

Let me say this about that

...Busy career in #29

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laborated on a Christmas party for children of Local 29 members, which turned into a tradition that still continues. Frank also said he was an admirer of the late Dan Faddis, the longtime apprenticeship and training director of Electrical Workers Local 48.

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT, Cusma built a workshop in the backyard of his home in Milwaukie, where he spends time on woodworking, ornamental iron and stained glass projects. One project was a steel and wood trellis; another was a wood-burning pizza oven in which he also bakes bread. He does volunteer work, including driving retirement home residents to their appointments.

FRANK AND JERI CUSMA were married in 1984 and have a son, Anthony, who works as a nurse and also attends classes toward obtaining a nursing degree. Frank's mother, Lidia, went back to Italy years ago but last year he traveled there to return her to the U.S. to re-establish her residency. Now 86, she lives with her son and his family in Milwaukie. In 1996, Frank's grandmother, Georgina Cusma, died in Trieste at age 107; she was one of Italy's oldest residents. Frank said he has traced the history of the Cusma family in Italy back to the year 1080.

★★★

JIM GILMORE, a retired business representative for Portland-based International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, died on March 14 in Seattle at age 81.

He was born in Wyoming and grew up in Butte, Montana. He left school to work as a mechanic for his father, then joined the United States Navy to serve in World War II. He and his wife, Bernice, were married just after he finished boot camp.

"**HE WAS** a Navy machinist and skipper of landing craft," his family said. "He navigated into the beach on Saipan with a load of Marines in that invasion."

After the war he worked as a maintenance man for the Golden Nugget Casino in Las Vegas, then left to enroll in the IBEW Local 48 apprenticeship program in Portland. One of his proudest achievements was helping to lobby a law through the Oregon Legislature that required toilet and hand-washing facilities for workers at construction sites. He was also proud of his work as a scoutmaster for Boy Scout Troop 283 in Portland.

HIS FAMILY SAID he later did labor relations work for the Howard S. Wright and Parsons construction companies and worked in Alaska's North Slope before retiring 20 years ago.

Survivors include his wife, Bernice; two sons, Tim of Seattle and Pat of Anchorage; and five grandchildren.

A CELEBRATION of his life is scheduled for May 12 between 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. at the Lake Washington Rowing Club, 910 N. Northlake Way in Seattle. The family said that in lieu of flowers, contributions can be sent to any charity or to the Group Health Foundation, 1730 Minor Ave. #1500, Seattle WA 98101.

★★★

NOEL JOHNSON, a retired leader of Portland-based Bakers Local 114, sent a letter to the Northwest Labor Press inviting readers to visit his Web site featuring photos and stories about the Lewis River. His letter said:

"This is to let my old friends in the labor movement know that I am in good health and enjoying life to the fullest. My lovely wife, Nancy, and I live close to Woodland, Washington. We have enjoyed 53 years of marriage. I am 72 years of age, however, I feel younger than I did when I retired from Bakers Union Local 114 after 40 years of membership.

"Thanks to our Bakers Union pension and Social Security, we are doing well. We both have a passion. Nancy is quilting and sewing. Her quilts are phenomenal. My passion is my Web site: www.lewisriver.com.

"It has been successful beyond my wildest dreams. Yesterday, over 1,600 people from all around the world enjoyed my pictures and stories. If you get a chance, log on to www.lewisriver.com and e-mail me at Noel@lewisriver.com to let me know what you think about the Website."

★★★

Americans are growing increasingly unhappy with their jobs, according to a recent survey by the Conference Board, a non-profit business membership organization. According to its survey of 5,000 U.S. households, the decline in job satisfaction has occurred over a period of two decades, with little to suggest a significant reversal in attitudes anytime soon. Here are some of the survey's findings:

- Less than two out of every five workers under the age of 25 are satisfied with their jobs. This segment has the lowest level of satisfaction and the lowest level ever recorded in the nearly 20-year history of the survey.

- Workers age 45-54 expressed the second-lowest level of satisfaction with less than 45 percent content with their current job.

- The lowest level of job satisfaction is exhibited among workers earning \$15,000 or less per year.

- Two out of every 10 employees do not see themselves in their current job a year from now.

Port and commissioners deserve thanks...and support

To The Editor:

As a resident and taxpayer in Clark County all of my working life, I want to thank the Port of Vancouver officials and commissioners for doing their job by proposing to create business opportunities which will provide living-wage jobs and benefits for Clark County and Southwest Washington workers. I have listened for many years to people moan and cry about having to work and pay taxes in Oregon for which they receive no benefits except a paycheck.

Over the past few years we have lost many big companies: Carborundum plant, Del Monte cannery, Alcoa/VanAlco Aluminum plants, Evergreen Aluminum plant, Jantzen knitting mills, Boise Cascade paper mill, Webber Machine, Pendleton Woolen Mill, Georgia Pacific (Crown Zellerbach) paper mills in Camas and Washougal, Kyocera and

many others. Some have closed or moved, many have gone overseas, some downsized or have been taken over in buy-outs, but, whatever the reason, the jobs for thousands of workers have been lost.

If it weren't for downtown renovation, hospital construction, school construction, chip manufacturing/electronic plants and home building, we would probably have the highest unemployment rate in the State of Washington.

Let's help the Port in their effort to create new business opportunities with good-paying jobs and benefits, so our workers can stay in Clark County and SW Washington. This would also help cut down on air pollution, fuel consumption, traffic accidents, congestion on I-5 and I-205 and provide more quality time for families by eliminating long drives and time spent in traffic tie-ups.

OPEN FORUM

With more business and job opportunities Clark County would be less of a bedroom community to our good neighbors across the river.

As a person who has represented workers in Oregon and Washington for 35 years, I want to again thank the Port of Vancouver officials and Commissioners for their proposal to save the largest area of industrial property left on the Columbia River for future business growth and job opportunities. Support for this proposal will help guarantee future jobs for our workers, their children and grandchildren.

Ed Barnes
IBEW Local 48
Retired
Vancouver, Wash.

Freightliner shows lack of commitment to city

To The Editor:

It's been seven months now since I retired, time enough to consider things from a different view.

Seeing my former employer Freightliner lay off half the workforce and permanently sending the Freightliner brand to Mexico seems only to demonstrate a lack of commitment to this place and its people.

This sense of entitlement to corporate mobility plays havoc on the lives of those left in the wake of companies that

shop the world for cheap labor.

I wonder if the laws of the land should include a responsibility clause where any company that fails in their humanity would be stripped of their corporate personhood and denied a business license.

I envision this clause to include a commitment to the place a company does business as well as a commitment to the people they employ.

In the case of Freightliner (now Western Star) perhaps we could offer

Freightliner a provisional business license, granted if the company demonstrates its commitment, a contingent license that would be immediately revoked in the case of abandonment or neglect. After all, if the company is allowed to enjoy the rights of a person they should act like one, act in a way that becomes a person with a family and a home.

Carroll Wikander
IAM Local 1005 Retired
Aloha

...End of the line at Freightliner

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of what a semi-skilled assembly worker makes in Portland. Rank-and-file assembly jobs at the Mexican plant pay much less. The plant's roughly 1,800 workers are represented by the Sindicato de la Industria Automotriz, a union affiliated with the CTM labor federation.

Meanwhile, an even bigger Freightliner plant is now under construction in Saltillo, in the Northeastern Mexican state of Coahuila. Mexican President Felipe Calderon attended the groundbreaking in January. The state government is widening the highway and paying half the cost of electricity transmission. On Feb. 1, the Saltillo City Council authorized the mayor to give tax breaks and streamline building permits. Freightliner is spending \$300 million to build the new plant, which will take 1,500 workers two years to build. After that, 1,600 workers will turn out 30,000 trucks a year starting early 2009.

As with Santiago, much of what's produced will be sold to customers in the United States.

"Melancholy" was how Kear described the mood at the Portland plant in the final days. Workers headed for layoff seemed resigned, sad to lose the camaraderie, the daily routine they shared with co-workers. A secretary took photos of line workers and put together a collage near the cafeteria. Workers signed a banner which will hang in the Machinists Union hall.

On the last day, workers were treated to cake and given commemorative polished metal keychains. The front of the keychain says "Freightliner: 1947-2007." A sticker on the keyring says "Made in China."

As it went down the line, the final truck, sold to C.R. England trucking, was customized a bit. Workers rigged up a metal stamp to imprint the letters "USA" on the back. Scores of workers signed the unfinished inside panels of the cab. One worker wrote on a piece of cardboard and taped it to the windshield: "Last Freightliner built in Portland, Oregon. Happy trails to you!"

Retiree Ron Bennett, who drove the first truck out of the Swan Island plant in 1969, was invited back to ride out

on the last one. Next to him, as workers' cameras flashed, vehicle inspector Mike McLaren started the engine and slowly took the truck out of the building.

"Makes me want to cry," said welder Morris Price. "That's my job gone out the door."

CORRECTION:

In an article in the March 16 issue, the NW Labor Press reported that workers at the Freightliner Pre-Inspection Delivery department, who voted April 3 to unionize, will be laid off shortly. Their work will continue.