

# Let me say this about that

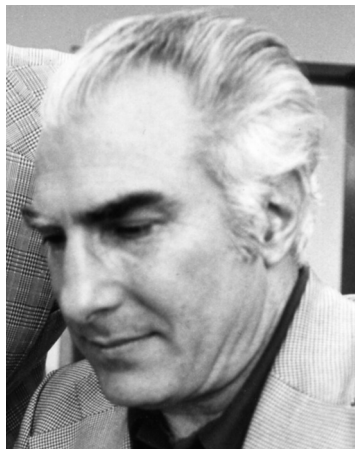
—By Gene Klare



## Vokos enters Hall

**THE NORTHWEST** Oregon Retirees Council has honored Christ Vokos of Portland with membership in its Labor Hall of Fame. Vokos, 84, is a retired secretary-treasurer of Bakery and Confectionery Workers Local 364. The Retirees Council is an affiliate of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO.

Vokos retired in November 1985 from Local 364, which he had joined in October 1950 upon going to work as a baker at the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) plant on NE Columbia Boulevard.



CHRIST VOKOS

**CHRIST GEORGE VOKOS** was born in Portland on Aug. 5, 1923. His father George C. Vokos, had moved to Portland from Greece in 1907. The elder Vokos worked as a union man all of his life in the United States. His union memberships included the Lumber and Sawmill Workers (now the Carpenters Industrial Council), Columbia River Fishermen's Protective Association, Alaska Fishermen's Union and Portland Painters Local 10. Christ's mother also came from Greece. Christ graduated from Roosevelt High School in January 1941. While in high school, he was among a half-dozen boys who took home economics classes. He has used the cooking and baking skills

he learned in school throughout his life. Upon graduation, before the U.S. entered World War II, Christ applied for officer training at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Connecticut, but was turned down because of a problem with his left eye.

At the urging of his father, who was working at a shipyard, Christ went to work at the Oregon Shipyard in St. Johns, helping to build Liberty ships as a member of Boilermakers Local 72. Eleven months later he transferred to the Swan Island Shipyard.

In March 1943, Christ joined the Merchant Marine and shipped out on a Liberty ship he helped build. He joined the Sailors Union of the Pacific and was assigned to be a cook and a baker on the ship, which was hauling cargo to the U.S. troops fighting Japanese invaders in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. Vokos traveled around the world on wartime Liberty ships, carrying troops and war supplies and dodging enemy submarines. His ship transported U.S. Lend-Lease cargo destined for Russian allies and carried U.S. troops to South Pacific battle zones. Vokos served on a tanker hauling high-octane aviation gasoline to Okinawa in the South Pacific from where U.S. bombers took off to drop atomic bombs on Japan, an event which brought about Japan's war-ending surrender.

**AFTER THE WAR**, Christ Vokos returned to Portland and worked out of the Carpenters Union on the construction of a passenger liner at the shipyard on Swan Island. He next did some commercial fishing with his father, sailing out of Astoria as a member of the Columbia River Fishermen's Union. In 1947 he went back to sea on a Merchant Marine Liberty ship carrying cargo to ports in the Mediterranean Sea. A stop in Greece gave him an opportunity to meet with relatives he'd never seen before. He made two trips to that part of the world.

Vokos was surprised in December 1948 to be drafted into the U.S. Army despite his wartime service in the U.S. Merchant Marine. After basic training at Fort Ord, Calif., he was sent to New Orleans, but within seven months, the Army sent him home with honorable discharge, deciding that his family needed him as a breadwinner. He went to Bristol Bay in Alaska to fish as a union member.

**DURING HIS YEARS** at sea, Vokos was the ship's delegate — shop steward — on every ship on which he was employed. He was an active member of the Sailors Union of the Pacific. He hewed to that same principle when he became a

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## Working America canvasses Seaside

About a dozen members of the Oregon chapter of Working America teamed up with delegates attending the Oregon AFL-CIO convention in Seaside to canvass neighborhoods and ask residents to vote "Yes" on Ballot Measure 50. Working America is a community affiliate of the AFL-CIO, with 1.8 million members nationally who don't have a union at work but share the same economic principles that unions stand for. Working America chapters have been established in eight states. Oregon is one of the largest, with 56,000 members. Among the delegates volunteering above is Amanda Fritz (right) a member of the Oregon Nurses Association and a candidate for Portland City Council.



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