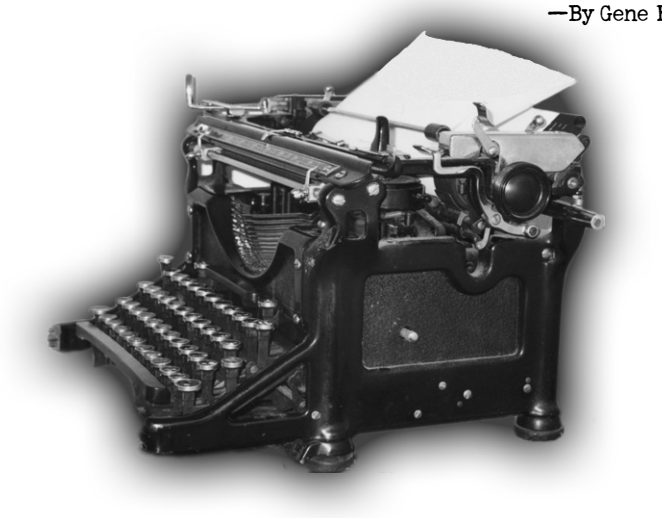
Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



Focus on Roseburg

A STRUGGLE BY NURSES in Oregon's Roseburg was the focus of a national AFL-CIO advertisement in the New York Times to illustrate the need for passage by Congress of the Employee Free Choice Act to help workers bargain collectively for a better life.

The ad, three columns wide by 10 inches deep, ran on the page opposite the editorial page at the end of February. The headline on it asked: "What happened to RNs Peg and Laura when they decided to form a union?" Above the headline was a picture of Peg Knapp and Laura Garren, registered nurses at Mercy Medical Center in Roseburg, which is in Southern Oregon's Douglas County. Their union is the Oregon Nurses Association, based in Portland.

THE AFL-CIO told this story in answer to the question asked in the headline:

"Between them, Peg Knapp and Laura Garren have been caring for mothers and newborn babies for 47 years. As they saw hospital care change, they believed nurses needed a stronger voice for patients. 'We worried that inadequate staffing levels were hurting patient care,' Peg recalls. An overwhelming majority of the nurses at Mercy Medical Center in Roseburg, Ore., felt the same way and signed cards to form a union.

"The hospital's reaction was 'an eye-opener,' Laura says. 'They forced us to go through an election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board and it was intimidating.'

"She says the hospital used the election period to conduct a campaign of fear and misinformation. Anti-union mailings three times a week. Videos saying unions are violent and would slash their tires. Laura says she looked around the room and couldn't believe any of her co-workers would slash her tires.

Nurses were pulled off the job and forced to attend anti-union meetings. Laura remembers hearing a colleague say, 'While I'm here in this mandatory meeting, the nurse upstairs covering for me is now taking care of 10 patients.'

"Despite the hospital's campaign, the nurses stuck together and won. But now they are struggling to get a contract. 'Management comes to bargaining meetings unprepared to negotiate, stalling the negotiations,' Laura explains.

"Today, a full year after the election was certified, Peg, Laura and their colleagues are still waiting for the hospital to respect their choice.

"That's why we need the Employee Free Choice Act. So workers can make a free choice to bargain for better treatment at work and a better life for their families."

★★★

WITHIN DAYS of the AFL-CIO advertisement, the Democratic-controlled U.S. House of Representatives passed the Employee Free Choice Act. Now the legislation moves to the Senate where the minority Republicans have enough votes to delay passage. At the White House, the anti-worker Republican President George W. Bush threatens to veto the Employee Free Choice Act if it reaches his desk.

★★★

KENNETH I. AHO of Portland, a 50-year member of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1, died on Feb. 27 at age 89.

He was born on Jan. 10, 1918 in Portland. He graduated from Benson Tech High School. In World War II he served in the U.S. Merchant Marine. After the war he became a tile setter and joined Local 1.

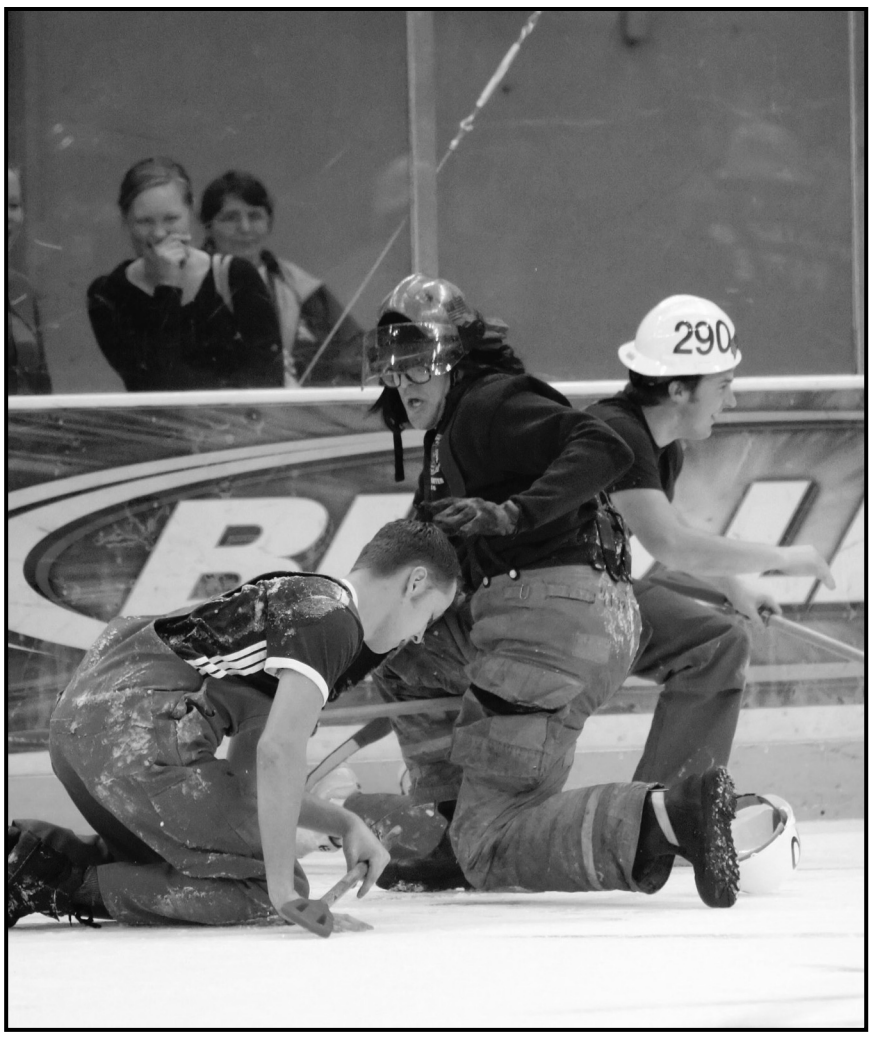
"KEN WAS AN AVID OUTDOORSMAN who loved to fish and hunt," his family said, adding: "Upon retirement he spent much of his time at his second home in Netarts, enjoying the beach and outdoor hobbies."

Survivors include his wife, Florence, whom he married in 1959; eight daughters and sons, Kenneth, Kathy, Joanne, John, Jackie, Jerry Jeanne and Jay; 25 grandchildren; 31 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his twin brother Arnold.

A Memorial service was held March 5 at Mt. Scott Funeral Home.

★★★

(Turn to Page 11)



Unions promote home fire safety at hockey game

Members of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and Fire Fighters Local 43 participate in annual "Broom Ball" hockey game between periods of the Portland Winter Hawks game March 9 at Memorial Coliseum. Contestants don tennis shoes and plastic brooms and try to slap a foam ball into the net. The event is used to promote residential fire sprinkler safety. "No one has ever died in a house fire when it's equipped with a sprinkler system," said Ron Murray, a business rep for Local 290. The union offers the only training program for residential fire sprinkler system installation that is endorsed by the Portland Fire Bureau and the Oregon Building Codes Division. The firefighters retained the "Broom Ball" cup after sloshing to a 0-0 tie. (Photo courtesy of Randy Malin)

BHMK
BENNETT HARTMAN MORRIS & KAPLAN, LLP
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Oregon's Full Service Union Law Firm Representing Workers Since 1960

Serious Injury and Death Cases

- Construction Injuries
- Automobile Accidents
- Medical, Dental, and Legal Malpractice
- Bicycle and Motorcycle Accidents
- Pedestrian Accidents
- Premises Liability (injuries on premises)
- Workers' Compensation Injuries
- Social Security Claims

We Work Hard for Hard-Working People!

111 SW Fifth Avenue, Suite 1650
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 227-4600
www.bennetthartman.com

Our Legal Staff are Proud Members of UFCW Local 555

Broadway Floral
for the BEST flowers call
503-288-5537
1638 NE Broadway, Portland

GREAT SELECTION of Work Boots & Carhartt
Check Our Low Prices!
45 Years in Business!
Hank's Boots & Workwear
8878 NE Sandy Blvd. • Portland
503.253.7098

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement.

4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150, Portland, Ore. 97213
Telephone: (503) 288-3311
Fax Number: (503) 288-3320

Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions $13.75 per year for union members.

Group rates available to trade union organizations.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150-0150, PORTLAND, OR 97213

Press Associates Inc.

25