but a lot of us have had to cut a lot of corners," Morrison said. "Two weeks ago, we had a big fish fry and 100-150 people from other union locals around the state showed up." (Freddie Wehrmann and Joe Wyatt representing USW Local 746L presented a check to USW Local 1671 at this fish fry.)

The struggle may go on awhile, he noted. "Everybody's still hoping for the best, but after we voted to return to work, the company's lawyer said, 'I don't know if we can win this, but we'll file an appeal and hold (you) up a while longer.'"

# Stronger Unions Mean a Strong Middle Class

Safeguarding access to unions ensures a more prosperous society.

By Harley Shaiken

**HARLEY SHAIKEN is a professor specializing in labor and the global economy at UC Berkeley.**

POLLS TELL US that 58% of eligible workers would join a union if they could, yet union membership in the private sector plummeted to 7.4% in 2006, a record low.

What explains this yawning gap? The fact that, for many Americans, joining a union has become a risk rather than a right. According to the 2005 National Labor Relations Board's annual report, 31,358 people were disciplined or fired for union activity. The result has been a chill on union organizing.

The Employee Free Choice Act, introduced in Congress this month, seeks to create a thaw. What the act does is simple: It allows workers to form a union if a majority of employees in a workplace sign up for one, short-circuiting an employer-dominated campaign and an additional vote. It also provides meaningful penalties for violating workers' rights and ensures that collective bargaining will result if workers choose a union.

Shrinking union membership affects everyone. Unions paved the way to the middle class for millions and pioneered benefits such as paid pensions and health insurance. Now labor's sliding numbers are contributing to the squeeze on the middle class. During a period of robust economic growth and record corporate profits, only those at the very top of the heap are enjoying a higher standard of living.

Worker productivity jumped by a record 20% between 2000 and 2006, yet real wages (pay adjusted for inflation) edged up an anemic 2%. Meanwhile, fewer workers are getting employer-based health insurance or pensions. Even Alan Greenspan, before retiring as chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, told Congress in 2005 that he found growing inequality of income and wealth in the U.S. "very disturbing."

In 1935, Congress passed the Wagner Act guaranteeing workers' right to organize and bargain collectively. It was immediately hailed as labor's Magna Carta. Since then, amendments, court rulings and NLRB administrative decisions have turned the act on its

head, serving to throttle rather than encourage a free and informed choice on unions.

Today, if workers try to organize, the NLRB generally sets a secret-ballot vote a month or more after the formal request. During this period, it is legal for the company to hire anti-union consultants, schedule an unlimited number of mandatory meetings with employees, "predict" that the workplace could be shuttered if the union wins and bar labor representatives from the premises.

It's not just that the playing field is tilted against organizing; unions are locked out of the stadium. Of course, why would companies limit themselves to what's legal? Penalties for violating workers' rights are virtually nonexistent.

Nonetheless, one might ask why the Employee Free Choice Act replaces the secret-ballot vote with majority sign-up. The secret ballot is appropriately considered sacred in a democracy, but it requires a democratic context to be meaningful. These NLRB-supervised elections often take place in highly coercive, even threatening, environments.

Fortune magazine reported last June that "workers are routinely fired or discriminated against for supporting unions. . . . Some [firms] go so far as to close down work sites when employees vote for a union." As a result, the NLRB elections are more like plebiscites in a dictatorship rather than election day in a democracy. The votes may be counted honestly, but the outcome reflects the fear-ridden atmosphere in which the vote occurs.

The Employee Free Choice Act would restore balance to a system that is driven by aggressive employers, anti-union consultants, coercion and fear. Strengthening free choice in the workplace lays the basis for ensuring a more prosperous economy and a more democratic society. It was Studs Terkel who put it this way: "Respect on the job and a voice at the workplace shouldn't be something Americans have to work overtime to achieve."

## Labor and Industry Quotes

**"Esau was a traitor to himself; Judas Iscariot was a traitor to God; Benedict Arnold was a traitor to his country; a strikebreaker is a traitor to his God, his country, his wife, his family and his class."**

**Jack (John Griffith) London  
The Definition of a Scab**

**"Capital is but the accumulated result of the work of our hands. Yet the sword of capital is forever directed against the throat of labor."**

**Peter McGuire  
1880s**

**"Thank God we have a system of labor where there can be a strike. Whatever the pressure, there is a point where the working man may stop."**

**Abraham Lincoln  
Speech March 16, 1860  
Hartford, CT**

**"No company ever shrank to greatness."**

**Dwight L. Gertz,  
Management Consultant**

# America's Workers Are Struggling

By JOHN J. SWEENEY

All people want their children to do a little better than they've done. A little better education. A little more saved.

But today, too many people think that the American dream is a pipe dream. Fewer than a quarter of Americans feel the next generation will be better off, according to a new survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

The vast majority of Americans are struggling to maintain their living standards in the face of stagnating wages, vanishing retirement security, eroding health care coverage and mounting debt. America's working families are being left behind in an economy designed to benefit Wall Street, not Main Street.

The rosy picture of the economy drawn by the Bush administration simply isn't reality for working families. Americans are working harder than ever, yet they're not keeping up with rising costs. Between 1980 and 2005, productivity in the U.S. economy rose 71% while the real compensation of workers rose just 4%. Meanwhile, those at the top of the economic heap are making money hand over fist. The average CEO now makes

411 times that of the average worker.

Something is wrong with the system.

One of the primary reasons America's workers are struggling is they've lost their ability to bargain with their employer for better wages and benefits through unions. Unions are a cornerstone to building and keeping a strong middle class in our nation.

Union workers earn on average 30% more than workers who don't have a union, according to government statistics, and they are much more likely to have health care coverage and pensions.

The single best anti-poverty device in our nation is a union card. In fact, more than half of people who don't already have a union say they would join one tomorrow if given the chance, but too few people get that chance. Employers routinely harass, intimidate and even illegally fire workers who try to form unions.

Congress must work quickly to level the playing field for working people by passing the Employee Free Choice Act, which would restore workers' freedom to choose to join a union and bargain for a

better life.

Congress also must stop the seemingly endless flow of good jobs out of this country. We've lost more than 3 million American manufacturing jobs since 2001, partially as a result of misguided exchange rate policies, unbalanced trade policies and corporate strategies to aggressively move manufacturing operations offshore. In the past five years alone, Wisconsin lost 87,600 manufacturing jobs.

Last week's announcement that the U.S. trade deficit hit \$764 billion in 2006, up 6.5% since last year's record, is further evidence that our nation's trade policies are broken and badly in need of an overhaul.

Princeton economist Alan Blinder warns that as many as 42 million service-sector jobs are vulnerable to being moved offshore. This isn't a blip in our path to economic freedom; it's a long-term trend that must be reversed with sound policy.

Congress should start us on the road to recovery by derailing President Bush's plan to extend trade promotion authority, or "fast track," which allows the president to force an up-or-down vote on bad trade deals without proper consultation from Congress. Extending "fast track" authority would hamstring Congress' ability to fix our broken trade policy at a time when working families are in dire need of a correction in course. We also must reject any trade agreement that does not provide adequate workers' rights and environmental protections.

Finally, our nation's middle class cannot be strengthened without a plan to provide every American with affordable, quality health care and a secure retirement.

At the richest moment in our nation's history, the American dream is fading fast for a majority of American workers. The only way to get America back on track is through a commitment to real, lasting reform in our trade and economic policies.

In November, working families voted for a change in direction. It's time our nation's leadership delivers.

*John J. Sweeney is president of the 10 million-member AFL-CIO.*

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## Harley-Davidson Inc. and Workers Reach Tentative Agreement

Originally published February 17, 2007

**YORK, PA.** // Harley-Davidson Inc., the biggest U.S. motorcycle maker, said late yesterday that it had reached an agreement with striking workers at its largest plant that may end a two-week strike.

The tentative accord was worked out late in the day with International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Local 175, which represents the 2,798 workers at the York, Pa., plant, the Milwaukee-based company said.

The union workers may vote on the agreement next week, Harley said.

Company spokesman Bob Klein declined to discuss terms of the proposed contract or when production at the plant may resume. Union spokesman Frank Larkin didn't immediately return a call.

Workers had been picketing the York plant since Feb. 2 after rejecting a three-year contract that included a 4 percent pay raise for many workers, but lower wages for new hires and changes in medical and retirement benefits.

The tentative contract agreement came about 6:30 p.m. at the end of two days of talks, the York Daily Record newspaper reported

on its Web site, citing union representative Tom Boger.

"They didn't get everything. We didn't get everything," the newspaper reported Boger as saying.

Work on a final agreement will continue ahead of a ratification vote that's likely to occur next Thursday, the report said.

If members approve the pact, production could resume Feb. 26, the newspaper was told by local union officials.

The strike shut down production of Harley's top-selling, heavyweight Touring and Softail bikes and had rippling effects on other manufacturing jobs.

On Monday, Harley laid off 440 workers at plants in Wisconsin where motorcycle parts such as engines are made, and said it could lay off up to 500 employees in that region if the strike weren't settled soon. In addition, at least three York County-based suppliers have laid off workers because of the plant shutdown.

Analysts said the strike is costing Harley \$11 million a day in lost sales.

The company's shares fell \$1.05 to \$68.04 on the New York Stock Exchange yesterday before the agreement was announced. They have fallen 2.9 percent since the strike began.

# 'Made in China' is Good for Me, Bad for Us

By ROBYN E. BLUMNER, Times Perspective Columnist Published February 11, 2007

When I go into a store to buy a new shirt, I am as sensitive to price as the next guy. But when I get a real deal on that Chinese-made shirt, it will be goodie for me and not so goodie for us.

My cheap shirt is a real problem for America.

We may regularly talk about the irresponsibility of budget deficits, but what gets far less attention is America's trade deficit, which now stands at more than \$800-billion a year. That we buy so much more from abroad than we sell cannot continue if Americans are going to enjoy a secure economic future.

I don't want to be able to buy a cheap shirt from China if it means my country loses good jobs, has to sell off national assets and is put further in debt to foreign nations and banks. And if our national leaders were more responsible on trade issues, they wouldn't be putting me in a predicament where the rational choice I make for myself is irrational for the common good.

"Free trade" is not the glorious win-win-win-even-bigger economic miracle that so many economists and politicians trumpet. There are demonstrable down sides for American workers, even skilled workers, and our continued record trade imbalances threaten a sharp decline in the average American's living standards. Our debt will one day lose its luster for our trading partners. Then, watch out.

In a 2004 op-ed column in the New York Times titled The Broken Promise of NAFTA, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz looked back on 10 years of the continental free trade agreement and found many of the promotional claims were empty promises. Mexico didn't expand its economy to bolster a middle class.

Its paltry 1 percent per capita growth was far poorer than in earlier years. Income disparities between Mexico and the United States grew by 10.6 percent; and real wages for Mexican workers fell annually.

President Clinton told us that NAFTA would mean "less illegal immigration because more Mexicans will be able to support their children by staying home." But the opposite came to pass. In 1995, there were estimated to be just 2.5-million illegal immigrants here, a number that now stands at about 11-million.

Meanwhile, NAFTA's impact on the United States has been a growing trade deficit with Mexico and Canada as well as reduced wages to American workers, by \$7.6-billion in just 2004 alone, according to an analysis by the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute.

About a million U.S. workers have had to take less well paying jobs due to displacements caused by NAFTA, mostly out of the manufacturing sector.

Proglobalization types scream "protectionism" as if it's a dirty word. The fact is, we have not abandoned protectionism for the politically connected. Subsidies exist to shield many products in our agricultural sector, particularly corn, from free-market forces. Moreover, our trade agreements contain all sorts of protections for the intellectual property of business. If trade accords can include patent protections, they can include enforceable labor and environmental standards.

"This is a society, not just an economy," Jeff Faux, founder of EPI and author of The Global Class War, says about how our nation should approach trade issues. Faux says that the decision to undermine American job security for lower prices on imports is a calculation that favors the interests of capital over labor. Corporate investors get rich in a global economy while workers compete to underbid each other.

He suggests we think of it this way: Transpose the global economy with the U.S. economy. Here, if we didn't have a minimum wage or environmental regulations, prices would also be lower. But we don't opt for that kind of society and neither should we allow the exploitation of human or natural resources to happen through the back door of globalization.

President Bush has been stumping for free trade recently, even telling Caterpillar factory workers in East Peoria, Ill., that "free trade agreements are helping" to create American factory jobs. He, of course, knows what an embroidered canard that is. Thanks to these agreements, American companies are moving their R&D functions, production and marketing overseas at an accelerating pace. Foreign countries now account for 50 percent of all U.S.-owned manufacturing output.

Bush wants fast-track trade authority reauthorized before it expires at the end of June so he can continue the free trade excesses.

A few courageous senators, led by Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., are insisting on fair and reciprocal trade agreements that protect American labor and environmental standards.

They should stand tough. I have more than enough cheap shirts. What I really need is a country that cares about its workers and economic fundamentals as much as its corporate investors.

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## A Level Playing Field for American Workers

Congress needs to modernize federal labor law.

In 1934 a series of violent strikes swept through American cities, including San Francisco and Minneapolis, producing such a wave of beatings, arrests and shootings that Congress decided there had to be a better way for Americans to form unions. It passed the Wagner Act, which gave workers the right to vote for unions and created the National Labor Relations Board to enforce fair collective bargaining.

Yet today, enforcement of federal labor law has decayed so badly that Americans might think they're back in the 1930s. Every year thousands of workers are illegally fired for union activity. Unfair-labor-practice complaints pile up at the labor board for months and seldom result in consequential penalties. "Intimidation, harassment and surveillance have become routine elements of the organizing process, so much so that fewer than a third of those attempting to organize succeed in gaining representation under a collective bargaining agreement," Cornell University professor Kate Bronfenbrenner has written.

Congress has waited far too long to correct this imbalance, but this year it has the perfect opportunity in a bill sponsored by Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., that would streamline union elections and put some teeth back in federal labor law.

Business lobbyists have denounced Miller's bill as an effort to rig workplace elections in unions' favor. Actually, the Employee Free Choice Act would do the opposite. It would give employees more choice, reduce meddling by unions and employers, and require independent arbitration if the parties are unable to negotiate their first contract.

It's no coincidence, then, that Miller's bill has attracted support from several Republican members of the House and a number of prominent church groups. They recognize, as mainstream America once did, that unions can provide a measure of economic security, reduce inequality and build a nation's middle class. Of course many Americans wouldn't join a union if given a fair chance. But that chance is something they deserve.

# OBITUARIES



**Charlie McMahan**, 76, was a painter in Dept 119. He retired 01-01-96.



**John Parrish** was a Dept. 705 machine cleaner when he retired. John was 63.



**Sam Willis**, 70, worked in Dept. 321. He retired 08-01-99.



**Lillian Wallace** was a tire inspector at the time of her retirement. She was 63.



**Lowell Hoyt** was a former Human Resource Manager at Kelly/Tyler. He was 74.



**Kenneth Crayton**, 53, was still working at Goodyear at the time of his death. He was a belt shear operator.



**Paul Emmet "Fozo" Fazande**, 57, worked in the curing room at the time of his retirement in 1995. No photo available.

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## Former Steelworker President George Becker Dies

**George Becker**, left, a second-generation steelworker who became the sixth international president of the United Steelworkers (USW), died at his home in Gibsonia, Pa., surrounded by his family, following a long battle with prostate cancer. He was 78.

Mr. Becker, who served seven years as the union's international president, was a respected union organizer and strategist and an internationally-known spokesman for industrial safety, workers' rights on the job and fair global trade. He was elected president in 1993 and again in 1997.

# Cheney Says Bush Will Veto Pro-Union Bill

President Bush will veto pending legislation aimed at boosting union strength, Vice President Cheney told National Association of Manufacturers members at a breakfast meeting to kick off the group's lobbying efforts. The "Employee Free Choice Act," currently making its way through the House, would change the process of union elections. Under the measure, if a majority of workers in a workplace sign cards authorizing a union, then the workers would get a union. Under current law, even when a majority of workers ask for union representation, their employers can force them to undergo an election process administered by the National Labor Relations Board.

Supporters contend the proposal would strengthen unions against unfair management tactics. Opponents warn that the measure is an effort by unions to exert undue influence after years of waning support. The manufacturers' coalition seeks to kill the bill, among a list of four legislative priorities for the 110th Congress.

The House Education and Labor Committee is scheduled to mark up the legislation Wednesday. Cheney, who donned a pink tie for the Valentine's Day address, also said economic growth would grow from private sector efforts, not the government. "Nobody can sit in an office in Washington, D.C. and decide to create prosperity,"

he said. The vice president defended the Bush tax cuts as fueling the economy's recovery over the past five years.

During his 20-minute speech the crowd applauded Cheney's vow that the Bush administration would continue to push for the end of the so-called "death tax." Pat Cleary, senior vice president for communications at NAM, told the crowd of about 200 manufacturers that their industry drives the broader economy, contributing 12 percent of the nation's GDP and three-fifths of research and development. "We're not asking for a handout," he said. "What we want is for government to get out of our way."

In addition to blocking the union proposal, other NAM legislative priorities include energy policy overhaul, making permanent a research and development tax credit and free trade, Cleary said. But he warned the crowd to be wary of promises extended by legislators. "They're going to tell you they're friends of ours," he said. "Some of them aren't telling the truth."

Tiffany Adams, head of corporate and public affairs for NAM, said about 600 members traveled to Washington for the three-day lobbying effort, the fifth time NAM has hosted the series since 1999.

The Stretch staff or publisher does not assume responsibility for views expressed in signed articles published in this publication.

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