

Let me say this about that

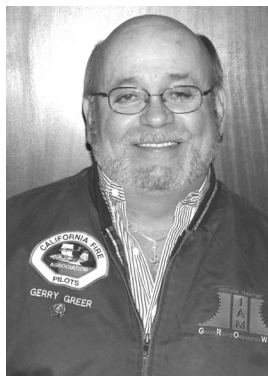
—By Gene Klare



Greer in Hall of Fame

GERRY GREER, 64, a retired Grand Lodge representative for the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), is the newest member of the Labor Hall of Fame, which is sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council. The NOLRC is affiliated with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Greer, who lives in Washougal, Washington, with his wife, Annie, also a retired union member, retired from the IAM international staff in 2005. At the time of his retirement, he was based at the IAM's Western Regional Headquarters in Sacramento, California.



GERRY GREER

GERRY GREER was born on Jan. 13, 1943 in New York City. After his mother divorced and remarried, he moved to Richmond, an industrial city in California's East Bay across from San Francisco. Gerry did not get along with his stepfather, and ran away from home at age 13, for a time staying with an older brother in Clovis, New Mexico. Then he went to Salina, Kansas to live at the St. Francis School for Boys.

After a college football scholarship failed to materialize, Gerry enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He spent most of his time in the Air Force as a jet aircraft mechanic stationed at a base across from the Boeing plant in Wichita, Kansas, where the IAM represented the workers.

After receiving his honorable discharge with the three stripes of an airman third class, he returned to California and patched up his relationship with his mother and stepfather. By this time he had become a musician who could play the piano and guitar, and he used those talents to form a rock and roll band. Greer and his colleagues joined the American Federation of Musicians and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists. From 1964 to 1970, the band traveled along a circuit, playing in Alaska, Montana, Idaho, Seattle, Portland and other places.



ANNIE GREER

On the band's itinerary was a Portland lounge on SE Powell Blvd. near 32nd Ave., just around the corner from the Machinists Building, where he would later work. After the music business began changing, the band disbanded and Greer took a job as a bartender in Denver.

ONE NIGHT IN DENVER, a customer left \$300 on the bar when he departed. When the man next came in, Greer asked him if he had meant to leave a \$300 tip. Surprised, the customer said he wondered where he'd lost the money. Greer handed him the \$300, but the customer insisted that Greer keep half of it. Then he offered Greer a job with the restaurant chain Mr. Steak. The man was vice president of the corporation. Greer was hired as an opening specialist, and worked his way up to area vice president responsible for restaurants in Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois.

After three busy years on that job, his then-wife, Mary Jo, urged that the Greer family move to her hometown of Salem, Oregon, and they did. Greer found a job as a welder at a Caterpillar lift-truck plant in nearby Dallas. There he joined Machinists Local 1506 and became active in the union. Lee G. Hunsaker of Albany-based IAM District 163 was the business agent who represented Dallas Local 1506.

WITHIN A SHORT TIME, Greer became president of the Salem-based Marion, Polk and Yamhill Counties Central Labor Council. He helped revitalize the

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Students try handling 40-ton crane

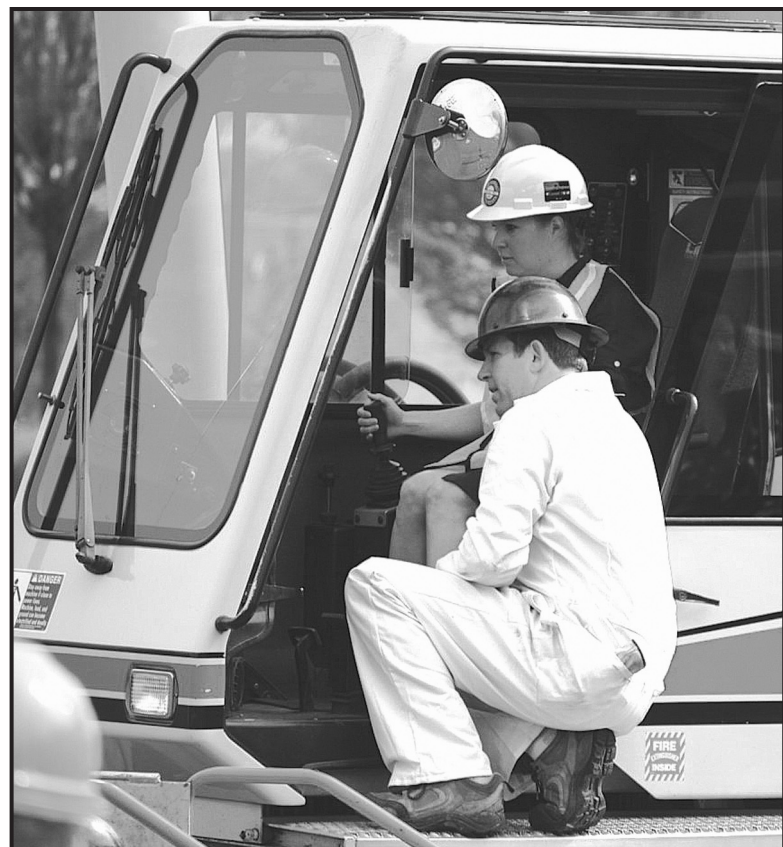
Operating Engineers Local 701 offers test drive at Roosevelt High

On April 4, students at Roosevelt High School in North Portland found a 40-ton crane on their football field, courtesy of Campbell Crane. Building trades unions are trying to recruit young people and wanted to draw attention to a new after-school trades program.

One hundred students gathered on the bleachers, and Operating Engineers Assistant Business Manager Nelda Wilson pitched building trades apprenticeships — “earn while you learn” — as a worthy career track.

Then it was time for volunteers to try operating the crane. The goal was to lower a ball into one of several blue cans, but it wasn't as easy as it looked. It took the principal an eternity to get the job done. When Deborah Peterson, the first student, tried to make the basket, the ball swung so wildly on its cable it looked like it might hit a precariously parked SUV. A star athlete and two other students did little better; the prize for fastest basket — a \$100 gift certificate — went to the school's Rose Festival Princess Sascha-Eden Samantha Preston. Maybe after four years of apprenticeship, they'll do better — and be ready to earn the \$29-an-hour wage that comes with that skill.

The after-school trades program began this week intended to interest students in union apprenticeship programs and help them get ready to participate as soon as they graduate. Fifteen students signed up for the class, which is being taught by a trainer from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters apprenticeship program. Students will build a work table and other basic furniture at Roosevelt, and will take tours of union apprenticeship programs.



In front of about a hundred of her fellow students, Roosevelt High School student Deborah Peterson gets a crash course in crane operation from Jerry Deruyter, a member of Operating Engineers Local 701.



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