

Let me say this about that

...Water enthusiasts

(From Page 2)

BILL AND SHARON used to participate in the Christmas Ship Parade, in which boat owners decorate their vessels with Yuletide lights and parade nightly in the holiday season on the Columbia and Willamette rivers to entertain the crowds of people who gather to watch the colorful event. After a decade or so they stopped participating and now are spectators watching from the vantage point of their houseboat's patio. Before Bill and Sharon bought their houseboat it earlier had been used as actress Raquel Welch's home in the movie "Kansas City Bomber," which was filmed in Portland using the Expo Center for the skating scenes.

THE COUPLE enjoy fishing in the Pacific Ocean on their boat and also like to dig for clams on Washington State beaches north of the Columbia River. They sometimes go fishing in Eastern Oregon on the John Day River's South Fork at a location where Sharon and two siblings own over 1,000 acres of range land. For years, Bill has gone hunting for deer and elk in other Eastern Oregon locales.

A spectator sport avidly followed by Belanger is auto racing. He's traveled to the famed Indianapolis Brickyard, to Utah's Bonneville Salt Flats and to other tracks around the U.S. to see and hear the speeding cars.

BELANGER'S WIFE, Sharon Rixen, is a longtime union member who has worked in various labor offices. Born in North Dakota, she moved to Portland with her parents in 1959 and graduated from Clackamas High School. She worked as an office secretary for the Oregon Bureau of Labor's apprenticeship division from 1965 to 1969 when the bureau was in the old State Office Building on SW Fourth Avenue in downtown Portland. Charles Hoffman was the apprenticeship director and Norman O. Nilsen was the elected state labor commissioner. She left to work in the office of the Portland District Council of Carpenters for Secretary-Treasurer Swan Nelson. Her next job was in the office of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 when Harvey Zoet was business manager.

In 1990 she accepted a job in the office of Office and Professional Employees Local 11, which she had joined in 1969 when starting at the Carpenters. At Local 11, she worked for Gary Kirkland, the union's executive secretary-treasurer. She retired from Local 11 in 2002.

SHARON HAS SERVED on the executive boards of the Carpenters Credit Union, Local 11 Credit Union and the IBEW and United Workers Federal Credit Union.

Bill has a daughter, Dana, from an earlier marriage.

★★★

Iron Worker #29 member recognized



BRIAN O'NEILL of Portland, a retired member of Iron Workers Local 29, was pictured in the international union's magazine holding his 55-year membership certificate. Under the heading "Proud 55-Year Member," the Iron Worker magazine said: "Brian O'Neill, retired member of Local 29 (Portland, Ore.), received his 55-year pin and is extremely proud of his career as an ironworker. Brian's father, John, was also an ironworker in Local 29 and served as business agent and International organizer. Brian recalls many stories about building in Oregon, including the Astoria and Umatilla bridges, and many mills and buildings. He would appreciate any cards or notes from the 'ole guys' who manned so many jobs with him. His address is 855 NE 112th, Portland OR 97220-3166."

MARJORIE HICKS, Brian's sister, sent the Labor Press a copy of the article. She said that another brother, Tommy O'Neill, also is a retired member of Local 29. Another brother, Larry, a retired member of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16, died in 2004, she said. Mrs. Hicks said Brian has a daughter, Tracy Chrest. Mrs. Hicks is a former school teacher.

Mrs. Hicks said of the recognition given by the Iron Workers to Brian: "It is especially pleasing since scaling iron was his life and now, after a leg amputation, he lives in a foster home. He is ever pleasant and proud to be 'union.' "

There are many of us still around who remember John O'Neill, the father of Brian, Tommy, Larry and Mrs. Hicks, and the grandfather of Tracy.

Workplace safety infractions cost less in fines than software piracy

To The Editor:

The mine accident in West Virginia concerns me. The coal mine was fined only \$23,000.

It is appalling that we have accidents like this, as well as in other industries, where the companies are fined a little more than traffic tickets for infractions that cause the loss of human life.

I heard a radio ad recently that said that businesses that pirate software can be made to pay \$100,000 for each instance of software infractions and that it was more than just a traffic ticket. The ad said that all it took was a former or unhappy employee to report the infraction for them to get fined. The Web site to report it is www.bsa.org/usa/. If you report the infraction, you can get a reward.

This is far different than reporting workplace safety infractions. When a former employee tells someone about safety infractions at a former place of employment, the person is discredited as a "disgruntled employee." Yet, the commercial for Business Software Alliance encourages former and unhappy employees to report on software piracy.

I think that our values need to

change to where a person reporting a job-safety infraction can get a reward — as much as a person who reports software piracy. I think our values need to change so that job-safety infractions are fined as much as software infractions and the fines are collected and the infractions are corrected.

The only way this is going to change is for us to vote for people who have the same common values that we have. I don't think that there is any politician that I agree with 100 percent. But I look at the big picture and I make my decision on who to vote for on how labor and worker-friendly they are. I consider more than just one issue and consider what family values really are. Family values include making family wages and providing health care for my family. Family values include making sure that business will provide a safe working environment for employees so that they can go home to their families without having any accidents at work.

Jeff Lyles
Plumbers and Fitters 290
Tualatin

Where in the world is Brian Platt?

Where in the world is Brian Platt?

Who knows? We don't know. And State Elections doesn't know, because he didn't show up for his hearing to answer charges that his signature-gathering company violated the ban on payment per signature. The Bureau of Labor and Industries doesn't know, because he didn't show up to his hearing to answer charges that he failed to pay his gatherers for every hour worked.

Maybe Ross Day knows. The newly filed candidate for the Marion County judiciary hired him to gather signatures for Oregonians in Action's "eminent domain" petition.

Maybe FreedomWorks' executive director and Oregon Republican Party vice-chair Russ Walker knows. He hired him to gather signatures for two petitions.

Or it could be that Bill Sizemore knows. Platt was also hired to carry his

initiative petition. Possibly he's in Henderson, Nevada, with the funder for many of these measures, hypnotist Loren Parks. Anything's possible.

If you see Mr. Platt, or you encounter any signature gatherers, send an e-mail to Our Oregon at: ballot-watch@ouregon.org.

FROM THE OREGON AFL-CIO
WEEKLY UPDATE

OPEN FORUM

Operating Engineers at Multnomah Co. thank their union

To The Editor:

Sometimes a verbal thank-you is just not enough — especially when that thank-you is earned for what often seems to be a thankless job. That's why we're writing this letter.

The maintenance crew at Multnomah County would like to give a very heartfelt round of thanks to Tony Sandbothe, our business representative from the Operating Engineers Local 701, for his extraordinary effort in negotiating our new wage package.

These negotiations were for a mid-contract wage reopener, and Tony has been tenacious and unyielding over the last six months. He fought at the bargaining table for wage adjustments that have been a long time coming for us, and worked behind the scenes to get the job done while also opening doors for future bargaining.

Our bargaining unit is small — 14 people strong — but he treated us like 14,000. He wasn't letting go until he'd reached a satisfactory conclusion.

So, thank you, Tony, for a job well done! And we'd also like to say "thank you" to Local 701 Business Manager Mark Holliday for making sure we've got the very best staff and negotiators working for us.

Brad Cole & 13
Operating Engineers Local 701
members at Multnomah County
Portland



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