



...from the Hall

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A newsletter by and for the members of *PACE* Local 8-237
Tacoma, Washington

www.local8-0237.com

The President's Corner

—by Chuck Whitt

On July 12th of this year I was pulled out of the mill to work on a special project with the International. You've read about Rapid Response in our newsletter previously. The International has me going around to various locals in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana and Wyoming to get each of the Rapid Response teams properly trained. I've trained locals from Port Townsend to Pocatello, Idaho so far, putting about 4000 miles on my vehicles since getting started. I spend quite a bit of time on the phone too. I have to call to set up these meetings, sometimes so often that at times I feel like a telemarketer. I frequently have to call a local three or four times before finally getting them to commit to a training date.

This was originally supposed to be done by Labor Day, but we have found out that quite a few people take vacations during this time period (duh?). So my time out of the mill has been extended to November to get this all done.

Another aspect of my job is getting people out to vote in the upcoming Presidential election. The International is making a concerted effort to make sure that all our members are registered to vote before the election. One effort to make sure that everyone is registered to vote is a raffle the International will be holding for a Harley Davidson 1200 Custom Sportster, or \$10,000. Everyone gets a ticket at no cost, but you must be registered to win. If your name is drawn and you're not registered, well, that's going to suck, isn't it. To make sure you're registered, we will have forms available when we pass tickets out. If you have any doubt about whether you're registered, fill a form out just to make sure – you wouldn't want to miss out on this fine Harley (made by PACE members, by the way), or the \$10,000 substitute prize. Would you?

In addition to this outside activity, I have also been involved with local union issues, getting calls and emails on issues that are going on in the mill. We had some meetings on the Recaust Project, the Washer Floor and Pulp Machine Room projects. We've also discussed with the Company ways to address the curtailments the Pulp Machine Room crew are experiencing. We've thrown out a couple of ideas and the Company is looking at some of their own. We'll meet with them again to come to some solution.

We've also had a fourth step grievance on a disciplinary issue that we're still waiting for an answer on. There have been some other disciplinary issues that have arose and we're working on them too.

If you have anything you need help on, please feel free to give me a call or send an email. You can contact Bob Jones (x449) or any shop steward if you need more immediate assistance.

In 1994, I openly supported the Republican candidates for the House and Senate, Randy Tate and Slade Gorton, even going so far as to agree to have my picture on Slade Gorton's campaign brochure (which as a vice president for the local did not sit well with the regional labor authorities). I did this because Senator Gorton supported our industry at a time when fiber resources were in short supply. Randy Tate, who was running against Mike Kreidler, promised to do the same.

The years surrounding 1994 were tough years for many of our co-workers. With the price of wood chips skyrocketing we were seeing our products sold at a loss quite often. This led to severe curtailments in the Pulp Machine Room, Digesters, and Bleach Plant. Our co-workers were suffering because of failed policies. I supported Republicans that year because it was the best thing to do for our livelihood.

With the scaling back of a reliance on federal timber, passage of the Forest and Fish legislation and a more stable timber base, the current threat to our livelihood becomes the threat of rising health care cost, unfair foreign competition, and an anti-union administration. It is for those reasons that I will be supporting the candidacy of John Kerry for President of the United States. Again, it's the best thing to do for our livelihood.

Though John Kerry doesn't elicit the greatest excitement in this election cycle, there are more reasons to support him other than he's not George W. Bush.

John Kerry will attempt to marshal the legislature into passing real health care reform (remember, the President doesn't make law, the House and Senate do), will use his Executive power to stop the assault on labor unions, and will initiate an Apollo type program to get America off its dependency for Middle East oil (which fuels the terrorism against us). He will change tax laws to stop the outsourcing of American manufacturing and will negotiate fair trade deals.

Why does any of this matter?

You shouldn't have to even ask that question about health care, the answer is evident with every paycheck you get, with every contract we negotiate. Though

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Vice Presidents Corner

— by Bob Jones

[Bob has had a family emergency taking his time and was unable to submit a column by the deadline time. He reports the following active grievances. -CW]

- Recaust Modernization
- Washer floor modernization
- Pulp machines down time because of lack of stock.
- 4- fourth step grievances scheduled for the 17th of September
- 3- Third step grievances
- 2- Second step grievances.

PIUMPF Census Form

All members of PACE Locals 8-237 and 8-586 should have received their PIUMPF Census Forms in the mail by now. It is very important that you fill these forms out and mail them to the address written in the cover letter. They will go directly to PIUMPF and all your information will be held in strict confidence by PIUMPF and PIUMPF only. None of this information will be shared with the Company or the Locals.

The information is needed in order to do a proper valuation of the PIUMPF retirement plan. The PIUMPF actuaries use this information to determine how much the plan should cost. This information will have vital importance as we move into 2005. As previously mentioned in a prior newsletter, the Company has some concern about the withdrawal liability and has threatened to withdraw from the plan. This information will play an important role in determining the correct dollar amount of the withdrawal liability.

Please fill the form out as soon as possible and get it in the mail. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at clwhitt@mindspring.com or call me on my cell phone (get the number from a shop steward).

— Chuck Whitt

12 Hour Shifts

The Paper Mill has been on 12 hour shifts since January and by all reports, are loving it. Even those who were originally against it in the beginning have come to like the time off. There were some problems in the beginning with extra board scheduling, mostly related to the cross scheduling between 8 and 12 hour shifts. For the most part, those have been worked out in conferences with the Company. I have talked to one extra board employee that has some problems with the shift, but he was the exception to the rule.

Per the agreement reached with the Company in the negotiations last year, PACE Local 8-237 and Operating Engineers Local 286 will be allowed to try 12 hour shifts next year (following the shutdown). The agreement specifies that a 70% approval of the shift workers in the locals will be required to implement 12 hour shifts.

In conjunction with our officer elections this year, Local 8-237 will conduct a vote on 12 hour shifts. Those elections will take place in December. The results will be posted on the bulletin boards following the vote.

Involvement

One of the questions I've heard over the years is; Why does my Union support the party many of us seem to be against?

The answer involves simple democracy.

More so than just about any other organization (or country), unions are controlled by their members. At the local level unions are controlled by the members who show up and vote. On the national level, where candidate support is determined, union direction is controlled by the delegates to the national conventions held every four years. Those delegates are selected by the members who attend the local union meetings. See the cycle here?

In fact, at the convention held last year, the delegates selected Richard Gephart and showed a clear affinity for a democratic alternative to the current president. On delegate took the mike to try to elicit support for Bush, but was unable to get the support needed to carry the day.

The answer to the above question is that our union is working for the party selected by the members.

Ate Hour Day



AWK



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Kerry's plan is not perfect in my opinion (I support National Health Care), it does promise to get more people enrolled in a health care program. That will make a huge difference in our rates, because we ultimately pay for those who have no health care insurance. People don't stop getting sick because they're not insured, they just stop paying. The insurance companies then raise our rates to pay for their losses. We do have universal health care in this country, it's just that not everyone has to pay for it. We do, and we're paying more and more every year, eating up our wage adjustments. More than 1000 people per day lose their health insurance. Are we to be next?

(By the way, I am glad to see that Bush supports National Health Care, I just wish he supported it here in this country rather than spending our money to implement it in Iraq.)

What has Bush done for health care in his term? He's signed a Medicare prescription drug plan that requires seniors to enroll in a program for \$35 or more per month, pay a \$275 yearly deductible, and then the government stops paying when you've used \$2200 in benefits and won't start paying for prescriptions again until after you've spent another \$3500 (the so called "donut hole"). The good news is that there is a low income plan that does away with many of these problems, except that you have to have less than \$9600 in assets to qualify. That includes an assets test that counts your vehicles, your furniture and even your burial insurance! Oh yeah, Bush has also made it illegal for the government to use their massive buying power to negotiate lower drug prices with the drug manufacturers. And if you're thinking of getting cheaper drugs from Canada, Bush made that illegal too. Guess who the drug lobby supports in this election?

The President of the United States appoints the members of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Bush appointees to the NLRB have already begun to undo decades of labor policies that have been useful in dealing with management, from ensuring that management negotiates fairly and openly, to establishing guidelines for the resolution of grievances. Though he's only appointed three of the five members to the Board so far, another term would give him the opportunity to fill the board with more labor unfriendly members and all but decimate your right to collective bargaining, as well as a fair and balanced relationship with the Company.

John Kerry will appoint members to the NLRB that understand that labor relations mean enhancing the dialog between labor and management rather than confining it. If for no other reason, that should be enough for labor to support John Kerry.

The President also appoints the Secretary of Labor as a member of his cabinet. Elaine Chao, Bush's Secretary

of Labor, has strong ties to business. She also has some pretty shady ties to communist China, which happens to be where a lot of our outsourced jobs are heading. The Chao Labor department has proposed flex time as a general replacement to overtime and recently enacted new rules on overtime that will eliminate OT for millions of employees. Those rules took effect August 23rd and already employees are seeing their overtime disappear. (It's interesting to note here that the day after the rules became effective some employees of a hotel I was staying at in Spokane asked for and received voter registration forms so that they could vote in the upcoming presidential election. They were very upset about losing their overtime.) What these rules stipulate is that if you supervise two or more people then the company can designate you as a layer of management and not be obligated under the Fair Labors Standards Act (FLSA) to pay you overtime after 40 hours. This would mean that machine tenders, recovery operators, boiler operators, leadmen, checkers and the like could be denied overtime under these rules. Doesn't that give you a warm and fuzzy feeling? And you gotta love this, Bush did all this after both *Republican* houses of Congress voted that he couldn't. Gawd, this man does love democracy, doesn't he?

John Kerry will appoint a Secretary of Labor that will live up to the will of the Congress and the American people and abide by the long standing rules of the FLSA. Upon his inauguration he will undo the Executive Order that Bush signed to allow this enslavement of the American worker.

President Bush proposed in his first State of the Union address to initiate a program for the development of hydrogen fuel to lessen our dependence on foreign oil. This oilman turned environmentalist forgot one thing though, to fund his proposal. Maybe it was the lobbying by the Saud and Bin Laden royal families that changed his mind, or maybe he really didn't mean it after all (he did have his hands below the dais when he proposed this, perhaps his fingers were crossed). Instead, he joyfully watched as fuel prices reached record levels (undoubtedly reaping the benefits in his oil industry investments) and saw his Saud and Bin Laden allies become ever richer.

John Kerry has proposed a program on the scale of what it took for us to put a man on the moon to find an alternate to our dependence on Middle East oil. He has proposed many times in the past to start such a program and fund it with a levy on gas prices. Had such a program been put into place years ago, we probably wouldn't be paying over \$2 per gallon for fuel now, and more importantly, we probably would have denied the funding to the Bin Laden terrorist network that attacked us on 9-11. Make no mistake, we are arming our enemies, and John Kerry recognizes this. What does

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George W. do? He ridicules John Kerry for past proposals to increase the gas tax in order to fund research on alternative fuels. Yeah, that's some foresight.

What's most important to us now is that we don't lose our jobs to unfair foreign competition. We all know now that this Company is nothing more than an investment firm, that if the opportunity permits itself this Company will rid itself of its employees to get a few more bucks to their shareholders. That's how they do business. If it becomes cheaper to make pulp in China, Chile, Mexico or any other foreign country and ship it here for conversion to paper, say goodbye to the pulp mill. If we do not have a President in place that insists that our foreign competitors play by the same rules, that likelihood increases. President Bush's Commerce Secretary has said that outsourcing is just a new way of doing business, and has negotiated the Central American Free Trade Act (CAFTA), Free Trade of the Americas Act (FTAA), and other trade pacts without any guarantees of a level playing field. We're in a race to the bottom and this Administration thinks that's OK. In a second Bush Administration, Bush will use his Fast Track authority to get these laws passed. And the death spiral of American manufacturing will just continue. Not even the Bush administration's attempts to say that putting burgers together is manufacturing will help hide the losses they fostered.

John Kerry will ask to have the previously, yet unapproved, Bush trade deals renegotiated. He has said he will insist that those who wish to compete with us do so on the same, level, playing field. He will insist that foreign firms that wish to trade with us abide by the same labor and environmental laws that American manufacturers are obligated to follow. Kerry will change the tax codes to take away the incentives to move manufacturing off-shore and stop the outsourcing of American jobs, our jobs. It's time a candidate sees the race to the bottom as a bad thing. Kerry is that candidate, Bush is not.

A lot is at stake here folks, and we need to outsource the Bush Administration before we're faced with another NAFTA and the loss of our jobs; or with the loss of health care; or with the loss of your voice in the workplace; or with the loss of your security as Bush policies fund terrorism. I ask that you support your family, your co-workers, as well as yourself in the fight for our jobs and our lives by voting for John Kerry this fall

This election is about your future. Make your choices wisely.



One of the problems many of us deal with working shift work is fatigue. It's become a part of our life in the profession we've chosen and most of us have learned to

deal with it.

Sometimes, though, we push it too far.

Six days after being taken off shift work I attempted to pack as much as I could into my first weekend off. I helped my girlfriend shoot a wedding that lasted to well into the night, got a few hours of sleep then, hopped in my car three hours later for a two hour drive to Astoria, Oregon for some deep water tuna fishing 40 miles off shore.

It was a beautiful day and the fishing was great! I bagged two tuna and had loads of fun. After getting back to the dock I helped scrub my friend's boat after its day on the salt water, cleaned the fishing gear and headed to a restaurant for some chow before driving home.

I knew I was tired, similar to the feeling after a long night of graveyard, but knew I could make it home OK. So off in our trucks my friend and I drove.

No more than five miles out of Astoria, on Highway 30 at mile post 92, I reached down to adjust the radio. Next thing I remember I was braking hard as I went off the road, hit a tree and rolled down a 35 foot embankment. I believe I had fallen asleep at the wheel. I didn't have any of the signs I usually look for when tired ("head bobbing"), but since I couldn't remember anything, I believe that's the best explanation of what happened.

My truck landed upside down facing the opposite direction. My airbag had deployed as designed and my seatbelt held me firmly in my seat as I hung upside down following the wreck. A quick release of the seatbelt and a firm plop to the crumpled roof of the truck allowed me to crawl out the passenger side door (the driver side was jammed).

Other than a pretty sore chest from the seatbelt and the airbag, a few scrapes on the arm and neck, I was OK. I was damn lucky!

Be careful out there. Never let your guard down and take your fatigue seriously.

The other good news, the fish were in my friends truck. And fresh tuna roast taste great!

