

Let me say this about that

...Don Chandler dies at 63

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Until his retirement in the early 1970s, Reverend McCullum was a pastor at the Morning Side Missionary Baptist Church at 106 NE Ivy St. That is the historic church that burned down a month ago, on Feb. 5-6, 2007, in a fire that is still under investigation.

HENRY MCCARTHY, the executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland and Vicinity Metal Trades Council, introduced me to Rev. McCullum. The two were discussing Local 1404's business when I stopped in at McCarthy's office in the old Portland Labor Temple. The venerable House of Labor, situated at Southwest Fourth Ave. and Jefferson St., diagonally across from City Hall, was the headquarters for the Portland labor movement from 1922 until mid-June of 1966 when it gave way to the new Portland Labor Center at 201 SW Arthur St., which was lost in a mortgage foreclosure in 1978.

McCullum had succeeded McCarthy as business agent for Local 1404 in 1958 when Henry was elected as the leader of the Metal Trades Council. After World War II service on U.S. Navy submarines, McCarthy worked as a business agent for several unions — Ship Scalers and Auto Painters Local 1404, Sign Painters Local 428 and the Hardwood Finishers Union.

MCCARTHY DIED of a heart attack at age 60 in 1976. He had served for many years on the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board.

There is enough space left to mention another unionist who rates space on the Labor Honor Roll. He is Bruce Baer, who worked as a member of Portland Newspaper Guild Local 165 and as a member and Portland Chapter Executive Board member of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists.

BRUCE BAER joined Local 165 when he went to work as a reporter for the strike-born Portland Daily Reporter right after he graduated from Portland State University where he was the editor of The Vanguard newspaper. He did not come out of the city's newspaper strike but enlisted in the strikers' crusade for a free press in Portland. After a couple of years he accepted the opportunity to become a reporter at KATU-TV, Portland's Channel 2.

He covered politics and the Oregon Legislature with a perception that gained him a host of viewers and listeners. He also wrote editorials for K2, and he was a regular on an OPB Channel 10 news analysis roundtable.

BAER DIED of cancer in August 1977 just weeks short of his 41st birthday.

Later on, when Bud Clark was mayor of the Rose City, he kept a framed photo of Bruce on his office wall at City Hall.

★★★

DONLEY G. CHANDLER, a former business manager of Portland Boilermakers Local 72, died Feb. 7, 2007 at age 63. He was afflicted with both Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases.



DON CHANDLER

dren; and a brother, Harvey D. Chandler.

Memorial contributions can be sent to AmVets. Funeral arrangements were handled by Rose City Funeral Home and Cemetery in Northeast Portland.

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LOUIS DAY of Portland, a retired school custodian, died on Feb. 5, 2007 at age 69. He worked for the Portland School District from 1990 until the summer of 2002 when he was forced into early retirement because district officials contracted-out custodial services to a private firm. He was an active member of School Employees Local 140 of the Service Employees International Union and was active in SEIU Local 503 as an associate member after the international merged Local 140 into 503.

Day was born on July 7, 1937 in Chicago, Illinois. The family later moved to Portland, where he graduated from Holy Rosary School.

HIS HOBBIES included collecting antiques, attending swap meets with other collectors and dining at all-you-can-eat restaurants.

Survivors include his daughter, Leasia Day; grandchildren Jenaree Porter and Marisha Day; first cousins Wanda Crawford of San Diego, Calif., Gwendolyn Bowers and Marguerite Bowers of Dayton, Ohio.

His funeral was conducted on Feb. 10 at Cox & Cox Chapel in Northeast Portland.

Congress should restore freedom to choose union

By RICK BENDER
President

Washington State Labor Council

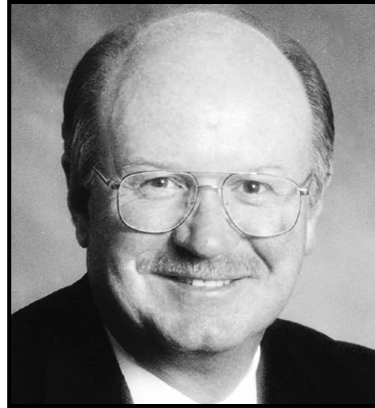
In America, we are supposed to have the freedom of association. At our jobs, that translates to the freedom to choose whether we want to organize a union and bargain collectively. But the federal labor law that is supposed to guarantee that freedom has been chipped away for decades, and now employers routinely deny workers this freedom of association.

Current law says Americans have the right to choose unionization free from intimidation, harassment and coercion by their employers. But in reality, enforcement is so weak and the penalties so small that employers routinely ignore the law. Some threaten to close plants. Others just fire union supporters. Some simply ignore that a union election has taken place and refuse to negotiate a first contract.

Who's to stop them? There are no police assigned to stop this type of illegal activity. Some, but not all, unions can afford to pursue a legal complaint-and-appeals process that takes years on behalf of illegally fired workers who technically aren't even their members. If they succeed, maybe the employer will have to pay some back wages.

Too many employers are willing to pay that price to prevent their workers from getting a union contract. It's gotten so bad that about one of every five union supporters can expect to be illegally fired as a result of their union activity, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

"Aggressive actions by employers — often including illegal firings — have significantly undermined the ability of U.S. workers to unionize their workplaces," says the study released this year. "With the legal penalties for such actions being so slight, employ-



ers can break the law to head-off organizing efforts and face almost no real repercussions."

It's time for us to stand up and say, enough is enough! We are Americans, and we will not have our freedoms and our right to collective bargaining taken away by union-busting corporate attorneys, nor by a government that turns a blind eye to their illegal activities.

The new Congress aims to level the playing field and restore the freedom to choose unionization through the Employee Free Choice Act.

The EFCA would establish stronger penalties for violation of employee rights when workers seek to form a union and it would provide mediation and arbitration for first-contract disputes. But most importantly, it would allow workers to form unions by signing cards authorizing union representation. This would help avoid worksite elections where employees are routinely pressured, harassed and manipulated by their employers.

Corporate lobbyists who oppose the EFCA say they want to preserve "secret ballot elections." Of course they do. These "elections," which are scheduled by the government after a majority of workers have already indicated they want a union, give employ-

ers several months to harass and intimidate captive employees into voting "no."

Imagine an election where a political candidate could force you to attend meetings bashing his or her opponent and could also threaten your family's livelihood, and you begin to get the idea. These elections are a joke, and the deck is severely stacked against workers.

More than half of all Americans say they would like to organize a union at their workplace, according to a new survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Why wouldn't they? Union members make more money, are more likely to get health and retirement benefits, and have better job security.

And yet, the overall U.S. unionization rate continued its decades-long decline in 2006 to 12.0 percent, as union membership dropped 326,000 to about 15.4 million.

The EFCA, which was introduced earlier this month, is co-sponsored by 234 U.S. Representatives, including Washington Reps. Jay Inslee, Rick Larsen, Brian Baird, Norm Dicks, Jim McDermott and Adam Smith.

"The Employee Free Choice Act is one of the most important pieces of legislation we will address," says Rep. Smith (D-Tacoma). "Our worker protections have slowly deteriorated as the National Labor Relations Board fails time and again to preserve workers' right to organize. We are long overdue in strengthening our federal labor laws and the Employee Free Choice Act is a monumental step in the right direction."

It's time to take that step. It's time for our bosses to butt out of union elections, so working people have a real opportunity to make up their own minds.

...Bush budget hits Oregonians hard

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significantly. Under the budget, these funds nationally would be 40 percent smaller in 2008 than in 2001.

• Cut Oregon's community development funding by \$7.5 million next year and by \$44.5 million over the next five years. The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) helps fund a range of community development projects in Oregon including housing and homeless programs, improvements to public facilities such as senior and youth centers, and economic development. Although CDBG already has seen substantial funding cuts in recent years, the Administration's budget would slash it by an additional 21 percent nationally in 2008 and more in later years.

• Eliminate grants that assist state

and local law enforcement in Oregon, costing Oregon \$11 million in funding next year and \$58 million over the next five years. The budget would replace a program that supports crime prevention and corrections activities, and a program which helps offset the cost of incarcerating undocumented immigrants, with two much smaller competitive grant programs. The new programs would receive only about half the funding of the programs they replace. While some states would qualify for funding under the new competitive programs, there is no way to know how the funds would be distributed.

In addition to the proposals in the president's budget, Congress faces other budget and program decisions important to Oregon. The Food Stamp

Program and the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known by its initials SCHIP, are both up for renewal in 2007.

"Congress must take this opportunity to strengthen these highly successful programs so they can help more of those who need assistance," Bauer said. "Oregon's success in reducing its hunger rate has hinged primarily on an expansion of the state's food stamp program. These gains are now threatened by the proposed cuts," she added.

The SCHIP program has helped reduce the share of low-income children in Oregon who are uninsured. "Oregon will need additional funds in coming years to reach the goal of insuring all of the state's children so they get the health care they need," Bauer said.

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