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Elections will be held on March 4th for all Grievance Rep positions

At the January membership meeting held at Frank Monreal's El Matador on January 16, 2005, nominations were taken for all Grievance Representative positions and for Trustee-at-Large.

Vicky Black, the incumbent Trustee-at-Large, was unopposed for her Executive Board position. This will be her 3rd term as the Trustee-at-Large.

At Strattec, incumbent Grievance Rep Karl Schneider will be opposed by Richard Clark.

At Briggs, 1st and 3rd shift incumbent Grievance reps Barb Schuller and Mike Merrill will be challenged by Vice President Fred Schmidt and Briggs Trustee Greg Weber, both Executive Board members.

On 2nd shift, incumbent rep Jesse Edwards will be challenged by Ron Bober, steward of Department 735.

There will not be a primary needed for any of

the positions.

The General Election will take place on Friday March 4, 2005. The polling places remain the same at the Local 7-232 Union office (8500 W. Capitol Dr.), Menomonee Falls plant and the Strattec cafeteria. However, at Briggs, there will be a change. Due to not having an entrance on the south end the cafeteria will no longer be used for a polling place, there will be, however, two polling places on the north end. One will be the usual Northwest location, located at Column #A39 and the other will be the new Northeast location located at column #H37.

The times for each location are listed below in the box. Please take the time to exercise your voice and vote. (Note: Profiles and pictures of the candidates are listed on page 2.)

Each grievance representative position is a 2 (two) year term.

NOTICE:

Elections will be held on Friday March 4, 2005 for the following positions: Strattec Grievance Rep, 2 Briggs 1st and 3rd Grievance Reps and Briggs 2nd shift Grievance Rep
Location and times:

- Strattec Cafeteria- 5:00 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Burleigh Plant- Column A-39 (northwest) and Column H-37 (northeast) 5:00 a.m. to 7:30a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Menomonee Falls Plant- 5:30 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Local 7-232 Union office (8500 W. Capitol Dr.) 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

NOTICE:

Nominations will be taken and delegates will be elected during the March Membership Meeting on Sunday March 13, 2005 at Frank Monreal's El Matador 9155 W. Bluemound Rd. at 9:30 a.m. for the expected Special PACE International Merger Convention

Briggs 1st and 3rd Shift Grievance Reps



Fred Schmidt

Current Vice-President
Current Steward Dept. 735
Delegate: PACE Region X
Spring Conference ('04);
PACE Leadership Conference
(‘04) PACE Rapid Response
Co-ordinator, By-Law
Committee



Greg Weber

Current: Trustee, Chief
Steward; Steward-Depts. 206,
345, 348, F7X & L3A; Co-
Chair-Election Comm.,
Member-Safety & By-Law
Committee; Delegate MCLC,
AFL-CIO Wis. State
Convention ('02, '04) &
PACE Region X Spring
Conference ('02, '03);
Former Guide on Ex. Bd.
Classes: Trustee-PACE
Headquarters, Labor Law for
Trade Unionists, Union
Representation, Workers
Comp & Griev. Handling;
Former Steward-Depts. 55,
63, 64, 90, 705, M3X & M5X



Barb Schuller

Steward - Dept. 88-4 yrs.;
715-716-6 yrs; 243-716-2
yrs.; Alt. Gr. Rep-Falls Plant,
Gr. Rep Burleigh & Falls
Plant, 1st & 3rd shift-Sept. '98
to present; School for
Workers & MATC- Job
Evaluation; PACE Region X
Women's ('02, '04) and
Leadership Conference
Classes on Collective
Bargaining, Ergonomics,
Labor Law for Trade
Unionists, Pension and
Insurance, Attended
Workshops AFL-CIO Comm.
Services-Counselor &
Referral Specialist



Mike Merrill

By-law committee 1995 to
present; Grievance Rep 1996
to present; Steward L-5- 1995
to 1997; Delegate-Wisconsin
AFL-CIO State Convention
1998, 2000, 2004 & PACE
International Convention-
1996, 1999, 2003; Delegate
MCLC 1997 to present;
Service Safety Committee;
Numerous other school and
Bargaining Conferences

Briggs 2nd Shift Griev. Rep



Jesse Edwards

Steward Dept. 194/195- 5
years; Alt. Gr. Rep-2
years; Acting Vice
President-7 months; Gr.
Rep. 1997 to present;
Member-SPEC and Die
Cast Sub Committee;
Chairperson of the UED
Safety Committee;
Delegate- Wisconsin State
AFL-CIO Convention-
'96, '98, '00, '04 and
PACE International
Convention-'96, '99, '03;
Numerous other school
and Bargaining
Conferences



Ron Bober

Current Steward Dept.
735
Has completed instruction
course in Steward
Training at MATC-
University of Wisconsin-
Extension School for
Workers



Rick Clark

Steward Department 303



Karl Schneider

Former Steward, Incumbent
Grievance Rep since '99;
School for Workers Collective
Bargaining Course, Negotiated
1 contract; PACE Region X
Collective Bargaining
Workshop; Delegate at the fol-
lowing Conferences: PACE
Region X Spring ('00, '01,
'02, '03); Governor's
Labor/Mgt. ('99, '01); FMCS
(‘00, '02); Mid-West
Labor/Mgt. Insurance (04);
Behavioral Health ('04);
Delegate AFL-CIO Wisconsin
State Convention ('00, '02,
'04) Current Delegate MCLC;
Volunteer Democratic ('04)
Election Campaign and
Volunteer- Milwaukee Hunger
Task Force.

Strattec Grievance Rep

President's Report by Scott Godshaw

Elections for all Grievance Rep positions 1000 Hours for Retirement- **Hot** Topic

The elections for all Grievance Representative positions are contested and will be held on Friday March 4, 2005. The times and locations are listed in the box on page 1. The only change is one location at Burleigh. Due to not having an entrance on the south end, the logical solution was to cover both entrances as well as possible. We believe we did that by adding Column H37 on the northeast end as a voting place. As usual Column A39 on the northwest end will be used. If you are off for any reason, you can vote at the Union office, 8500 W. Capitol Dr. Once again, there are no absentee ballots. Voting again will be in-plant at the Menomonee Falls plant and the Strattec cafeteria as well. You can only vote for the candidate (or candidates-1st and 3rd shift Briggs) from the shift and plant that you work.

1000 Hours for Retirement

Recently it was called to our attention that someone's printout from Mercer was inaccurate. After some investigation, it was discovered that due to the change in the ERISA (Employee Retirement Income Security Act) Law as of January 1, 1976, the 1000 hours in any year (including your first year) would count as a year of Service towards your 29 years and 1000 hours.

A letter we received from the Briggs & Stratton Retirement benefits department reads as follows:

The definition of service in the Briggs & Stratton Retirement Plan was changed effective January 1, 1976. Starting with the calendar year of 1976, participants received one year of service for each calendar year he/she had 1000 hours of service. Prior to 1976 service was based on the elapsed time method. With this change, participants will be able to retire earlier if they have 29 years and 1000 hours.

Example: John Doe was hired in January of 1977 and had over 1000 hours in 1977 and every year there after. He becomes eligible for retirement on June 30, 2006 because he has 29 years and meets his 1,000 hours during June of 2006. He is eligible for an unreduced pension effective July 1, 2006.

In essence, the 1000 hours is good in your first year of service as well as your last year of service.

There are many other issues at this time related to problems with Mercer. The Bargaining Committee is scheduled to meet with the company the first week of February to try and work through these issues.

Strattec

These issues are the same at Strattec, this is not a Briggs issue. This formula works the same with the 1000 hours. ERISA is a law, not a contractual item.

Back Charge Vacation Days

It has come to my attention that members are still having trouble with backcharge vacation days. At Briggs, on the day you will be off, you must call in to the ACTT system but not less than 15 minutes prior to your shift. You should call in either sick, personal business, called in vacation day, etc. Upon your return, you would call in #38- backcharge of a vacation day. You have 2 hours before the start of your shift, up to the end of your shift to call the backcharge in.

At Strattec, you must call in on the STARS system before the start of your shift on the day you will be off. Then upon your return, before the end of your shift, you would fill out the back-charge form and give it to your work group leader. Any questions ask your steward, grievance rep or call the Union office at 463-7425.

From the Briggs & Stratton Benefit Department

Take advantage of new ways to manage your retirement. Briggs & Stratton has made it even easier to manage your retirement by integrating the benefits administration for both the 401(k) Plan and the Retirement Plan (Pension Plan). While your benefits as a plan participant remain the same, you can now enjoy the enhancements that come from combining the services of the two plans. As a result of this change, you can access information about your account(s) in one centralized place. This will enable you to get a clearer picture of your overall retirement savings - both in terms of where you stand today and what you can do to make progress toward your goals.

Easy access, all the time

Your Retirement Program account(s) can now be accessed online through www.ibenefitcenter.com or by calling the Briggs & Stratton Retirement Program Service Center at 1-800-685-6474. The Website offers an array of planning tools, account features, and educational resources to help you with your financial planning. You can also manage your retirement by phone - either through the automated phone

system, which is available around the clock, or by speaking with a Participant Services Representative.

Always at your service

If you have any questions about the 401(k) or Pension Plan, you can call the Retirement Program Service Center as often as you'd like. Representatives are on hand between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Central Standard Time any business day to:

Answer your questions about your plans' features and services

Assist you with your transition to retirement, including helping you complete forms that are required in order to begin receiving Pension Plan payments

Help you model different payment scenarios and see how they may affect your projected Pension Plan benefit at retirement

Provide assistance enrolling you in the 401(k) plan
Perform a personalized 401(k) plan account analysis to help you with your investment decisions.

Continued on page 4

Membership Meeting Recap

by Tom Bishanell

The membership meeting was held on January 16, 2005 at Frank Monreal's El Matdor at 9:30 a.m. President Scott Godshaw presided over the meeting. Greg Weber gave the Trustee's Report for November and December. Ross Winklbauer gave a combined Financial Report for November and December. Ross noted that at the end of December, we had 1,008 members at Briggs and 307 members at Strattec.

Communications

The Waukesha County Labor Council is sponsoring their scholarship awards competition with annual awards of \$450.00 and \$200.00.

The Hunger Task Force thanked us for our generous donation at Christmas of \$100.00.

The Executive Board recommended the following motions that passed:

Send Joint Board members to the 2005 Region X Spring Conference on March 19 and 20. Issues about the proposed merger will be discussed at this conference.

Send the 2 automatic delegates plus 2 more elected delegates to the emergency PACE Convention in Las Vegas April 13 through April 15th to vote on the proposed merger with the Steelworkers.

Reports of Officers

President Godshaw read the big news press release that there is a proposed merger taking place between PACE and the Steelworkers. The release noted that if this merger is approved, we will be part of the largest and most active Industrial Union in America.

At Briggs, those that have a Flexben account received a "Smartcard" in error. Scott emphasized that a new "Smartcard" will be issued only for those that request one. Knowing that the racing engine must vacate Rolla, Scott e-mailed Larry Bartling requesting that it come to Milwaukee. No decision has been finalized yet. There will be a 3rd stage grievance meeting at Briggs on January 19th, where we will have 7 grievances, 3 of which are discharges.

At Strattec, we are having problems with the company offering severance where 33 members are on layoff. A policy grievance has been written regarding this.

Vice-President Fred Schmidt reported that Paul Lindgren from Rapid Response would be coming back in March for another meeting and anyone may attend.

Mike Merrill reminded members that if they received a flex card or a debit card to mail receipt back within 7 days. 2 Labor Grade 22s were laid off at the Falls. There was an issue with pay as you go during the Christmas shut-down paychecks.

On January 3rd the coil department added 8 people on first shift and 7 on second. Mike ended by reporting that the Micro Line run rate had dropped to 500 engines per day and the Outboard Line will be running out their stock.

Jesse Edwards told members with a flexible spending account in 2004 that they had until March 1st to file a claim against their accounts. In Die Cast, it looks like we will be getting some jobs back. In the Coil Department, a counter-weight back pole and plastic assembly job were added.

Karl Schneider reported on more new work for Die

Cast at Strattec. The Company purchased some new equipment, a third shift was added in Service and a policy grievance was written about the severance language. He ended by updating the layoff/recall information.

Ross Winklbauer told members there would be another option on Briggs & Stratton's 401k's with less than \$5,000. It now would be possible to roll them over. He explained that people retiring the first of the month automatically had dues taken out in the Briggs system. By the end of the month, he identifies these payments and sends it back to the member. He ended by reporting that Briggs was the sole bidder for the bankrupt Murray.

Tom Bishanell gave the year end timestudy report. There is one piecework grievance remaining and 35 daywork grievances at Briggs & Stratton. At Strattec a former Union job that the company made a salaried position is due to be arbitrated in March.

Membership then nominated candidates for Trustee at Large and Grievance Reps at both companies.

The next membership meeting will be held Sunday, March 13th at Frank Monreal's El Matador, 9155 W. Bluemound Road at 9:30 a.m.

Continued from page 3

Assist you in making changes to your 401(k) plan account, including adjusting your contribution rate, modifying your investment elections, or rebalancing your portfolio.

Your information is protected

Whether you are using the phone or online services, you can rest assured knowing that your information is protected. The Retirement Program's service provider, Mercer Human Resource Services, respects and protects your privacy by maintaining safeguards to store and secure client information from unauthorized access and use.

One of the primary ways you are protected is through your Retirement Program's secure login process. To access your account information, you must provide your Social Security Number and personal identification number (PIN). If you have misplaced your PIN, call the Service Center (1-800-685-6474) and request a PIN letter. To help protect your information, a confirmation letter will only be mailed to your home address; PINs are never provided over the phone or mailed to your business location.

Make the most of your Retirement Program

The Briggs & Stratton Retirement Program is a valuable resource to help you pursue financial security in retirement. Be sure you are taking full advantage of all it has to offer. If you have any questions, again, please call 1-800-685-6474 between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. Central Standard Time any business day, and speak with a Participant Services Representative.

Attend an on-site meeting!

These changes will be discussed in further detail at upcoming on-site meetings. Milwaukee Hourly employees are invited to attend meetings on March 10th and 11th. We encourage you to attend a meeting and learn more about how you can make the most of your Retirement Program's resources. Stay tuned for more details.

Strattec Corner

by Al Olivares

Well, everyone, its that time again. I have a bit of manufacturing and American history to share with you. During the latter half of 1776, Benjamin Franklin was sent by Congress to seek foreign aid for the Revolutionary War. His endeavors were successful and he did acquire weapons and provisions that in turn helped us get our now "taken for granted" freedoms. The embarrassment the United States suffered due to an incapacity of being able to be self sufficient during the war would now lead to actions taken by government officials of the time. In 1791, with the embarrassment and fear still fresh in the government's head, the Secretary of Treasury at that time and soon to be President, Alexander Hamilton wrote a report to the President. The report highlighted that America needs to ensure and promote manufacturing within our borders to ensure our safety and to keep our levels of supplies strong enough to defend ourselves without having to worry about a different country to come and bail us out. Bottom line was that we need to manufacture goods in America to take care of America.

With that being said, let me get back to the present time frame. It appears that the government now and the ruthless greed of corporations are now putting the money before the safety and defense of our beautiful country. As

laborers we feel the wrath of these injustices every day. Now, the intent of this article is not to lower your level of patriotism or sense of security. In fact I feel we need to be aware of this kind of information so we do not fall prey to the old saying "those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat." With the current status of the world and the advancement of technologies abroad, who is to say that anyone will be able to help us even if they want to?.

The only way to lead our lost herd of politicians back to the prosperous, greener pastures of manufacturing within our own borders is to go out and vote for the representatives that know the issues and realize the repercussions and the severity of such. As far as Corporate America is concerned, the only way to wake up those greedy bastards is to let the right government officials give them a swift kick in the butt, by putting in place laws and guidelines that keep Americans working, making goods in American factories to keep Americans going every day in times of peace and in such tragic times as now with fear of war and terrorism abroad. I'm pretty sure the greedy corporate bastards will not be happy making the great country they live in a third world defenseless wasteland. Let's see how they would enjoy all that money surrounded by poverty and despair.

Membership Information

January 2005

1420 Members in Good Standing
1080 in Briggs & Stratton Unit
340 in Strattec Unit

January Dues Payments

1008 Dues Paying Members at Briggs
296 Dues Paying members at Strattec
1304 Total Dues Paying Members
(Difference reflects members off work for lay-off, illness or other reasons)

LOCAL 7-232 REPORTER

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LOCAL 7-232 PAPER, ALLIED INDUSTRIAL,
CHEMICAL AND ENERGY WORKERS
INTERNATIONAL UNION

*Representing employees of Briggs & Stratton Corp.
and Strattec Security Corp.*

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**The information contained herein is of informal nature
and is not intended to be final and authoritative.**

Editors: Scott Godshaw, Ross Winklbaauer, Al Olivares
Officers: President: Scott Godshaw Vice President: Fred Schmidt, Secretary-Treasurer: Ross Winklbaauer Sr. Recording Secretary: Tom Bishanell, Trustees: Greg Weber, Ralph Schwieger, Vicky Black, Guide: Debbie Curro, Sergeant at Arms: Dennis Clark.
Briggs Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Mike Merrill, Barb Schuller, Jesse Edwards, Tom Bishanell
Strattec Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Karl Schneider, Dennis Nowak, Al Olivares

Local 7-232 Legal Clinic

Do you have legal questions or problems facing you or your family? Have you suffered a major personal injury? If you have, or if you have any other legal problem, Local 7-232 is providing free legal consultations with lawyers from the law firm of Previant, Goldberg, Uelman, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman at the Local 7-232 Union office, 8500 W. Capitol Dr. Legal clinic hours: 1:00P.M. to 4:00P.M. First Monday of the month. Call for an appointment 414-463-7425.

March Membership Meeting

Sunday
March 13, 2005
9:30 a.m.

Frank Monreal's El Matador
9155 W. Bluemound Rd.

IMPORTANT BUSINESS

- Reports of Officers, Grievance Representatives and Committees
- Discussion and action on any other proper business for this meeting.
- Nominations and Election for Delegates for Special PACE Convention



With the beginning of year 2005, let's all try to attend our monthly doings and invite our retired friends to join our club. Our many thanks go to Briggs & Stratton for all their yearly help and to Local 7-232 for putting my monthly write-up in their *Reporter*.

You must be a paid up member to attend any of our events. Dues are \$24.00 a year. Call Erma Gorecki at 781-8951 for more information. You can also pay & join our club on the third Wednesday of each month at our monthly meeting at Post 449 located at 3345 N. 124th Street. The meeting starts at 12 noon. Our monthly bingo is also held on the second Wednesday of each month with all free prizes. Cards are also played every Tuesday, (Sheepshead). Tournament prizes are awarded free for every table. Doors open at 11:00 A.M.

To see my report, you can turn on your computer at www.pace7232.org or you may also pick up one up at the Union Office at 8500 W. Capitol Drive. There will be some copies of the *Reporter* available at our meetings.

Our new officers for 2005-2006 are as follows:

- President – Bob Johnson
- Vice President – Dolores Higgins
- Financial Secretary-Treasurer – Erma Gorecki
- Recording Secretary – Doris Reinke
- Corresponding Secretary – Frances P. Capello
- Sgt.-at-Arms Geri Kunda

Congratulations to all!

There were no sick members called in to me this past month.

Please bring your Birthday or Anniversary to our monthly meetings.

Our newly elected Entertainment Committee member is Nancy Bannach. Good luck Nancy on your new job. I'm sure you will do fine.

Hope to see you all at our coming events.

Take care & God Bless,

Frances P. Capello

Corresponding Secretary

262-251-7514

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 17- Steward Meeting
March 4- General Election-Grievance Reps



March 13- Membership Meeting
(Nominations and Election for Delegates for Special PACE Convention)

March 17- St. Patrick's Day



March 25- Good Friday Holiday
March 27- Easter Sunday



Union Dues Paid for 2004

Briggs \$36.35 X 8 months = \$290.80

\$37.63 X 4 months = \$150.52

Total = \$441.32

Strattac \$35.84 X 7 months = \$250.88

\$37.44 X 5 months = \$187.20

Total = \$438.08

Grievance Rep Reports

Briggs & Stratton Second Shift

by Jesse Edwards

Flexible Spending Account

The members who had a flexible spending account last year and still have a balance, the deadline for filing a claim against your 2004 FSA is March 31, 2005. You can call them directly at 1-800-988-9094 or you can request a form through the Group Insurance Department.

Life Insurance

Effective January 1, 2005 Met Life became the new life insurance carrier for Briggs. Also as of January 1, 2005 your life insurance increased to \$26,000. For retirees, upon retirement, your life insurance is \$ 8,000.

Security/EMT

The security and EMT office has moved to a new office located just south of the cafeteria. If you get injured at work make sure you report it to the EMT and your manager. If you need to enter this office from the outside please use door W-12.

797/Coils

Department 797 has added 2 new jobs. One job is called Counter Weight back pole. This job will be staff with 1 setup and 2 assemblers per shift. This job is schedule to run 9 hours on 1st. and 2nd Shifts. This job is scheduled to start up in late January or early February. The other job is

called Assemble plastic. This job is schedule to run 2 shifts, 9 hours. These jobs will not add any additional people. They will be staffed with the existing people that are already in the department.

105/Layoffs

Department 105 has scheduled a layoff for Friday January 28, 2005. They plan to layoff three labor grade. 21's one labor grade. 18 and one janitor.

Die Cast

It looks like Die cast will be bringing some work back. There is a possibility the Intek cylinder; Model 9 head and the flywheel job will come back. If these jobs come back, it will be temporary. As you already know Die Cast is scheduled to be eliminated by the end of 2006 or by midyear 2007.

Member denied pass

According to the shop rules if you need to leave work during working hours you should get a pass from your manager. A member called me down to their department and they were very upset. I asked what happened? They explained to me they asked the manager for a pass to go home because they didn't feel well and the manager response was go to security. That's not the

Briggs & Stratton First & Third Shift

by Mike Merrill & Barb Schuller

Micro Line

On the Micro Line on Dec. 20, 2004 the company reduced the run rate from 750 engines per day to 500 engines per day.

Outboard Line

On the Outboard Line, the company plans to build 700 to 800 outboards which is the remainder of the stock left in house. That means we will build 15 engines per day until finished. We were told they would use 4 assemblers as of right now. At that point, we will no longer build Outboards at the Burleigh plant.

Coils

In Dept. 797, the Coil department, on Jan. 3, 2005, the company added 8 assemblers on 1st shift and 7 on second shift due to the retirements.

Menomonee Falls Plant

At the Menomonee Falls plant on Jan. 18, 2005, the company did post a voluntary layoff for (2) Labor Grade 22's. On Feb. 7, 2005, the Menomonee Falls Management will be conducting a meeting with our members there to give them the updates on construction and time tables on the new plant. The new plant will be completed in 2006.

In Solidarity,

Barb Schuller & Mike Merrill

proper procedure. If you don't feel well or if you need a pass to go home because of a personal reason, the manager can't refuse to give you a pass. The company can't hold you hostage. If this happens to you please see your steward or grievance rep. right away.

Smoking / Policy

Just a reminder the smoking policy is being enforced. Just recently some members were called in and warned about smoking in a No Smoking area. You are permitted to smoke in the designated areas only.

All Stewards

To all the hard working stewards, as you know we are in the mandatory season. There are 14 mandatory Saturdays per calendar year. I strongly recommend that you make a photocopy of all mandatory Saturdays, so that you have a record of how many your department works.

Also, just a reminder to stewards, there will be a Steward Training at the Union office (85th & Capitol) on Thursday February 17, 2005 at noon and 3:30p.m.

In Solidarity,

Jesse Edwards

Wellness Corner- "You can't live without it" Sticking to your New Year's exercise resolution

by Mary Calvagna

It's that time of year again-champagne flows, balls drop, and New Year's resolutions are made.

Resolutions run the gamut-from quitting smoking or being more productive at work to eating more vegetables or losing 10 pounds. A majority of resolutions, though, revolve around exercise. People often pledge to start an exercise program, get back on track with a program they resolved to start last year, or raise the intensity of their current exercise program. Unfortunately, many of these good intentions don't last past February.

Do you make the same fitness resolutions year after year? Here's some advice on making your exercise goals attainable and sustainable in the New Year.

Working with a personal trainer Laurie, a 29-year-old editor, was exercising six to seven days a week, seeing no improvement, and starting to burn out. After talking with a trainer, Laurie realized that her program needed revitalization. Her current routine consisted of climbing on the StairMaster everyday and lifting weights on Nautilus machines three times a week.

"The personal trainer pointed out that my workout was stale," Laurie explains. "He encouraged me to incorporate different exercises and taught me how to work with free weights. I started playing basketball again, going to step aerobics and kick boxing classes, and even began lap swimming. Now I ask myself what I feel like doing each day, rather than dragging myself to the StairMaster."

Reworking Laurie's exercise program paid off. Within six months she lost 10 pounds and has kept the weight off for almost four years. More importantly though, she has stuck with her exercise program. "I feel better about myself and I look better," Laurie says, "and friends have even asked me how I got my arms to look so good. Not bad for a little change-up in the routine that made it more fun to boot."

A trainer weighs in "An exercise program needs to have variety and be fun for a person to stick with it," explains Michael Wood, CSCS, a certified strength and conditioning specialist and director of the Sports Performance Group in Cambridge, Massachusetts. "It should be tailored to the individual; that's where a personal trainer comes in. A trainer can assess your fitness level and your needs, and then put together a program that gets into the nuts and bolts of exercise, one based on the right techniques and good body mechanics."

A personal trainer knows the body and knows the equipment. Even seemingly minor changes in the way you exercise can make a huge difference in the results. "My right arm is stronger than my left, so my trainer suggested I use dumbbells (a weight in each hand) instead of a barbell," says Laurie. "Now my right side doesn't compensate for my left and both sides are gaining muscle equally."

And it doesn't have to cost a fortune. A few appointments are all it takes for a trainer to assess your abilities and create an exercise program that can work for

your body. "A good trainer weans you off after time," says Wood. "And if you feel your motivation start to slip or you begin to get bored, set up an appointment to refresh your workout."

Six tips for success So you have made up your mind to make this year's New Year's resolution stick. These steps will help you attain and sustain your new fitness goals. And they can be applied to any type of resolution, not just exercise.

•1. Write it down

To get a clear understanding of your resolution, write out the specifics of your new workout plan. Include all the details-how many times a week you want to work out, which days, what types of exercises you plan to do, and what your goals are. Continue to document your progress throughout the year to gauge how it's going and if you've been successful.

•2. Be active with friends

Meet a friend to go for a walk or inline skating or biking or hiking or play racquetball... The options are endless.

•3. Do it for yourself

Make a resolution because you really want to-not to please someone else. Regular exercise will make you look better, but it will also make you feel better.

•4 Set realistic goals

If you have never run a day in your life, don't decide to become a marathon runner by February. Instead, start with a goal you can accomplish, such as running three or four miles. Once you've attained your first goal, you'll be motivated to reach for a new, tougher goal.

•5. Be specific

Give yourself detailed guidelines with specific dates, times, and/or amounts. Don't just say "I want to lift more weight." Instead, determine how much you want to increase by and in what time frame. Pick a specific road race, triathlon or charity race to participate in.

•6. Reward yourself for success

If you've kept to your exercise schedule all month, splurge on a new pair of athletic shoes. Or maybe you hit a specific weight-lifting goal-treat yourself to dinner out with a good friend. However you do it, be sure to pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

RESOURCES:

Aurora Health Care

<http://www.AuroraHealthCare.org>

To find a personal trainer certified by the American Council on Exercise (ACE):

<http://www.acefitness.org>