

**GUEST EDITOR**

*Guest Commentary*

***By Richard O'Heir, Sr.***

As I write this article, I have such great pride in the fact that I am a Local 17 pipe coverer; have been a member of this union since 1959 and worked on permit for three years prior. I have been in this business for fifty years. I launched this career as a nineteen year old kid with only one thing in mind which was to make a good living. This wonderful business has done just that for me – it has afforded me the opportunity to provide a good living for myself and my family for fifty years. When I started in the business, a "helper's" pay was \$ .84 an hour.

I was married in 1957, and in the following seven years had five children. In 1972, I partnered up with Jack McNamara, who was, himself the son of a pipe coverer. Together we started our own business. All of this was made possible because of pipe covering. I convey this to illustrate precisely what this business has to offer someone who is willing to go to work every day, and give a good days work. You will make a better than average living and be able to raise a family with a good standard of living. One of the proudest moments of my life was when my son was accepted into Local 17 in January, 2006.

I was asked to be a trustee for the Pension Welfare and Annuity Funds in 1984. I am proud to say we had about \$40 million in our pension fund with some two hundred retired men. Today we have \$145 million with over six hundred retirees who average over \$2,000 per month in pension payments. I tell you all of this to illustrate how fortunate you are to be a union member and a member of the Building Trades. You can trust the leaders whom you have elected. I can assure you that the decisions they make are for the benefit of the membership in general, and not for personal gain.

This business has afforded me the opportunity to be in every type of plant in northern Indiana, and northern and western Illinois. I have been in Nuclear Power Stations, Fossil Stations, Meat Plants; you name it. These experiences have enabled me to see and be part of how each one operates and creates, designs, and controls their own individual product, and to see and be part of how they affect all of us, our world and our environment.

Our Union has made great strides, not only in wages and benefits, but in terms of being recognized as a true member of the Building Trades. Years ago, we were looked at as an afterthought. We are now understood for our true value in the industry.

In conclusion, I urge you to show up for work every day, be on time, and do the work in a professional manner. This will maintain the integrity which Local 17 has worked for years to attain.

### **LOCAL 17'S LONG-RANGE PLAN**

Local 17 is about to undertake an ambitious program to increase our membership and market share for our contractors. In order to take our industry back, we need to be bold and innovative. The following are important steps for Local 17's long-range plan for our industry.

1. Our participating contractors will be subsidized for each legitimate Energy Audit they perform. (School Districts, Hospitals, Power Plants, Industrial Plants, etc.) Local 17 will provide this from our Market Recovery Fund.
2. The Local 17 JATC will educate our apprentices on the basics of the 3E Energy Audits. We will also launch an introductory "*Journeyman Upgrade*" 3E Class for our Journeymen. (Dates to be Announced)
3. Local 17 will provide instructors from the "Insulation Energy Appraisal Program 3E Plus Program" to teach the 2-day course at our facility. Each contractor will be allowed to send 1 person to learn this 2-day software class and start putting it to use. A test will be given, and upon passing the test they will receive their certification. (Dates to be Announced)
4. Local 17 is pursuing a marketing firm to promote union insulation contracting. We will place ads in Trade Journals and produce DVD's that will inform the construction industry of the energy savings insulation provides. We must convince anyone who will listen that insulation is a large part of the solution to our Nation's energy problems. We will educate everyone about the dangers of the "Greenhouse Gas Effect" and NOX emissions. We will push our energy audits, as there is no better time than now, with the price of fuel and the obvious effect of global warming to promote our industry.
5. Local 17 with IRIC, will form a Labor/Management Energy Committee - comprised of 3 contractors and 3 union representatives. This Committee will meet regularly and investigate the "Green Building" initiatives, the Leeds Program, Energy Star, and any government grants for energy conservation. Once this Committee gets its feet wet with these programs, it can start to pursue legislation that would help our industry achieve some of our goals.
6. The Local 17 Full-Time Officers and Executive Board are going to take on duties they never have had before. We are going to police our organization by enforcing the Professional Craftsman Code of Conduct. The final piece of this program will start this fall. We will teach the QCC portion of this plan. It is an 8-hour course that all General Foremen, Foremen, Superintendents and union stewards will be expected to attend. We will keep you informed. (Dates to be Announced)

7. Local 17 needs to start taking more advantage of the PAC Fund money we spend every year. On Friday, August 4, 2006, at our Family Night Union Meeting, we will bring a motion that would allow us to send a Local 17 member to some of these political gatherings as a representative of Local 17. We want to be able to compensate this person for expenses, etc. It has become far too difficult for us to attend every event. We imagine there may be 1 or 2 events a month that one of our members could attend. We would send someone that would represent the Local responsibly. It is important to be seen by the politicians to remind them of who we are and what our issues are.
8. At our August 4, 2006 Union Meeting, we will put forth a motion to make available 3 more elected offices for our Local. These delegate's terms would coincide with the offices that are up in June '07. These 3 elected members would become delegates to the Chicago Federation of Labor. We currently have 6 delegate positions at the CFL. The other 3 delegates will remain unchanged. They are Local 17's Business Manager, Financial Secretary and Cook County Business Agent. CFL Delegates are required to attend about 9 delegate meetings a year. They are held on the first Tuesday evening of the month. Why? To get more of our membership involved. Hopefully we can attract more fresh faces to participate.

***We said ambitious and we were not kidding!***

From all indications, we are going to get busy again. We cannot become complacent and enjoy our newfound prosperity. Just being busy and having full employment should not satisfy our appetites. We should all put forth the effort to expand our industry and not just be happy that everyone is working. If we all make a big push towards expanding our industry, it goes a long way in helping the Union's Funds and our contractor's pocketbooks. This will help our organizing efforts immensely by allowing us to strip the best workers from their unscrupulous open employers and hurt our non-union competition. Let's band together and send our industry a strong message that we are very serious about this new initiative.

**DECEASED MEMBERS**

These members have served Local 17 well. Our Local will remember them for eternity.

James A. Holland	R# 28860	03-24-06
Ron Sheppard	R# 68318	05-06-06
George McDonough	R# 32262	06-16-06

**RECORDS UPDATE**

We have enclosed paperwork to our active members. Please complete this form and mail back to us in the envelope provided. We are in need of updating all our records. Please help us by mailing this form back as **promptly as possible**.

## RETIREES

Local 17 would like to honor these recent retirees. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

Denis Papp	R# 42093	02-01-06
James Quinn	R# 32289	04-01-06
Harold Bradley	R# 37136	05-01-06

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Our own **Jack Shine** was the recipient of the **2006 W.F. "Pablo" Bleiker Award** that was presented this past week at the Annual International Apprenticeship Conference. This prestigious award is presented annually to recognize the outstanding achievement of one individual within our International Apprenticeship system. Jack has been the Apprentice Coordinator for Local 17 since January 1, 1987 and is at the helm of one of the largest Apprentice Schools in the International. All of us at Local 17 consider Jack to be our resident expert on all issues involving insulation, asbestos abatement, safety issues, and firestopping. Earlier this year, he worked with FEMA in New Orleans, and then was called back there a second time to teach an OSHA 10 Hour Class. Jack has three sons: John Jr., 24, Matthew 23, and Mark 21, and was recently married to Amy. **CONGRATULATIONS JACK! WAY TO GO!**

The next **OSHA 10 Class will be held on Saturday, July 8, 2006, at 7:00 A.M.** Please call Sue to confirm your attendance if you have not taken this class.

**Local 17 will be hosting their Annual Family Night Union Meeting on Friday, August 4, 2006 at 8:00 P.M.** We will be conducting the **John McNichols Scholarship** drawing and the new **Jack Barry Scholarship** drawing as well. All members and their high school aged children and older are invited to attend this meeting. Each student attending will be eligible to receive a free ticket for an APPLE, 30GB, IPOD drawing. We hope to see as many of our members as possible.

Our **19<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner Dance will be held on Saturday, October 14, 2006 at Park Place of Countryside, 6240 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.** All the New Journeymen, Retirees, and the Class of 1976, (30 Years of Service) will be honored this year. Further information will be sent to those individuals, as well as nearby room accommodations. **BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

The last Professional Craftsmen Code of Conduct Class (PCCC) will be held on Saturday, July 22, 2006 at 8:00 A.M. at the Union Hall. Remember this class is **Mandatory!** Please call Donna to confirm your attendance at this meeting.

## ENJOY A SAFE AND HAPPY SUMMER!

Editors,  
B. Glynn, J. Crinion, J. Caddick, D. Byrne, Donna