

...Former AFL-CIO leader Nesbitt appointed to governor's staff

(From Page 1)
reined in anti-union ballot measure activist Bill Sizemore. Then, as Oregon AFL-CIO president, he helped unite and focus Oregon's labor movement, turning it into a permanently mobilized political force.
So he was tremendously disheartened to see labor's unity unravel as

SEIU led a group of unions out of the national AFL-CIO in July 2005.
"We were going to have to go through a period of rebuilding," Nesbitt said, recalling the dilemma he faced as the split spread to the state level. "I had already done it once."
As the Oregon AFL-CIO met in its September convention, it was unclear

whether national union leadership would allow Change to Win locals to remain affiliated with local AFL-CIO bodies. Nesbitt decided the time had come for him to step aside, and proposed former Fire Fighters Union President Tom Chamberlain as a successor.

After resigning, Nesbitt stayed connected with the labor movement, working as a consultant for the Working Families Party of Oregon, a new labor-led third party that qualified for ballot status this year. He maintains an associate membership in SEIU.

In July, he began working as a political adviser on Kulongoski's re-election campaign.

Unions were the backbone of the campaign. Now, Kulongoski's choice of Nesbitt and Terhune suggests the governor will work closely with organized labor in his second term.

With Democrats in control of the Legislature and governor's office, Nesbitt is optimistic about progress on issues dear to labor, including a fairer tax system, health care cost savings, and greater ease for employees to form unions.

"A progressive and growing union movement is important, but it's still not enough. We need to make government work for working people," he said.

Nesbitt says he sees working for the

governor as a continuation of his political work in the union movement.

"I never saw unions as a special interest. Unions are a defender of the general interest."

Nesbitt's new post means giving up several commitments, including the

Working Families Party, as well as his regular column in the Northwest Labor Press, which he's written since 2004. Nesbitt serves on the Oregon State Board of Higher Education, and said he will decide soon whether it's feasible to remain on the Board.

Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 helps foster children's party

A \$1,000 donation by Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 to child welfare employees at the Oregon Department of Human Services in East Multnomah County helped foster kids enjoy a holiday party this year.

"They step up and help us every year. We adore those guys," said Deborah Bruun, a social service specialist who helps organize the annual event.

Local 290's contribution accounted for nearly half of the money raised this year.

The State of Oregon used to fund the party, which includes pizza, games, craftmaking and gifts at the festively-decorated Multnomah County office in Northeast Portland. Some 200-plus kids and foster parents attend each year.

But budget cuts in the late '90s dried up the money-source for the party. State

employees thought the event was so vital for the children that they began raising money on their own time.

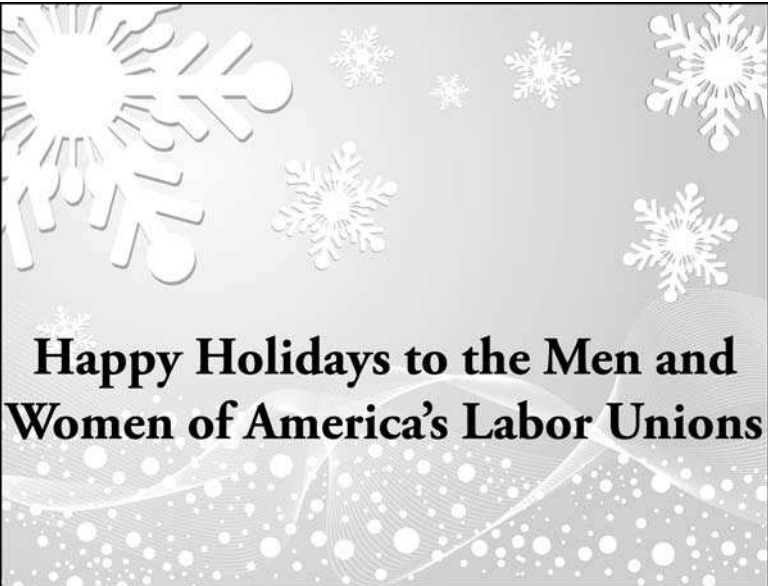
Bruun cold-called Local 290 about six years ago, and the union has been contributing ever since.

Last year the union sponsored a "fishing room with candy cane fishing poles that caught stuffed animals," Bruun said.

Bruun said this year employees were scrambling to raise enough money for the party. She and her daughter met with Local 290's Executive Board, who approved a \$1,000 contribution.

"I don't know what we would have done without their support," Bruun said. "There might not have been a party this year."

The party was held Dec. 13 (after this issue went to press).



Happy Holidays to the Men and Women of America's Labor Unions

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