

Let me say this about that

... 'Bud' Lent dies at 86

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committees at the Portland Art Museum and the TriMet mass transit system.

FINDLEY RESIGNED as Local 99's secretary-treasurer in 1993 because he thought it was time for a career change, and went to work as a CWA member at AT&T. He maintains his membership in Local 99 and still catches a musical gig now and then. He has also kept his OEA membership because he occasionally fills in as a substitute teacher in a couple of suburban school districts. He also stays busy as chairman of his neighborhood association in the Arnold Creek area of Southwest Portland.

"We met in the House of Labor," Findley said of his 1980 marriage to Kathryn Bunch. They met as delegates from their local unions at an Oregon AFL-CIO convention. Bob has a son, Jeffrey, who live in New York City; and a daughter, Susan, of Tigard. Kathryn has a son, Brian, of Oregon City; and a daughter, Christine, of Salt Lake City, who is the mother of Kathryn's and Bob's granddaughter.

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BERKELEY (BUD) LENT, a workers' lawyer who became a Democratic legislator, a Circuit Court judge and an Oregon Supreme Court justice, died of a heart attack on Nov. 11 at his home in Las Vegas at age 86.

He was watching a football game on television when he told his wife "Call 9-1-1, I'm having a heart attack," a friend told the Labor Press. The friend, Edward J. Whelan of Portland, recalled that Lent was general counsel for the Oregon AFL-CIO when Ed was executive secretary-treasurer and later president of the labor federation from the mid-1960s into the '70s.

LENT WAS BORN in 1921 in Los Angeles; the family moved to Southeast Portland when he was a child, settling in the Lents community, a working-class neighborhood named for an ancestor, Oliver P. Lent, who had traveled to Oregon from Ohio by wagon train in 1866.

After graduating from Franklin High School, Bud Lent served in the U.S. Navy in World War II, earning the stripes of a signalman second class. Later, he attended Occidental College in Los Angeles and graduated from Reed College in Portland, followed by studying for a law degree at Willamette University in Salem. He supported himself at law school by working as a guard at the Oregon State Penitentiary. At Reed he'd worked in a sawmill.

LENT WAS FIRST ELECTED to the Legislature as a state representative in the late 1950s and later was elected to the Senate. As a lawyer, his clients included injured workers, unions and the Labor Press. Part of the time his law office was in the Portland Labor Center. He became a judge in 1971 when Gov. Tom McCall appointed him to a Circuit Court vacancy in Multnomah County. Five years later he won election to the Supreme Court in Salem. He served as chief justice for a year in the early 1980s. He retired in 1988 and worked in Oregon and Nevada as a mediator, attempting to settle civil lawsuits without a trial.

Survivors include his wife, Joan; four daughters, Patricia Brandt of Portland, Deirdere Lent of San Diego, Terry Ling of Beaverton, and Suzanne Robinson of Butler, Pa.; two sons, Eric Lent of San Diego and Scott Othus of Lake Oswego; a brother, Perry of Portland; 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be scheduled later.

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FOLLOWING ARE some recent comments by Charlie Mercer, president of the national AFL-CIO's Union Label & Service Trade Department in Washington, D.C., which were published in his End Notes column in the department's Label Letter:

"Hats Off To the United Steel Workers and its recent roll-out of a campaign entitled 'Protect Our Kids — Stop Toxic Imports.' The campaign features the Website protect-our-kids.org. Teaming up with Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, USW is asking the public to sign its online petition calling on government to fix the toxic toy problem.

"USW IS WORKING with two grass-roots organizations — Women of Steel and Moms Rising — to call attention to the problem and to distribute thousands of 'Get the Lead Out' screening kits along with a series of 'Safe Home Sessions' to help families learn more about protecting themselves and their loved ones.

"Announcing the campaign at a Washington, D.C. press conference, USW President Leo Gerard urged Congress to move ahead on legislation sponsored by Brown to improve consumer protections and require country-of-origin labeling.

"CHINA'S ATTEMPT to export its poor standards is a serious problem," Gerard said, "but a huge number of dangerous imports are made for North American manufacturers that choose profits over safety. Meanwhile, our government regulatory agencies are being gutted. Those facts are equally disturbing."

Mercer went on to say:

"It's a topsy-turvy world for U.S. consumers. Ignoring recent flare-ups of meat products and the concerns of millions of Americans, the Bush Administration appears intent on ending hands-on federal meat and poultry inspection.

"IN YEARS PAST, the White House promoted a bogus notion that it could substitute a 'risk-based' inspection system that would rely on periodic quality control sampling of meat and poultry products..."

Bush uses signing statements to illegally inflate his office power

To The Editor:

Over the last few years, signing statements are being used to claim executive privilege by George W. Bush. He has claimed the authority to bypass more than 750 statutes, which were provisions contained in about 125 bills.

Bush has routinely asserted and claims the right to "supervise the unitary executive branch." In other words, bypass the Congress as subordinate, no matter what laws are passed. Basically, Bush asserts that Congress cannot pass a law that undercuts the constitutionally-granted authorities of the president. He asserts that essentially the laws of Congress do not apply to the president when negated by his declaration in a signing statement.

The theme in these signing statements is clear, in that the laws enacted by the Congress will not be rigidly adhered to, but rather be "construed" or loosely interpreted and are subordinate to the wishes of the president. Under this premise, the president may choose to follow or ignore legislation enacted into law.

Example: HR 5441 signing statement:

"The Executive Branch shall construe section 522 of the Act, relating to privacy officer reports, in a manner consistent with the President's consti-

tutional authority to supervise the unitary Executive Branch."

This appears to be an attempt at defining the presidency of the United States as a supreme power, an office in which one may set aside acts of Congress without regard to the practical application of the law.

In July 2006, an ABA "Blue Ribbon Task Force" found that these presidential assertions of constitutional authority "undermine the rule of law and our constitutional system."

Lawrence Tribe wrote that signing statements are "constitutionally unobjectionable."

The president has put himself above the Congress, has put himself in the position of willfully failing to support or enforce the laws of the land and "his actions have resulted in harm to others" as well as harm to the Constitution which he claims to defend.

There is no exemption from the law that allows George W. Bush to inflate the office of the presidency. The regularity and copiousness with which Bush uses signing statements demonstrates a will to usurp the power of the Congress through acts of impunity, a violation of the Constitution and law.

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Industrial accident kills Jeff Baker; son of Carpenter leader Ray Baker

Jeffrey Baker, the son of retired Carpenters Union official Ray Baker, was killed in an industrial accident Nov. 16. He was 46.

Ray Baker is a retired financial secretary-treasurer of Carpenters Local 1388 and a past president of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council. After retiring he moved to Wichita Falls, Texas.

Jeffrey had been a member of Local 1388, having gone through its apprenticeship training program. A motorcycle accident, however, prevented him from continuing that career.

He found work as a welder for Allied Systems of Sherwood, a nonunion firm. According to Local 1388, Baker was welding a 500-pound piece of steel onto a logging truck when a sling used to hold the steel in place broke. The steel piece struck Baker in the head.

The accident is under investigation by the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Jeffrey H. Baker was born Nov. 3, 1961, in Portland. He grew up in the Milwaukie area and lived for a time in Kansas and Nevada before returning to Oregon in 1988.

He was a member of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

He is survived by his wife, Kimberly Nicholson; his father; mother, Lorna Bufton-Renfro of Lake Oswego; daughters, Elizabeth Barns and Crystal Baker of Nevada; son, Jeffrey of Nevada; brothers, David and Robert, both of Wichita Falls; sisters, Cindy Wray of Wichita Falls and Linda Morgan of Colton; and one grandchild.

Services were held Nov. 19 at Hoodview Church of God in Woodburn.

2,600 casino dealers join Auto Workers

Card dealers at Foxwoods Resort Casino, the largest private employer in Connecticut and owned by the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe, voted last month to join the United Auto Workers Union. There are 2,600 employees in the bargaining unit.

It is the first union to be established at a tribal casino under a contested vote, according to Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal. Blumenthal had argued in favor of the right to unionize at the casino, stating that federal courts already have ruled that labor laws apply at tribal casinos.

The Mashantucket Pequot Tribe tried to stop the vote, arguing that tribal em-

Portland members of UFCW #555 urge Eugene pact

To The Editor:

Last week, over 100 Portland-area rank-and-file members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 signed a letter which was submitted to the Oregonian for publication. We asked Albertsons, Fred Meyer and Safeway to start bargaining fairly with our members in Eugene-Springfield. It's been nearly nine months since the contract in that area expired and negotiations began.

In October, our union filed an unfair labor practice because the companies had refused to discuss wages.

Then the companies offered a 15 cent per hour annual raise. That's less than half the cost of living increases. Eugene-Springfield members then voted to authorize their bargaining committee to call a strike if necessary. Bargaining continues.

Portland members are disappointed with the low wage offer. Portland journey-level clerks have gotten an average of one-half percent annual raise since 2003 and apprentice clerks have gotten no raises. We know the Eugene settlement will likely set precedents for our contract negotiations next year.

Gasoline prices are rising. Rents are rising. Food prices are rising and so are profits of our companies. Yet they make a wage offer that continues our loss of buying power.

We urge the companies to start negotiating in good faith and offer fair wages and benefits.

**Stuart Fishman
UFCW Local 555
Portland**

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