

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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VOLUME 118, NUMBER 3

PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 3, 2017

Unity march draws 500

The agenda being outlined by newly-elected President Donald Trump worries the ranks of workers, women, unions, people of color, and other minorities; so much so that more than 500 people gathered at Shemanski Park in Portland Jan. 21 for the "United Front Against the Trump Agenda" rally and march.

Union members and labor organizations made up a large portion of the crowd, but participants also included a wide range of community and faith-based groups such as Augustana Lutheran Church and the Community Alliance of Tenants.

"Now is the time for a labor-led mass mobilization to give our members and other workers the confidence and determination to unite and fight back," said rally organizer Jamie Partridge.

Rallygoers marched eight blocks to Waterfront Park, where they joined nearly 100,000 people at the Portland Women's March.

"Solidarity has never been more important," said Shannon Walker, president of the SW Washington Labor Council.



About 500 people at a union-backed unity rally parade down Salmon St. en route to Waterfront Park to join the Portland Women's March. Participants included members of construction trade unions (below) and the Portland Association of Teachers (right).



Trump withdraws U.S. from TPP, will re-open NAFTA

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI)—Quickly carrying out two campaign promises that brought him key votes from unionists in the industrial states around the Great Lakes, President Donald Trump formally withdrew the U.S. from the labor-opposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) free trade agreement, and said he will re-open the 23-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico.

The AFL-CIO cheered the announcement. Member unions had stitched together a wide coalition of community, worker, religious, civil rights, and civic groups to oppose the trade pact with 11 Pacific Rim nations. As a result of their pressure, former President Barack Obama said following the Nov. 8 election that he would not submit the TPP to Congress.

But he still left its ultimate fate up to Trump, who on Jan. 23 signed an executive order ending U.S. participation in the pact. Trump promised to negotiate more pro-U.S. bilateral trade pacts with the TPP nations.

"The U.S. withdrawing from TPP and seeking a reopening of NAFTA is an important first step toward a trade policy that works for working people," said national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka. "While these are necessary actions, they aren't enough. They are just the first in a series of necessary policy changes required to build a fair and just global economy."

The AFL-CIO and its congressional allies have introduced principles that every future trade pact must cover. They include enforceable worker rights, protection of Buy American provisions, bans on using trade pacts to undercut new U.S. "green" manufacturing, and making currency manipulation a violation of trade law. They also include abolition of a secret pro-corporate trade court — the Investor-State Dispute System, which is part of TPP and NAFTA.

TriMet bargaining off to a rough start once again

TriMet and Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 began negotiations Jan. 9 over a new contract that covers 2,400 employees and about 1,200 retirees. If the past is any guide, bargaining will be contentious.

Last May, TriMet proposed to extend the existing contract for two years, adding 3 percent annual wage increases. After conferring with members, Local 757 leaders declined the offer.

Members may have soured on several contract concessions they agreed to in 2014. Bruce Hansen, who led those negotiations, lost re-election as union president the following year, and Shirley Block, Local 757's new president, has said the union gave away too much to TriMet. Union health insurance

concessions were slated to save TriMet \$50 million over two years. The contract increased workers' share of the insurance premium, and ended the promise of fully-paid retiree health insurance for new hires.

In bargaining, Local 757 is proposing to rescind the increase in the workers' share of the premium, and restore the former retiree health insurance benefits. TriMet meanwhile wants further concessions, including greater latitude to hire from the outside. Right now, part-time bus operators get dibs when new full-time operator positions become available. Block said most part-time operators joined TriMet with the expectation and promise that they'd later get an opportunity to be-

come full-time, so the idea that TriMet would pass them over and hire full-timers off the street would be a betrayal.

"We're not going to roll over," Block told the Labor Press. "We're going to fight them all the way."

Public transit workers are barred from striking, under a state law the union advocated for in 2007. Instead, like firefighters and police officers, public transit workers enter binding arbitration if union and management can't reach agreement after 150 days of bargaining. Because bargaining started on Jan. 9, the two sides will have to continue until at least June 8, at which point either side could initiate binding arbitration.

The way it works in Oregon,

if the contract is decided by binding arbitration, the arbitrator can't split the difference, but must pick one side's offer, whichever he or she considers most reasonable. That's how the 2010-2014 contract was settled: The arbitrator judged that existing union health benefits were too generous, and picked TriMet's proposal in its entirety. The current contract expired Nov. 30, 2016, but its terms will remain in force until a new contract replaces it. The contract covers bus and rail operators, mechanics, trainers, maintenance workers, dispatchers, and customer service representatives.

The two sides will next meet to negotiate on Feb. 16.

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Byram new executive director of Labor's Community Services

Eryn Byram is the new executive director of Labor's Community Service Agency (LCSA). She succeeds Vickie Burns, who retired last month.

Byram has worked part-time as LCSA's office manager/outreach specialist since 2012. She interviewed for the director's job, along with three other finalists. A hiring committee comprised of five members of the LCSA Executive Board recommended Byram, and the full 16-person Executive Board concurred.

LCSA is a non-profit organization that operates under the auspices of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, in partnership with United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. The agency works with an array of community-based and governmental organizations throughout Oregon and Southwest Washington to provide social service programs, dislocated worker assistants, education, information, referral services, and other needs.

Byram, 42, brings real energy to the agency. She knows the ins and outs of the operation, having worked with Burns for the last five years. Two years ago, Byram created Team Labor, a program that brings union mem-



Eryn Byram

bers and labor allies together to volunteer for selected public service projects. The program came about as a result of LCSA's successful Presents from Partners (PFP) toy drive and holiday party. PFP started small, but over the years has grown tremendously. Last December more than 100 union members volunteered to help.

"I would like to see Team Labor grow the way Presents from Partners did," Byram said.

Her goal is to bring an army of union members and community allies together once a year to work on one big project. As

an example, Byram points to last October's one-day home repair event that helped six Heritage Village mobile home park households from being evicted, in partnership with Rebuilding Together Washington County.

Born and raised in Pittsburgh, Byram lost her father in a car accident at age 10. Her family moved to Flagstaff, Arizona when she was 13. By age 19, Byram was happily traveling solo around the country, camping out of the back of her truck, stopping occasionally to work at a national park, restaurant or bar.

She landed in Portland in 2000, where she met her future husband — a valet at the Hilton Portland Executive Towers. He helped her get a job at the hotel's Porto Terra Tuscan Grill. It was a union job, and in 2005 Byram became a member of HERE Local 9.

Byram excelled as a union member. At her first union meeting she stepped up to be a shop steward. She studied the contract, attended all the shop steward training classes, and assisted her co-workers when needed. If a question arose, she always had a copy of the union contract in her apron to refer to.

"It was my calling," she said. Byram got involved with the bargaining committee in July 2008. Negotiations were difficult, and resulted in a boycott.

Byram's enthusiasm and skill set had caught the eye of then-business manager Karly Edwards, who hired Byram to organize the boycott. It was so successful that the Hilton's top brass agreed to all of the union's demands, including wage increases and insurance coverage for housekeepers.

"It was a worker-led campaign, and we boycotted the crap out of them," Byram said. "To this day, they are the highest paid housekeepers in the state."

After the boycott, Byram remained with Local 9, first as an internal organizer, then as a community organizer, and finally as administrative assistant.

She left Local 9 and went to work part-time at LCSA in January 2012. In that job she joined Office and Professional Employees Local 11. Byram had met Burns, the executive director, at a Resource Navigator training for Local 9. LCSA offers the training for free to unions. The course instructs staff on how to help their mem-

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300+ attend labor law conference

Union leaders know that U.S. labor laws will be under attack in the new Trump Administration, so it was no surprise that more than 300 unionists attended the Oregon Labor Law Conference Jan. 27 to get training and new information on grievance handling and arbitration, collective bargaining, organizing, union governance, legislation, and worker rights.



Norman Malbin, retired IBEW Local 48 general counsel, founded the conference 20 years ago. "It



brings together union staff and leadership from around the Northwest to learn about cutting edge labor law, and build a stronger labor movement," he said.



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UNION MEETING NOTICES

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

General Membership and Executive Board meets 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, in the meeting room, at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 300, Portland.

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12067 NE Glenn Widling Dr. #108, Portland.

Fire Fighters 452

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

Fire Fighters 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

Glass Workers 740

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, at Best Western Plus, Mill Creek Inn, 3125 Ryan Drive SE, Salem.

IBEW 48

RENEW meets 5:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month in the Executive Boardroom.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. on the first and third Wednesday of the month in the Executive Boardroom. Coast Unit meets 6 p.m. on the first Thursday of every month at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5:30 p.m. on **Monday, Feb. 13**, in the Meeting Hall.

Sister's in the Brotherhood meets 6:30 p.m. on **Monday, Feb. 13**, in the Meeting Hall. You are welcome to attend the EWMC meeting beforehand.

Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. on **Wednesday, Feb. 13**, in the Dispatch Lobby.

Sound and Communication Unit meets 6 p.m. on the second Wednesday of every month in the Meeting Hall.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at Northern Wasco County PUD, 2345 River Road, The Dalles.

Washington Unit meets 6 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month at the Longview Meeting Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave., Longview, WA.

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of every month in the Meeting Hall.

General Membership Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of the month in Local 48's Portland Meeting Hall and at the Local 48 Longview Hall. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Meetings are at 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland, unless otherwise noted.

DEATH ASSESSMENT: No. 2519, Thomas A. Davis III; No. 2520, Norman L. Conser; No. 2521, Paul W. Peterson; and No. 2522, Ronald R. Stuck. The Feb. 2017 assessment is \$1.50.

Insulators 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 10.

Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9. Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.

Meetings are at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

Laborers 483 Municipal Employees

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Executive Board meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 13.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23.

Meetings are at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Office and Professional Employees 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 14, at the OPEIU LOCAL 11 meeting hall, 3815 Columbia Street, Vancouver, Washington. **PLEASE NOTE:** Nominations will be accepted at this meeting for the following positions: Executive Secretary-Treasurer (3 year term); Vice President (2 year term); Recording Secretary (2 year term); Sergeant-At-Arms (2 year term); Utilities (2 year term); Public Employees (2 year term); At-Large (2 year term); At-Large (2 year term); Trustee (3 year term).

Nominees must be present to accept, or have written acceptance of nomination submitted at this meeting. Nominations will be held in accordance with Article VII, Sections 1-4 of the Constitution of the Office & Professional Employees International Union, Local No. 11 which states the following:

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nomination of officers shall take place on the second Tuesday in March at the General Membership meeting of each year. No person may be nominated, appointed or elected, or in any way represent the members of this Union unless he or she has been a member of this Union in continuous good standing for at least twelve (12) months preceding the election. Section 2. No member shall be a candidate for more than one (1) office. Section 3. Members need not be present to be nominated for any union office. Those members, who by virtue of geography are unable to either attend or have other members from their area attend to place their name in nomination, may notify the Union office of their desire to be nominated. The

Executive Secretary Treasurer shall nominate or cause to be nominated those same members. The members, who are not present at the nomination meeting to accept the nomination, must have their acceptance of the nomination in writing, available at the nomination meeting. Only those candidates who accept the nomination shall be considered valid candidates. Section 4. Except as provided for in Section 3 above, write-in nominations or nominations by proxy shall not be allowed. *only members that reside outside of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties in Oregon, and Clark County in Washington may utilize the geographical exception in Section 3.

Operating Engineers 701

District 1 & 5 members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 3, at 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 1 members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 6, at the Red Lion, 510 Kelso Dr., Kelso.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 7, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, at the Courtyard Marriott, 600 Airport Rd., Medford.

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at the Asbestos Hall, 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Website: www.iupatlocal10.org

Plasterers 82

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Plumbers and Steamfitters 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. The following locations will be able to participate remotely in the Regular Business Meeting at 7:30 on the 3rd Friday of every month: Bend, Eugene/Springfield, Eureka, Medford, and Salem.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21. Please contact Craig Spjut at 707-496-1767

HAPPENINGS

Retirees group will discuss tax reform at free forum

Rising costs for housing and health care are among the most notable demands on fixed income retirees. Some two-thirds have little or no retirement savings and are relying on public programs to survive. With Oregon's population 65 years and older expected to nearly double by 2030, that will place more demands on those public services. The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans Education Fund is hosting a free seminar to talk about how tax reform can possibly help bring some relief. Guest speakers are Chuck Sheketoff, executive director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy, and Daniel Morris, research director for Our Oregon.

- **Time:** Thurs., Feb. 9, 9 am-noon
- **Place:** Oregon Labor Center, 3645 SE 32nd Ave. Portland.

LERC sponsors Black History event Feb. 15

For Black History Month, the University of Oregon Labor Education and Resource Center (LERC) is sponsoring a presentation, film, and discussion led by retired AFSCME secretary-treasurer Bill Lucy and University of Washington Tacoma labor history professor Michael Honey. Lucy was with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during the 1968 strike by AFSCME sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee. Honey is the author of several

for location information.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at 4816 S 6th St., Klamath Falls.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 9.

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 2.

Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland. (Phone: 503 232-4807)

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS: There will be nominations for Worden and approval of additional union policies at the Feb. 14, 2017 Portland meeting.

Medford area members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8. Please call Dennis Dover for location – 541-517-9644.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at 1887 Laura St., Springfield. PLEASE NOTE: Meeting to be broadcast with the Portland meeting.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

Women of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 (WOSM) meet 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 17, at Beaulahland, 118 NE 28th Ave., Portland. Children are welcome.

CENTRAL LABOR CHAPTERS

Central Oregon

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at the Social Justice Center, 155 NE Irving Ave., Bend.

Lane County

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 15, preceded

by a 6:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, preceded by a 6:30 Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Southern Oregon

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

Northwest Oregon

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 1, at Laborer's Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver.

BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION

TRADES COUNCILS

Columbia-Pacific

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 7 and Feb. 14, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland

Lane, Coos, Curry & Douglas

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 22, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 2, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Portland & Vicinity

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 9.

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28.

Meetings are at the IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

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WANTED: Central Oregon union members interested in running for office

Oregon Labor Candidate School is looking for union members and leaders who are interested in running for public office — hard workers ready to fight for all working people from the inside of city hall or the State Capitol. An intensive two-day training in the nuts and bolts of getting elected is scheduled for March 4-5, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in Bend at the Common House at Higher Ground Community. Apply online at <http://bit.ly/2jE4cXN>. Contact Sara Ryan at sara@oregonlaborcandidate.school.org or 503-957-0306 for more information or for help with the application.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 21 at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 1-800-521-5954 ext. 226.

Bakers 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 23, at Izzy's, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

Elevator Constructors 23

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 8, at Home Town Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland.

Glass Workers 740

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave, Portland.

Insulators 36

Retiree breakfast 9 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 2, at the Dockside Restaurant, 2047 NW Front Ave., Portland.

Plumbers and Steamfitters 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 16, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. The topic is "The Nature of Addiction."

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Rose Etta Venetucci first woman business rep at IATSE Local 28

Rose Etta Venetucci has been elected business representative of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 28. It is the only full-time post at the union, and Venetucci is the first woman to hold the job in the local's 122-year history.

She succeeds Roger Gayton II, who did not seek re-election.

IATSE Local 28 represents about 400 stage (members and extras), wardrobe, and allied craft workers. They work shows in Portland at the Keller Auditorium, Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, Moda Center, Memorial Coliseum, and Newmark and Winningstad theaters. They also

work business conferences, and concerts in arenas and outdoor venues throughout the Portland metro area and Southwest Washington.

Venetucci, 52, has been with the union since 1990. She had just completed her first three-year term as president when the business rep job opened, and she was encouraged to run. Venetucci has held posts as an Executive Board member, vice president, and chair of the Education and Membership committees, and she helped plan the local's 100-year anniversary party in 1995.



Rose Etta Venetucci

A native of Los Angeles, Venetucci moved north to study theater at Portland State University. She was introduced to Local 28 while working as a stagehand at the university's Lincoln Hall. The theater was run by union member Chris Her-

rick. "He raised us IATSE and ensured we learned our craft on the job site. On big shows he would bring in a union crew to work side-by-side with us. I hand-delivered my application to join the union," she said.

Venetucci worked as a theater electrician. She was very active in the union until 2005, when a automobile accident resulted in a partial disability. She disappeared for five years.

"Why did I come back? I was asked," she said.

In 2010, then-business rep Radar Bateman offered her an office job to fill a vacancy. She did some dispatching and assisted Bateman where needed.

Three years later she ran for president.

President Venetucci reached out to members, asking them to volunteer at least once a year in any event they wanted — whether it was to support Local 28 or some community group.

"Being a union member has rights and responsibilities, and being active is fun and rewarding," she said.

Local 28 members stepped up. Their union banner can be seen at most rallies, marches and protests; the local participated for the first time in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council's Muscular Dystrophy "Labor Bowl" fundraiser; during last November's election, Local 28 sponsored two phone bank nights — and 68 percent of its members voted in the election. The union launched a "Young Workers Committee" for members ages 18 to 35. The group holds regular gatherings, with an open invitation to the entire labor community. And attendance at union meetings continues to grow.

"The most important part is

showing the importance of the work and make it fun," Venetucci said.

In addition to her duties as business rep, Venetucci sits on the Executive Board of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, representing the amusement trades section for the Oregon Theatrical Federation. She also serves on the Oregon AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE) board.

"I am inspired by many of my brothers and sisters who have supported, shared, and educated me," Venetucci said. "I hope to pay it forward, and encourage all my brothers and sisters to get active."

In other IATSE Local 28 election results: Rhiannon Rodriguez-Betts was elected president; Gayton was elected vice president; Jay Spottswood was elected recording secretary; and Phillip Timmons was elected financial secretary/treasurer. Executive Board members are Katherine Andrews, Kathryn Mura, Mike Pratt, and Stephanie Cook.

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August 26, 2017
(Save the date)

...Byram takes reins at labor agency

From Page 2

bers in need access information about social programs and other services.

“Vickie has done so much for Labor’s Community Service Agency, and I’ve learned so much from her. Vickie built this thing. She got the ship running strong and in the right direction. Now I hope to take it to the next level,” Byram said.

Byram wants to serve on the United Way Campaign cabinet.

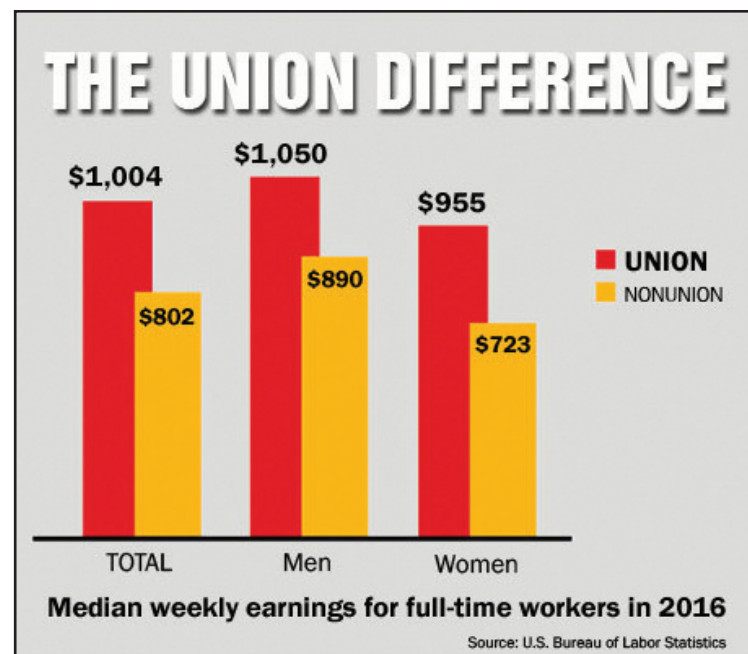
“It’s so important that labor and United Way continue to build a strong partnership. Their impact work on ending the cycle of childhood poverty is important and has an inherent link to labor’s living wage jobs. Together, we can really make a difference.”

Byram will have the labor seat on Workforce Systems Inc. She will be the dislocated worker labor liaison for employees facing layoff or plant closures.

Byram also wants to make some changes to LCSA’s Helping Hands program. She says more and more calls coming into the office are from folks being evicted from their homes, or facing astronomical rent increases.

“What we can offer right now isn’t really helpful to a family living in a car,” she said.

Byram will be reaching out to union locals in the coming months to talk about possible solutions.



Annual survey records further union membership declines

Union membership fell to 10.7 percent of the U.S. workforce in 2016, down from 11.1 percent the previous year, according to the latest annual report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). That amounted to a loss of 240,000 union members since the previous year. Total U.S. union membership now stands at 14.6 million.

The 10.7 percent figure is the lowest ever recorded since comparable data began to be collected in 1983. That year, union members made up 20.1 percent of the U.S. workforce.

In Oregon, 13.5 percent of workers were union members in 2016 (228,000 workers), compared to 14.8 percent for 2015. In Washington, the survey found 17.4 percent of workers (539,000) were union members in 2016, up from 16.8 percent in 2015. With the increase, Washington is now the fifth most unionized state in the nation. Oregon ranked 11th.

In neighboring Idaho, union members were estimated at 6.1 percent of the workforce in 2016. In California they were 15.9 percent.

New York was the most unionized state, at 23.6 percent,

while South Carolina was the least, with 1.6 percent.

In each case, the figures are slightly higher for “union-represented” workers than for union “members.” That’s because some union-represented workers choose not to become full union members. Nationwide, an estimated 1.7 million workers were union-represented but not union members, and the total of the U.S. workforce that was union-represented was 12.0 percent. In Oregon, union-represented workers were 15.8 percent of the workforce, and in Washington 18.7 percent.

Nationally, just 6.4 percent of private-sector workers were union members, while more than five times that, 34.4 percent, of public sector workers were union members. That amounted to 7.1 million union members in the public sector, and 7.4 million union members in the private sector.

Union members continue to out-earn nonunion workers, on average: Median weekly earnings were \$1,004 for union members, compared to \$802 for workers without a union.

The BLS union membership report is considered fairly reliable at the national level, but small year-to-year fluctuations at the state level may have more to do with how the numbers are obtained. They come from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, a monthly sample of 60,000 households nationwide. The smaller the state’s population, the greater the likelihood that a statistical sample might not have been representative.

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Retired Cleveland Iron Workers first to see pension cuts

Retirees in the Cleveland Iron Workers Local 17 Pension Fund are the first pensioners in the country to see cuts to their retirement benefits as a result of the Multiemployer Pension Reform Act (MPRA).

Congress passed MPRA late in 2014 as an amendment to a bill to continue funding for the federal government. It received almost no debate. The law opened the door for trustees of severely distressed multiemployer pension plans to reduce benefits for current and future retirees—if doing so could save the plan from future insolvency. Changes must be approved by the U.S. Treasury Department.

In a post on Local 17's web site, trustees said participants "saved themselves by implementing benefit cuts now to avoid the projected insolvency in 2024."

The plan put forth by labor and management trustees of the

Iron Workers Local 17 pension fund reduces accrued benefits and eliminates early retirement subsidies and extra benefit credits. Trustees said the average cuts are about 20 percent, but that includes workers who are years away from retirement. Roughly 336 current retirees will experience cuts of 30 to 60 percent, according to the Pension Rights Center (PRC), an advocacy group.

Out of 1,938 eligible voters, 616 voted in favor of the cuts and 320 voted against. Another 1,002 current and former workers in the fund didn't vote. Under MPRA rules, the uncast votes were counted as approving the cuts.

The vote was administered by the Treasury Department.

The cuts went into effect Feb. 1.

According to PRC, eight other pension plans have applied to the Treasury Depart-

ment to cut retiree pension benefits. Four applications were denied and four others — impact-

ing more than 71,000 workers — are in various stages of review by the Treasury Depart-

ment. Another 70 plans are in "critical and declining" status and are eligible to make cuts.



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Seniors disconnected from White House

Early in January, the Alliance for Retired Americans announced a "National Medicare, Medicaid & Social Security Call-In Day" for Jan. 23. The purpose was to send a message to newly-elected President Donald Trump, telling him to keep his campaign promise of not cutting Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid.

Jan. 23 arrived, but when senior citizens across the country called the White House comments line at 202-456-1111, they were met with a recorded message.

"The comment line is currently closed, but your comment is important to the president."

The recording then instructs callers to send comments online at www.whitehouse.gov, or by Facebook messenger.

According to the Pew Research Center, 41 percent of Americans 65 and older do not have Internet access.

"How are seniors suppose to get their message heard?" asked Scott Blau, president of the Oregon chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans.

Some media reported that the White House plans to get the phone line back up soon, though there is no confirmed time line. At press time, the comment line was still closed. Moreover, Trump's White House Facebook account didn't have Messenger installed.

Under the Obama Administration, the White House used a team of volunteers to accept comments from callers.

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Union women play key role in women's marches nationwide

Thousands of union women and men took to the streets with workers across the country Jan. 21 to support women's rights — and to oppose a growing tide of anti-women policies coming out of Washington, D.C., and state capitals.

The Women's March on Washington, D.C., drew more than 500,000 people. Another 5 million took part in 673 "sister marches" held on seven continents. In Portland, a record 100,000 people filled Waterfront Park. Hundreds more turned out for marches in Salem, Eugene, Bend, Astoria, Newport, Astoria, Pendleton, LaGrande, Ashland, Halfway, and elsewhere.

"We're here not only to march, but we're here to build a movement," AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler told the crowd in the nation's capital. "It's a movement for paid family leave. It's a movement for equal rights. It's a movement for workers' rights. It's a movement for immigrants' rights. We're going to stand together in solidarity to make sure our voices are heard."



Union signs (above) and union members were everywhere at the Women's March in Portland on Jan. 21. The march drew an estimated 100,000 people to Waterfront Park (right). For Cheri Rice of Office and Professional Employees Local 11 (below, left), it was a family affair. She marched alongside her daughter and granddaughter.



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