



SPOTLITE

Theatrical Protective
Union Local No. One
IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC
Organized 1886

WINTER 2006

LOCAL ONE CONTINUES THE HOLIDAY CLASSIC, BALANCHINE'S *NUTCRACKER* AT THE NEW YORK STATE THEATRE



Our crew, left to right: Ray Frederick (26 Nutcracker seasons), Property Master Lenny Simoncek (10), Heath Hurwitz (1), James Little (12), Skip Kirtland (6), Ben Dancyger (19), Tim O'Dell (19), Pete Whipple (12), Joe DeGeorge (10), Marty Prudenti (18), Pat Kerrigan (12), Master Carpenter Frank Lavaia (37), William Krinsky (26), Robert Cohen (12), Andrew Walters (26), Patrick Freeman (14), Richard Robbins (6), Brian Mitcham (4), John Walters (34), Dennis Robbins (28), Kerry Smith (21), Flyman Dan Camar (27), Mark Walters (25), Dave Essig (19), Joe Mensching (8), Dan Hix (13), Chris Walters (20), not pictured Head Electrician Thomas Maher (36)

***If you want others to
be happy, practice
compassion. If you
want to be happy,
practice compassion.***

—The Dalai Lama

The stage is large and quiet. As people walk across it you can feel it bounce to the rhythm of their steps. Stagehands start to wander onto the stage as half-hour approaches. A single ballerina strides across the stage with full makeup, her hair in a tight chignon and wearing mismatched green, blue and yellow warm-ups. She is an ethereal being, both of this earth and yet despite her beauty, not of this earth. *Continued on pg. 4*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------|------------|
| COVER STORY | 1, 4, 5, 9 |
| PRESIDENT'S LETTER | 2 |
| SECRETARY'S NOTE | 3 |
| ACTORS' FUND PIX | 7 |
| MIKE WEX | 8 |
| JOHN DIAZ NOTE | 10 |
| TUBE TALK | 10 |
| LABOR DAY PIX | 11 |
| JOHN CONYERS PIX | 12 |

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have a lot to be thankful for as we close out this banner year of record employment, earnings, meeting attendance, job opportunities and increased contributions to our Pension and Welfare Funds. Most of our thanks need to go to each other as we have all done our part to create the strongest Local One in many, many years. Recent reports confirm that fund contributions have gone up, much to the credit of the B.A.'s and their negotiating committees. Much of the heartfelt thanks go to our members who answered the call of the Union whereby participants in the plans can look forward to continued coverage.

With that report comes news of our planned transition of the Dental, Life Insurance and Long Term Disability benefits and its 2.5 million dollar burden shifting from the Welfare Fund to our General Fund. We have been able to break even this year in the Welfare Fund with a strong belief that we can do it again next year. I don't have to remind you that this Fund was to have a 10.4 million dollar projected deficit in 2006 and bankruptcy by January 1, 2008 when this administration began. You then understand how proud I am of my fellow Fund Trustees for attacking what was handed us and fighting through various political pressures. For this achievement I offer my thanks.

A large part of our obligation is to inform and educate our members to tackle problems together. Our record attendance setting benefit meetings of a year ago will be followed up by a Special Benefit Meeting on December 10th where we will also act on Dental and Life Insurance resolutions. If our Dental plan is approved by the membership our new dental provider, Sele-Dent, will be there to make a presentation. Also, our upcoming intentions for Long Term Disability will be presented.

I also want to congratulate my fellow Fund Trustees in our ability to distribute one million dollars in equal allocations to our pensioners and widows in time for Christmas again this year. I also wish to inform our retirees of our commitment to a significant improvement in Pension allocations next year and thereafter by the following. Brother Toby McDonough leads a Sub-Benefit Committee to research improvement in the antiquated \$9.75 credit that has never been examined before. Brother Robert Score, Edmond Supple and Toby McDonough also deserve thanks this past year for initiating the resolutions for the Widow's Supplemental Benefit Plan increase as well as the Inactive Fund increase, both which passed.

I want to extend a message of thanks to all Local One family members who got out and voted for putting the working families of this country in a better position to succeed. The November Election saw our Political Action Committee victorious in 28 out of 30 endorsements and should be congratulated for its efforts. They are Brothers Donald Kleinschmidt, Toby McDonough, Ephraim Dunskey, Daniel Gilloon, James Edmiston, Robert Score, William Ngai, Daniel Dashman, Kenneth Merkle, Lawrence White, Edward Santini and Sister Karen Zabinski.

Continued on pg. 4



FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You and your family members have one of the best social services organizations in the country available for your needs. The Actors' Fund, as is stated on their web site home page, – www.actorsfund.org – “is a nonprofit, national human services organization that helps entertainment and performing art professionals in theatre, film, music, opera, television and dance through a broad spectrum of social, health, employment and housing programs that address their essential and critical needs.” What that means is if a Local One member needs help The Actors' Fund will be there. The people that work at The Actors' Fund are extremely dedicated, professional, knowledgeable, kind and caring people.

The variety of programs that are offered will certainly meet you and your family's needs. For instance, the Actors' Work Program (AWP) could be of special interest. For many, working in the entertainment industry can mean always seeking work. In that respect, stagehands are no different from actors. And let's set one thing straight right away – as Joe Benincasa, Executive Director of The Actors' Fund, once said, “The Actors' Fund is also the stagehands fund.” Don't let the name fool you. The Actors' Fund is for all of us in show business. Sometimes seeking work can lead to other occupations or fields. The AWP assists clientele in identifying careers and jobs that do not interfere with stage work. The AWP's three areas of services – career counseling, job training and job placement – can help meet your needs. For example, the AWP can assist you in exploring the possibility of starting a small business, or if you already have a business, assist you in improving its operations. In 2007, the AWP will have a resource guide of entertainment industry professionals who either have their own business or provide goods and/or services. This resource guide will allow the theatrical community to buy from its own – both for personal and professional use. AWP also has a weekly seminar called *Network Now* where you can perfect networking skills and have the opportunity to network with other industry entertainment professionals. If you have been thinking about returning to school – either for a degree or a credential, AWP counselors can help you make that decision. The first step to take advantage of AWP services open to all Local One members in good standing is to attend an orientation. They are held every Monday (except legal holidays) from 12:00 – 2:30 p.m. at The Actors' Fund, 729 7th Ave, 11th floor. Services are free. I encourage you to take advantage of this great program and learn more about it.

The Local One website is constantly being updated with all sorts of information about programs and groups that meet at The Actors' Fund and may be of interest to you. The Actors' Fund is listed as a “link” on our site and we have a special “page” on theirs. To get there, simply click on “Services and Programs” which is a title on The Actors' Fund web site home page - a drop down listing will appear - scroll down to “Partner Programs” until you see “IATSE Local One Members Assistance Program” (MAP) and click on that title – you will then find yourself on our page and many of the programs are described in more detail.

I cannot say enough about how The Actors' Fund has supported the membership of our Union for so many years and in so many ways. The positive actions implemented by The Actors' Fund staff in regards to our membership have quite simply saved lives. That is not a dramatic overstatement but simply a matter of fact. The working relationship between the Local One office and The Actors' Fund office is exemplary. Edmond Supple and I have constant contact with the staff at The Actors' Fund and rely on their expertise over and over again. I am proud of our members for seeking various types of assistance when the need arises and I am forever grateful to The Actors' Fund for all the help, support and advice they have provided and continue to provide to the membership of Local One.

Finally, I would like to offer my hope that we all have the strength to recognize when we need help and the strength to seek and accept it when it is being offered. The Actors' Fund offers that much and more. I wish you and your families all the best during the holiday season.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,

Robert C. Score

Recording-Corresponding Secretary

Jim Claffey (from pg. 2)

I would be remiss if I did not comment on the recent Constitutional proceedings that took place in the October and November membership meetings. It was my objective to preserve the integrity and honor of Local One at all times and I believe the membership demonstrated the same in the sworn pursuit of following our Constitution and By-Laws while exercising democracy for all. My thanks to all who attended.

At press time we are in the trenches with ABC Television negotiations. The Business Agents and our committee have been exemplary in fighting off many harmful proposals while we pursue a strong economic package that must urgently contain Pension and Welfare contributions. Just around the corner are Fox TV negotiations and a much anticipated struggle with NBC. Let's not forget our upcoming battle with the League this summer. Do expect a Special Meeting after the New Year to discuss alternative employment opportunities and putting away a couple of dollars on the side in expectation of a labor dispute.

In closing, I am obviously very pleased with the strength and progress that we have achieved and look forward to celebrating this year with you at the Local One Christmas party arranged and hosted by Vice President Willie Walters on Wednesday, December 20th at the 1050 Restaurant (10th Ave. & 50th St.)

Have a safe and happy Holiday Season!

Respectfully and proudly submitted.

Jim Claffey
President



Cover story (from pg. 1)

Brother Frank Lavaia, the Master Carpenter, calls to Dan Camar on the Fly Floor and the portal legs start to descend from the sky, marching from downstage to the rear-wall drop.

Frank gives another order and the upstage trap descends about eight feet with four carpenters on it to furl the magic Christmas tree for the second half of the first act. The brothers see the "Spotlite" camera and playfully cover each other with the excess snow from filling the snow bags. Then the tree begins its descent and all horsing around immediately ceases. This is a job that must be done right. It is the most spectacular of effects and it is done without lasers, LED screens, computers or automation. Just strong bodies controlled by intelligent and sensitive minds working classic stagecraft as a seamless unit with a capstan, ropes, pulleys, pallets and one stage lift to thrill young audience members for the fifty-second straight year.

This is half-hour preset at "The Nutcracker," arguably the single most famous ballet production in the world, and this is the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center, where Local One has been making the magic happen since the house opened in 1964. From 1954 through 1963 "The Nutcracker" was performed downtown at City Center, where Local One also made the magic happen.

There are several hundred children already in the house chattering and watching intently. The work lights fade and the stage lights come up. On stage, the energy coming from the audience is easily sensed. Slowly, the majestic house curtain lands and the stage

becomes, for the next few minutes, a private space of enormous activity with none of the frenzy that such apparent chaos would normally engender. Clearly everyone backstage knows what they are doing and they are doing it in a calm, efficient and much practiced way.

On stage, after a few minor adjustments to the tree, the deck plugs are placed and the rest of the preset continues. Dancers, oblivious to the activity all around them, practice their pirouettes in full-performance mode. At places, the children in the ensemble begin to assemble offstage, milling about and trying their best to behave. A last hush falls over the stage and through the great curtain the excited chatter of the children increases as the house lights go to half. The overture plays, the great curtain opens and another performance of "The Nutcracker" begins to the hushed sighs and gasps of the audience.

Meanwhile, up on the fly floor and on the bridge above the fly floor cues are being done. The big moments are at the end of the first act when the apparently normal Christmas tree grows in height and the snow storm following the battle with the mouse king occurs. Both are technical feats of classic stagecraft and look great.

The 45 foot tall Christmas tree is raised by lowering a 2300 pound counter weight set. One man, the "Tree Master", David Essig, controls the weight with a single rope. To set the tree, the one inch braided rope of a 3 to 2 block and tackle is run through idler wheels on the grid-iron and down to a standing idler attached to the upper fly floor deck. From there it goes to an electric capstan which lifts the arbor of counterweight. As the counterweight is raised the tree is being furled onto the deck of the lowered stage lift. The more weight comes off the lines from the furling of the tree the more work the capstan has to do to raise the 2300 pound weight, until, when only ten feet of the tree is visible, nearly all of the weight is being held by the capstan and the block and falls. The Tree Master ties off with a bag-tie and transfers the tail from the capstan to the two special 1 ½" welded steel pins on the rail. Then about 300 feet of braided line are cleanly laid out on the fly floor deck, similarly as on a big ship, so that it will smoothly pay out through Dave's hands as he lowers the weight to raise the tree.

The tree isn't happening alone. Snow falling

like a blizzard takes two operators yanking with all they've got on each of the snow bag sets (times six) for most of the long final scene. The orchestra is playing and the window cue is on warning for Dennis Robbins. Like magic, when the final cymbal crash occurs, the window cue goes, the light cues go and the tree stops at its high trim. For those of us who do live theatre, it is commonplace to have so many large concepts move in such a precisely coordinated manner; but for the audience, technical wizardry hits its mark and theatre magic becomes unforgettable.

Many of our members have been working on the Nutcracker for years. The three heads: Frank Lavaia, Master Carpenter; Tom Maher, Head Electrician; and Lenny Simoncek, Head Propertyman; all have crewmembers who have worked on this production for decades.

We are now in the second act. The Sugarplum Fairy is concluding her dance. She steps onto the "toe slide" with one foot and while balanced by the male lead, she appears to glide effortlessly off stage on one foot. The reality is that Marty Prudenti is gently and carefully cranking the winch attached to the "toe slide" cable that is "magically" carrying the Sugarplum Fairy off stage.

Not only does the State Theatre do "The Nutcracker" every year, they crew the theatre all 52 weeks a year. The New York City Ballet has a regular season along with "The Nutcracker." The New York City Opera has two seasons a year. There are also

Continued on pg. 8



Snow cleanup proceeds swiftly after the Nutcracker first act ends on the New York State Theatre stage

THEATRICAL
PROTECTIVE UNION
LOCAL No. ONE,
IATSE, AFL-CIO, CLC



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Visit: www.iatselocalone.org

Past editions available Online

**ALL QUESTIONS, COMMENTS
AND SUBMISSIONS GREATLY
APPRECIATED**

Upcoming Monthly Membership
Meeting dates are:

DECEMBER 17, 2006

January 28, February 25, March 25, 2007

**COME TO YOUR
UNION MEETINGS!
IT'S INFORMATIVE AND
PART OF YOUR DUTY AS
A MEMBER.**

Organized in 1886, Local Number One has served the entertainment community in theatre, television, and other entertainment venues proudly and professionally. With about three thousand members covering an expanding jurisdiction throughout the greater New York metropolitan area, our experience and knowledge covers the range of expertise required for any application. From fabrication to installation to safe operation, we can do it.

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT JAMES J. CLAFFEY, JR.; VICE PRESIDENT WILLIE WALTERS; TREASURER DONALD B. KLEINSCHMIDT; SECRETARY ROBERT C. SCORE; CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES JOHN M. DIAZ, SR.; THEATRICAL BUSINESS MANAGERS MICHAEL WEKSELBLATT AND KEVIN MCGARTY; TELEVISION BUSINESS MANAGERS ROBERT NIMMO AND EDWARD McMAHON, III; TRUSTEES WILLIAM NGAI AND DANIEL THORN; REPLACEMENT ROOM OFFICER PAUL DEAN, SR.; ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY EDMOND SUPPLE, SR.; AND FINANCIAL SECRETARY ROBERT (TOBY) McDONOUGH

*Come Celebrate the Holidays
at the
Local One Christmas Party
with family and friends on
December 20th, 2006
at 1050 Restaurant
(50th Street and 10th Ave.)
from 4 to 7 P.M.
Santa may make an
appearance for all you
kiddies.*

LOCAL ONE EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETS AT THE ACTORS' FUND OFFICE IN RECOGNITION OF THEIR HELP TO THE MEMBERSHIP



Local One Executive Board in the Actors' Fund Board Room sharing lunch with their staff. Discussions included their thought of changing their name to recognize their mission is not limited to just assisting performers.



Joe Benincasa, Executive Director and Brian Stokes Mitchell, President of the Actors' Fund pictured with members of the Local One Executive Board.

The Times ~~Are a' Changin'~~ have Changed!

Recently I was reading an article about Gordon M. Bethune. Mr. Bethune had been the CEO of Continental Airlines from 1994 until his retirement in the beginning of 2005. He was regarded as a no nonsense executive who knew the airline industry inside out having begun as a Naval air mechanic and rising through the ranks of Boeing before being tapped to run Continental. Mr. Bethune turned around a struggling airline but not as a so called “turn-around expert.” He knew what he was doing because of his experience. He knew the most important thing was getting the customer from point A to point B. And in a world where all of the competition was cutting back on extras like food, pillows and blankets Mr. Bethune insisted that these cost items should remain intact saying that the public would be fine paying a couple bucks more for what they have expected over the years. He was right! He left the airline a success. After the events of 9/11 shattered the airline industry, success was now measured by how little you lost and Continental was in a better position than most. In response to why his rather simple strategies had worked so well in a complex industry now run by investment bankers and other outsiders Mr. Bethune was quoted as saying *“There’s no secret formula for this #%*. If you’re going to be in the watch business it helps to know how a watch works.”* My hero!

How very simple. How very true! As an analogy that very statement can be applied so very closely to the industry that we as Local No. One service as well-- Theatre or Television. To take a good look at where we are now you need to step back to get the big picture. Start with TV. In the early 90’s there seems to have been a failure to recognize that our own employers had changed. Not their names but their mind-set under new corporate ownership. Sure, the same old studio or production manager was still there and to the average guy change really doesn’t set in when the same routine, same show, same-same occurred day in and day out. But TV became the media and communication divisions of corporations that build nuclear plants, aircraft engines, run amusement parks, hotel chains and newspapers. Even that same familiar manager now had a new boss

himself and a new company line. The word “synergy” was used a lot to show shareholders how all the different aspects of a corporate world works together to enhance value. From the mid 80’s going forward, cut and slash was the policy of the day. Putting out a good product was now secondary to squeezing out share value. During that time I recall a conversation with a studio manager. He pointed to an ENG News van leaving a garage across from where we were standing. The van had no front bumper or fender on one side, was dented and basically a wreck. It had the Network logo on the side. He said “two years ago you’d have been fired for taking a van in that condition out on the road, now no one cares.” That was on West 57th Street in 1990.

Understanding who you are dealing with and how they seek to run things is the first order of business. After six years of working within a corporate environment as a Business Manager it was surprising to see how much had changed when I returned to the Theatrical portion of our industry. I noticed it more so at the places I worked throughout my career. Look at the many non-profit venues up at Lincoln Center. There is no portion of the industry that has morphed more quickly than in this area. From ’94 to ’98 there were meetings and negotiations with Labor Relations where I dealt with Theatre or Hall Managers. Now I deal with Human Resource & Facility Managers. It’s not just a change in job description, it’s also a change in background and experience within this industry. Try resolving a simple grievance that has to do with a performance or a past-practice with someone who’s only theatre experience is buying a ticket. Or to deal with someone that may know how to actually build a theatre but doesn’t really know how to run one. Don’t get me wrong, this doesn’t mean they are bad people. On the contrary, the new regimes are fine as individuals but when it comes down to the theatre business itself, I’ll be talking about theatre, they’ll be talking about business. Another change in the non-profit area is the sheer numbers in management and I don’t mean just up at Lincoln Center. Speak about top-heavy organizations; it’ll be a long time before you hear “Save the Managers” (as in “Save the Whales”).

Commercial Broadway Theatre is following suit as well. A company that originated in Cable TV now owns two of our largest venues (and now a third as well). Two Broadway theatres are operated by entertainment conglomerates. And even the traditional employers now have their own HR Departments sending endless policy letters, disciplinary memos, FMLA, sick and personal day notices on a daily basis producing lots of paper trails. While this is not out of the ordinary, it is odd when you think about where it originates from, which employer(s) and for lack of a better description, an industry that may be the last operating on a casual basis. Again, none of this is necessarily bad. It's endless change and in order for us to continue to succeed as an organization we must adapt and change with the times. Better strategies mean understanding your adversary-what they think, what they know and what they don't know. Understand that this is Corporate Theatre; TV is there already. Understand that they may be in the watch business but *they may not know how a watch works!*

Mike Wex

Cover story (from pg. 5)

assorted special events done in the house. The professional Local One crew does it all.

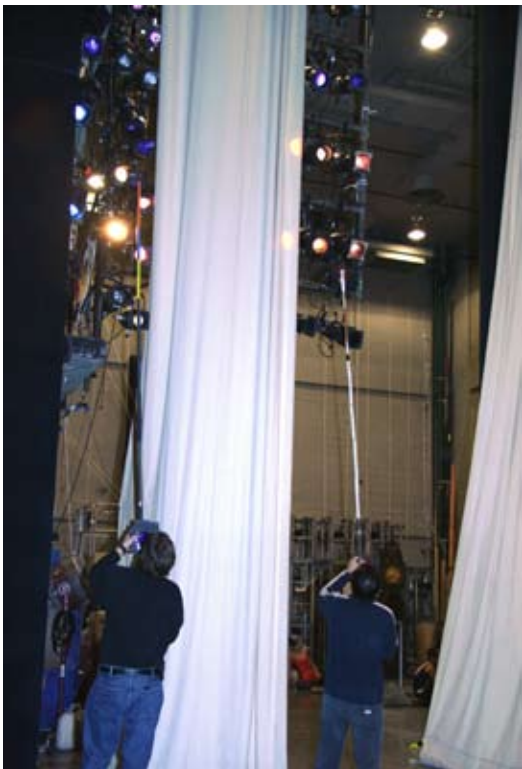
The State Theatre, from its 90 foot high grid to its 55 foot wide proscenium seating 2713 has been entertaining New Yorkers with the finest of fine art for more than 40 years and Local One has been creating the magic behind the scenes for all of those years.

We salute the Crew of the New York State Theatre as they may long serve as an example of Local One professionalism.



Left picture: Gel frames changed using bamboo poles at the side light ladders.

Photo above: Carpenters clamping down scenic legs just like it has been always done.



A Note from John Diaz

A few days ago while I was reading *Professional Safety Journal* of the American Society of Safety Engineers, December 2006, an article on "Automated Systems Hazards and Safeguards" dealt with much more highly mechanized production than what we deal with. My reading saw some similarities jump up at me from the pages.

It stated 46 % of the injuries involved maintenance personnel where 22 % occurred during adjustments and setup with 12 % involving operators and 6 % supervisors. Workers were injured when trapped between a machine and a fixed structure, entangled with machine in motion or being in danger zones out of view of a video camera or operator mis-communications, or no communication. Circumventing safeguards, residual pressure in pneumatic and hydraulic systems and lastly time taken for all machine movement to cease not considered are all of my favorite fears.

I love Nathan Lane as a performer, I believe him to be a super star on Broadway, and so I apologize to him and his family for the imagined example set forth here. My biggest fear is to see a headline in all papers stating Nathan Lane was hurt during a performance of his show. Mr. Lane is staged between four tons of scenery potentially hurting him. This can happen with producers using one automated system to control both deck and fly machinery.

I have seen Opera singers get sick and pass out under the bright lights. We are lucky there

are hundred of eyes working the deck and the fly floors. So when a singer passes out it is usually seen. I have also been there when only a few people see the singer and help push the singer to safety.

On Broadway some of the systems are run from the basement and some from the fly floor. Most operators have video cameras with different views of the deck. Most get the "clear" from the stage managers from their viewpoint.

His show employs one automation system running both the deck and fly pieces claimed necessary to run the show smoothly and in the time frame needed. This new idea limits the number of emergency stops and cuts down on people viewing the stage area. This I believe is a system that will be a danger to the people on the stage.

Producers are playing with the safety of the people working on the stage to save a few bucks. Safety is my main concern. Trained eyes of people knowing what to look for and precise communications will cut down the odds of an accident from happening. Automating systems and cutting the crew size reduces this and adds higher risk factors. A safe system needs trained and competent back-up personnel. Two "E" stops work better than one. One on the fly floor for that view point and another from the deck is a tried and true system. Why do otherwise then to save some money would producers put people at risk?

John M Diaz Sr.
Chairman, Board of Trustees

TUBE TALK

By Bob Nimmo

Thank you to all who voted in the November elections. It is now our responsibility as citizens and working people to hold those we helped elect accountable for how they respond to the needs of a humane society and organized labor.

May 2007 be a prosperous and healthy year for all.

*Local One Wishes All its
Members and their Loved
Ones Happy Holidays
and a Prosperous
New Year*

LABOR DAY PARADE 2006



This fall's Labor Day Parade sights included Local One making a charitable donation to St. Patrick's Cathedral as we marched by including 86 year old Retired Brother John Brennan, pictured right, who walked the entire route. Local One thanks those who participated. The more marchers we have, the more politicians notice, the more strength we wield.



CONGRESSMAN JOHN CONYERS, JR. (D-MI) IN NEW YORK PROMOTING
SINGLE PAYER HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION



Recording-Corresponding Secretary Robert C. Score meeting with a man with exquisite taste in hats, forty-two year Democratic Congressman John Conyers, Jr. of Michigan, incoming Chairman of the Judiciary Committee and author of HR 676, the U.S. National Health Insurance Act known as the Single Payer Health Bill, which will be re-introduced in the 110th Session of Congress. Local One with its members supports the continuing national fight for affordable health care for working families.

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