

Let me say this about that

...Long IAM career

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council's tradition of holding a Christmas Party for area children in the Elsinore Theatre in downtown Salem, serving as master of ceremonies for the well-attended event. Greer remained with the labor council until he was hired for the IAM staff in 1989. In the years in-between, he served as a business agent for IAM District 163 representing the members of Local 1506. When the IAM merged District 163 into Portland-based District Lodge 24, he started working out of the Machinists Building on SE 32nd Ave. around the corner from the SE Powell spot where he performed as a musician years earlier. Divorce ended the marriage of Gerry and Mary Jo in 1980.

GEORGE MILLER, then the directing business representative of IAM District Lodge 24, appointed Greer as his administrative assistant after Dick Schneider was called up by the International Union. While working out of the District 24 building, Greer met his second wife, Annie, who was the manager of the union's financial office. She was a member of Office and Professional Employees Local 11. They'll mark their 25th year of marriage this year. Lee Hunsaker was Gerry's best man at the wedding. A few years after their wedding, Annie left her IAM job to become a secretary at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555's office in Tigard. Ken MacKillop, Local 555's president, had been secretary-treasurer of the Salem-based Central Labor Council during some of the time when Gerry was its president.

WHILE WITH DISTRICT 24, Greer was elected to represent the Salem-based labor council's three counties on the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board and later was elected first vice president of the state labor federation. Also, Greer attended Machinists leadership classes at Placid Harbor, Maryland, and union classes conducted by the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center. This education added to his earlier college-level studies in Kansas and Colorado. Greer's political work brought him in contact with Oregon Governors Bob Straub, Vic Atiyeh and Neil Goldshmidt.

In 1989, Greer was appointed by the IAM as a grand lodge representative — an international rep — and assigned to Phoenix, from where he assisted local unions in Arizona, New Mexico and Southern Nevada. While the Greers were in Phoenix, Annie worked as a secretary for Teamsters business agents. Gerry was next assigned to the IAM's 13 state Western Regional Headquarters in Sacramento, California, from where he handled assignments in many states, including Hawaii, where he was stationed for a while. When the Greers were in Sacramento, Annie worked for the California State Building and Construction Trades Council as its assistant legislative director. Sometimes Gerry, working on IAM assignments, accompanied Annie to National AFL-CIO Building Trades Legislative Conferences in Washington, D.C., where the Greers met with President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore and his wife, Tipper.

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT in 2005, the Greers returned to the Northwest, making their home in Washougal, across the Columbia River from Oregon. Gerry transferred his membership to Vancouver Local 1374, which is affiliated with District 24. Gerry and Annie enjoy camping and boating with family members. Gerry has a son, Douglas, an assistant director of public instruction in Wichita, Kansas; a son, Joel, a real estate developer in Salem; and a daughter, Jennifer, of Chicago, where her husband works as a research analyst at the Ben May Institute, University of Chicago. Annie has two sons, Sean Smith, a building contractor in Beaverton, and Erin Smith, a Portland Police sergeant. Gerry and Annie have nine grandchildren. Gerry is the rear commodore of the Vancouver Yacht Club; the Greers have a 27-foot, twin-engine Carver.

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Book announcement

A **BOOK** about the leftist and labor history of the Rose City, titled "The Portland Red Guide: Sites and Stories From Our Radical Past," will make its debut at 6 p.m. Tuesday, May 1, at The Great Northwest Bookstore, 3314 SW First Ave. on the corner of SW Gibbs St.

The May Day event will feature comments by the book's author, Michael Munk, and music by General Strike, a band of unionists who will play and sing songs appropriate for the occasion. General Strike performs at union strike rallies, Labor Day programs and other events.

The Red Guide, a 256-page illustrated book, is published by Portland State University's Ooligan Press, and will be available at the bookstore for \$16.95. Author Munk, a Portland historian, is a retired professor who taught political science at New Jersey's Rutgers University. He graduated from Portland's Reed College, which he attended on a scholarship from the Oregon State Federation of Labor, which later became the Oregon AFL-CIO.

U.S. labor backs efforts to stop ratification of CAFTA in Costa Rica

To The Editor:

While the Bush Administration is pushing Costa Rica's President Óscar Arias Sánchez to finally ratify the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA), the international labor movement is closing ranks against it.

CAFTA has been approved by every other signatory country in Central America and by the Dominican Republic. But in Costa Rica, public outcry against the treaty has stopped ratification so far. Many Costa Ricans know the devastating impact CAFTA is having elsewhere.

In October 2006, a two-day general strike was held against the treaty. On Feb. 26, 2007, more than 80,000 unionists, students, farm workers, environmentalists, feminists, indigenous people and other activists protested CAFTA in the streets.

Despite popular resistance, President Arias and the pro-CAFTA majority in the Costa Rican Congress had vowed to push through approval of the treaty this spring. However, on April 13, Arias changed course and announced plans to hold a national referendum on the issue.

U.S. labor support for Costa Rica's anti-CAFTA forces grows. In response to a request for help from

Costa Rican labor leaders, the national AFL-CIO and a number of labor organizations in Washington, Oregon and other states are sending strong anti-CAFTA messages to President Arias and Costa Rican legislative leaders.

The Washington Federation of State Employees (WFSE) Local 304 in Seattle adopted a resolution of solidarity with the Costa Rican labor movement in their fight against CAFTA that also calls for "repeal of CAFTA and NAFTA by the U.S. Congress."

The Martin Luther King County Labor Council and statewide WFSE Council 28 unanimously endorsed the resolution and forwarded it to the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC) and national AFL-CIO.

Backing in Oregon has come from United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, Portland Jobs with Justice and the Industrial Workers of the World Portland branch.

In a March 2007 letter to Arias, WSLC President Rick Bender reiterated the U.S. labor movement's reason for opposing CAFTA, which the U.S. Congress barely ratified by two votes in August 2005.

"We believed then, and we believe

now, that free trade agreements based on the failed NAFTA model lead to loss of jobs, privatization of essential government services such as health care, water distribution and energy services, and interference with the rights of citizens in the U.S. and Costa Rica to enact laws and regulations in the public interest," Bender wrote.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney is also sending a message to President Arias that the labor federation stands in solidarity with Costa Rican labor on this issue and urging his government to refrain from retaliating against trade unionists and others who oppose CAFTA.

Union members and their unions can help by writing letters to Costa Rican officials calling on them to abandon efforts to ratify CAFTA. Address your e-mails to President Óscar Arias Sánchez at isolis@casapres.go.cr. Send copies to Sadie Bravo Pérez, Partido Acción Cuidadana, at sbravo@asamblea.go.cr, and Francisco Antonio Pacheco Fernández, Partido Liberación Nacional, at lrosales@asamblea.go.cr.

For more information, contact Fred Hyde at fhhyde@igc.org.

Fred Hyde
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