



NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

Volume 112
Number 3
February 4, 2011
Portland, Oregon

Conciliator has TriMet and ATU talking after threat of strike

Amid threats of a wildcat transit strike, a state conciliator on Jan. 28 persuaded leaders of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 and TriMet to take a step back and try to resolve their differences.

"It's probably the most movement we've seen from TriMet so far," said Local 757 President Jonathan Hunt. "But we're not there yet."

A second meeting was scheduled Feb. 2 (after this issue of the Labor Press went to press).

The sides have been engaged in a labor dispute since the old contract expired Nov. 30, 2009. State law prohibits transit workers from striking and requires that all contract disputes be settled by binding arbitration.

However, at a TriMet board meeting Jan. 26, Hunt said union members — frustrated by the transit agency's "illegal implementation" of health insurance premium copays — are ready to stop bus and train service.

"Every single day I hear from my members, 'you guys (TriMet) are breaking the law, you don't care about binding arbitration, so why should we?'" Hunt said. "I'm telling you, our group is asking and going to put forward reductions within our workforce; you are going to

have service stopped. You are telling us, 'the law means nothing.'"

The union has filed two unfair labor practice (ULP) complaints with the

Oregon Employment Relations Board. One alleges that TriMet changed its bargaining position when petitioning for arbitration in July 2010. The other is for unilaterally changing their agreement over health insurance costs, a move the union says was in retaliation for filing the first ULP.

TriMet had been honoring the terms of the expired contract until this year, when it started charging active and retired members for a portion of their health insurance premiums. The increase in monthly out-of-pocket costs ranges from \$15.31 to \$234.70, depending on the carrier and coverage.

The Oregon Employment Relations Board isn't expected to hear the cases until May. But before leaving office, Gov. Ted Kulongoski asked state conciliator Robert Nightingale to "clear his schedule" in order to assist the sides in resolving the dispute. The Jan. 28 meeting proved fruitful.

Meantime, the union has been holding large rallies prior to TriMet board meetings to inform the public of the alleged illegal actions, and packing those meetings to plead with board members to get TriMet General Manager Neil McFarlane to rescind his order on health insurance copays.

The seven-person TriMet board of directors is appointed by the governor.

"Somehow there is this perception we're not willing to move on health insurance copays," Hunt told the Labor Press. "That's just not true. But you can't shove it down our throats and expect us to say 'thank you.'"

At the Jan. 26 board meeting, Hunt said TriMet was getting "bad advice" from its attorneys — advice that ultimately could cost the agency millions of dollars in backpay and penalties.

He offered to pull the two unfair labor practice complaints if TriMet reversed the change in health insurance and returned to the bargaining table.

"In one day," Hunt told the board, "we could deal with these unfair labor practice issues and come to an agreement on a new contract, if TriMet is willing to recognize what we see as unlawful actions and put a stop to them."

Hunt also invited board members to sit in on negotiations to see first-hand what is being proposed.

"I'll commit to (bargain) every single day that Mr. McFarlane will commit," Hunt said. If at the end of the day, an agreement can't be reached, Hunt suggested the sides sign a joint letter to

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Steve Fung, a member of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 and a part-time bus operator at TriMet, joined about 100 people Jan. 26 in front of the downtown Portland Building, site of a TriMet board of directors meeting, to protest the transit agency's Jan. 1 unilateral change to health insurance premiums. Fung, who was TriMet's "Part-Time Operator of the Year" last year, said his goal is to help inform the public that operators aren't getting a free ride and the implemented contract is having serious ramifications — especially among retirees.

In Oregon and Washington

Carpenters dissolve 15 locals, charter four new locals

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America dissolved 15 of its Oregon and Washington locals effective Jan. 24, and replaced them with four newly-chartered locals, one local each for general carpenters, millwrights, pile drivers, and drywall carpenters. The changes, which were outlined in a letter to members from General President Doug McCarron, also include dues reductions and a shift to a new centralized dispatch system run by the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters.

The union will close some offices and lay off some office staff. The dissolved locals — 247, 1388, 1065, 1707, 1001, 2154, 1715, 1273, 306, 2067, 711, 204, 1699, 2416, and 2396 — had a combined membership of about 7,000, according to the most recent filings with the U.S. Department of Labor.

Newly-chartered Carpenters Local 156 now represents all general carpenters in the state of Oregon, plus four Southwest Washington counties (Clark, Skamania, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum), totaling about 4,000 members. Local 156 comprises members of former locals 247, 1388, 1065, 1707, 1001 and 2067, plus carpenter members in mixed locals 1715, 306, and 1273. McCarron appointed Doug Tweedy interim president and Wayne Frazey interim financial secretary.

In that same Oregon and Southwest Washington area, all drywall hangers now belong to newly-chartered Interior Systems Local 146. It comprises former interior/exterior Local 2154 plus interior specialists from mixed locals 306, 1273, and 1715, for a combined membership of roughly 1,300 members. McCarron appointed Bruce Epstein in-

terim president and Norman Curry interim financial secretary.

Both locals — Local 156 and Local 146 — will be headquartered in the union hall that formerly belonged to Local 1388, at 276 Warner-Milne Rd. in Oregon City, Oregon.

Meanwhile, all pile driver members in Oregon, Washington, Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming now belong to newly-chartered Pile Drivers Local 196, which takes as its headquarters the former Local 2396 hall at 4696 Pacific Hwy East in Fife, Washington. Local 196 includes about 1,000 members from former locals 2416 and 2396, plus any pile driver who belonged to a mixed local in those states. McCarron appointed Dena Rempelos interim president and Leiter Hockett interim financial secretary.

Finally, all millwrights in Oregon,

Washington, Montana, and Idaho are now members of newly-chartered Millwrights Local 96, which will use former Local 1699's office at 515 N. Neel St in Kennewick, Washington as its headquarters. The new local combines about 700 millwrights from locals 711, 204, and 1699, plus any millwrights from mixed locals — except for Metal Trades Local 2403 at Hanford, Washington, and Local 808 in Idaho Falls, Idaho, which continue as autonomous locals. McCarron appointed Dave Rupe interim president and Justin McClendon interim financial secretary.

All assets of the dissolved locals are being transferred to the regional council. Some or all of those assets may be apportioned among the newly established locals, McCarron said in the letter.

Not all of the 15 dissolved locals

had offices and staff, but some did. The Carpenters-owned buildings on the 2200 block of N. Lombard St. in Portland and at 3655 Kashmir Way SE in Salem are said to be up for sale.

The consolidation reduces overhead and duplication of services, and thus allows local dues to be reduced, explained Regional Council Executive Secretary-Treasurer Doug Tweedy in letters to members of each local.

"While we are proud of where we have been and the local unions that helped us to achieve so much," Tweedy said in the letters, "our general president has signaled that we must continue to adapt to the industry's changes or be left behind."

For all four of the new local unions, dispatching will now be centralized and operated by the regional council using a new automated system.

Despite fall in union membership

Pacific Northwest ranks among top 10 in union density

The Great Recession has pushed down union membership by 1.3 million over the last two years — nearly double the total gains unions made in 2007-08, according to the latest report from the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

The number of union members dropped 612,000 to 14.7 million in 2010. The rate of union membership dropped to 11.9 percent, compared to 12.3 percent the previous year.

In the state-by-state breakdown, Washington held its No. 4 ranking in terms of union density, with the state's 552,000 union members accounting for 19.4 percent of the overall workforce — nearly one in five Washington work-

ers. Only New York (24.2 percent), Alaska (22.9 percent) and Hawaii (21.8 percent) have higher unionization rates than Washington.

Oregon's 245,000 union members puts it 10th nationally in union density — at 16.2 percent.

States ahead of Oregon in union density are California (17.5 percent), New Jersey (17.1 percent), Connecticut (16.7 percent), Michigan (16.5 percent), and Rhode Island (16.4 percent).

According to BLS statistics, total jobs in Oregon increased by 44,000 in 2010, while union membership fell by 5,000.

Total jobs in Washington dropped 10,000 in 2010, but the number of

union members dropped 22,000.

Those numbers mirrored a national trend of lower union density in nearly every state in the country.

BLS union data analyst Jim Walker told Press Associates Union News Service the recession particularly hit hard at three more-densely unionized sectors: manufacturing, construction and local government.

"Also, men dominate those industries — especially manufacturing and construction — and they have a higher share of union membership and were particularly hard hit by the downturn," he said.

By contrast, Walker said more lightly unionized sectors, including

health care and hospitality, were not as hard hit by the recession. As a result, 6.9 percent of private sector workers are unionized, compared to 36.2 percent of public workers. Public sector unionists outnumber private sector unionists by 500,000.

Some private sector industries are more unionized than others, however: transportation and utilities (21.8 percent), telecommunications (15.8 percent), and construction (13.1 percent).

Since 1983, when BLS first started keeping comparable data, union density among men has declined by 12.1 percent, to 12.6 percent in 2010. The rate for women has dropped 3.5 percent in 27 years, and 0.2 percent from 2009

to 2010. It's now 11.1 percent. Men were also a larger share of unionists in 2010 (54 percent) and in 2009 (55 percent) than their share of the total workforce (51 percent).

There were some states where union membership increased, with all of them in the South or West. But even there, the recession's impact appeared.

For instance, BLS reported that North Carolina is still last in union density, though it edged up from 3.1 percent and 115,000 unionists in 2009 to 3.2 percent and 117,000 last year.

The biggest percentage gain was in Kentucky, which added 3,000 unionists, to 100,000, and density rose from 13.9 percent to 14.8 percent.

The wage difference between union and nonunion workers hit a key milestone: Precisely \$200 a week. Unionized workers had a median wage of \$917 per week compared to \$717 for nonunion workers. The median is the point where half the population is above and half is below the figure. The union/nonunion gap widened by \$2 in one year.

And union women still had a significantly higher median wage than their nonunion sisters — and were closer to parity with men. In 2010, union women earned a median weekly

As union membership falls, middle class incomes shrink

By **KARLA WALTER & DAVID MADLAND**

Union membership is at record lows. Critics claim that unions are not important to the modern economy — with only 12 percent of workers currently unionized — but the truth is that if you care about the middle class, you need to care about unions.

The middle class is markedly stronger when workers join together in unions. As the chart at right demonstrates, the sharp decline over the past 40 years in the percentage of workers organized in unions has been associated with an equally sharp drop in the share of the nation's income going to the middle class — those in the second, third and fourth income quintiles.

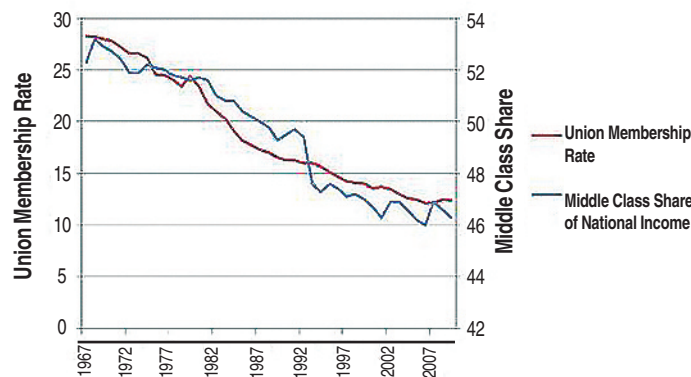
The power of unions to create prosperity for working families is well recognized: Organized labor is one of the few voices for the economic interests of the middle class in our government. Unions were key to creating and protecting the social safety net (including Social Security and Medicare) and winning major legislative victories for working families such as the Equal Pay

Act, the Civil Rights Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act and — most recently — the Affordable Care Act.

And unions ensure that workers are paid fair wages. Unionized workers today make significantly more than their nonunion counterparts — about \$2.50 more per hour than an otherwise comparable worker in the typical state, ac-

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As union membership decreases, middle class income shrinks



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(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
 Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement.
 4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150, Portland, Ore. 97213
 Telephone: (503) 288-3311
 Editor: Michael Gutwig
 Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice
 Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.
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Single-payer summit draws 400; many union members

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

On Jan. 29, State Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland) met his counterpart in Congress — U.S. Rep. John Conyers of Detroit — at a daylong conference on building a movement for

“single-payer” health care. Dembrow is a leader of American Federation of Teachers-Oregon; Conyers is the son of a United Auto Workers union representative. Both are sponsors of legislation that would take private insurance companies out of the center of the health care

system — by setting up a public insurance system to pay for basic health services.

Conyers’ “Medicare for All” proposal in Congress, HR 676, was kept out of the official debate on health care reform in 2009. But the bill that did become law, the Affordable Care Act, allows states to set up their own single payer systems. Dembrow’s bill, which he expected to introduce early this month, would do that.

The Oregon Single Payer Conference, held at a church in downtown Portland, drew 400 attendees from around the state — twice as many as organizers expected. And 50 of those attended a workshop about the special role organized labor could play in bringing about a single payer system.

Union health and welfare trusts are a working model of what a single payer system would look like, said workshop co-chair Tom Leedham, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 206. Because union trusts are mostly self-insured, they provide a high-quality benefit at a price that employers can’t match.

“All the money goes into one pot, out of which we pay claims,” Leedham said. That’s how a single payer system would work. While union health trusts may rent a provider network from Blue Cross, Leedham said, and may pay a private company to administer claims, no union trustee collects a salary or makes a profit off the trust. The trust is run to benefit all members and their families, and no questions are asked about pre-existing conditions or any other insurance company loophole.



State Rep. Michael Dembrow (D-Portland), left, talks with Congressman John Conyers (D-Michigan) about his bill in the Oregon Legislature to create a public system of health insurance. Conyers’ bill in Congress would do the same on a national level by extending Medicare to all Americans.

Hundreds of locals, central labor councils, and national unions have endorsed the single payer idea, said fellow workshop co-chair Mark Dudzic, national coordinator of the group Labor Campaign for Single Payer Health Care. They’ve done so for pragmatic as well as principled reasons.

Health benefits are the most contentious item in bargaining union con-

tracts. And paying the ever-rising cost of health care burns up money that could otherwise go to wage increases or other benefits. A single payer system would take health care off the bargaining table. It would make health care a birthright for every American, Dudzic said, and deliver the universal health care that every other rich industrial country has achieved.

Busted!

A sampler of recent charges of employer labor law violations filed with the local office of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

Willamette Glass must reinstate workers it fired

Willamette Glass, a nonunion glass contractor in Clackamas, agreed to reinstate four workers and pay \$43,411 in back pay. That — and a workers’ rights notice mailed to all employees — will settle a charge filed by **Painters District Council 5** after the Jan. 22, 2010, firing of four members of Painters Local 740. The NLRB concluded that company president Scott Fritcher fired the four glazing and fabrication employees because of their union sympathies. Two workers agreed to accept reinstatement, but two others declined, reportedly concerned they’d be returning to a hostile environment. The NLRB took seriously a threat by one anti-union co-worker — that he would be going “hunting” for any union guy that tried to steal his job. Painters organizer Mike James says District Council 5 has not given up trying to organize the company.

Georgia-Pacific strips worker of union rights

Georgia-Pacific is accused of issuing discipline that went outside the bounds of the union contract, to retaliate against a worker for supporting his union, the **Inland Boatmen’s Union**. At a paper product warehouse, Dave Franzen was made to enter into a “last chance agreement” under threat of termination. The agreement strips him of his union right not to be terminated without just cause. The company refused to bargain over any aspect of the discipline and refused to provide information to the union when it tried to represent him.

Corporate-owned hospital doubles CNA workload

The NLRB has determined that unionized **McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center** in Springfield broke federal labor law. The agency issued a complaint in three separate charges filed by **SEIU Local 49** and set a Feb. 15 trial date for the case to be heard. The for-profit hospital is part of Tennessee-headquartered Community Health Systems, the nation’s largest publicly-traded hospital company. Local 49 staff director Ron Ruggiero said the chain is making record profits in Springfield and elsewhere, yet refuses to bargain seriously with its 340 union techs and support staff workers, and is asking them to pay more for their health insurance. The hospital also doubled the patient load of some certified nurse assistants — from 11 to 22 — without bargaining with the union.

Hilton manager seems to be on rampage

Hilton Portland food and beverage manager Florian Kunkel is on a rampage, judging by recent unfair labor practice complaints. Last month, we reported the charge that he grabbed a union contract right out of the hands of union steward Melissa Goff. Since then, Kunkel called one worker an idiot and made a group of workers work on Christmas who had supported Goff in her grievance and unfair labor practice charge. **UNITE HERE Local 9** filed two more charges and is alleging across-the-board retaliation against seven of Goff’s co-workers for supporting her in the grievance procedure and in her unfair labor practice charge.



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Put forth by member of Bakers Local 114

Bill proposes to add 'bereavement' to Family Leave Act

A longtime member of Bakers Union Local 114 is behind a bill in the Oregon Legislature that would expand the Oregon Family Leave Act to allow for up to eight weeks leave to mourn the death of a family member.

The Oregon Family Leave Act was passed by the Legislature in 1995. It requires employers of 25 or more employees to provide their workers with job-protected leave (up to 12 weeks) to care for themselves or a family member in cases of illness, injury, childbirth and adoption, or when on military call to duty or on leave from active duty. A family member can be a child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild.

The leave is unpaid, although there are provisions that allow a worker to tap accrued sick and vacation pay.

Robin Zimmerman, 50, is a 31-year member of Bakers Local 114 employed at Oroweat. In May 2008, he lost his wife to cancer. Her death impacted him and their young daughter deeply. Zimmerman was fortunate to have strong support from his employer,

his union, and from co-workers, but it opened his eyes to the fact that the standard leave for mourning among employers is just three days.

"I don't know if all employers do the right thing. Mine told me to take as long as I needed," Zimmerman said. "What I did realize, though, was there was nothing in writing."

Employers don't always do the right thing.

In California, Senate Majority Leader Ellen Corbett introduced a bill this session to include bereavement leave. She cited several instances in which employees were fired for missing work following a death in the family. In one case, an employee took family and medical leave to care for her sick father. When her father died, she attended his funeral. When she returned to work, her employer informed her that her family leave had ended upon her father's death. She was fired. In another case, an employee's husband died suddenly. She took off for a few days to fly home to bury him — and was fired immediately upon her return to

work.

In Portland, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 has a grievance pending against TriMet for denying funeral leave.

Zimmerman says, from his experience, three days away from work just isn't enough. The initial shock can leave families unable to function with their daily lives. "Even the basic chore of fixing and eating meals disappears into a fog," he said.

It was his personal experience that led Zimmerman to the crusade to change the law.

He remembered reading an article about an expansion of the Oregon Family Leave Act. "Why couldn't bereavement be included in that law?" he asked himself. Zimmerman consulted with the head of the Bakers Union, Terry Lansing, about how to get a bill in the Legislature. He did some research on the Oregon Family Leave Act, then called his state senator.

Zimmerman told the Labor Press many people he talked to were unaware that bereavement leave wasn't covered

under the act — state or federal.

Zimmerman talked with Sen. Brian Boquist (R-Dallas) in spring of 2009 and asked him to sponsor a bill. They met and, eventually, SB 506 — The Grief Recovery Bill — was hatched. It was filed pre-session and has been assigned to the Business, Transportation, Economic Development Committee.

The bill would amend the Oregon Family Leave Act to allow an immed-

iate two weeks off following the death of a family member, with the ability to get more time — up to eight weeks — if approved by a physician.

Zimmerman doesn't know if the bill will pass, but he's asking union members and others who support the idea to call their legislators and ask them to do so, too.

For more information about the bill, go online to www.griefbill.orbs.com.

...TriMet stops mediating grievances

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the governor asking for expedited arbitration to get the contract settled.

As Hunt was talking about a possible work stoppage, TriMet board president Richard Van Beveren interrupted, telling him to wrap up quickly, otherwise, he would adjourn the meeting.

Board member and Teamsters official Lynn Lehrbach attempted to ask a question, but Van Beveren refused it.

"I'm not recognizing your question," Van Beveren said.

"You're shutting me off, Mr. Chairman?" Lehrbach asked.

"Yes," Van Beveren retorted, saying that the board had already allowed several members to speak. "I think we have given ample time, we have been very patient, and you keep going, Jon."

In a heated exchange, Hunt said union members would not sit idly by and watch TriMet continue to break the law. He said they will attend every board meeting, with everyone signing up to testify to make sure their voices are heard.

"If we have to shut this city down, that's exactly what we're going to do," he said.

The union raised two other issues at the board meeting. The first concerned the safety of Type 4 light-rail trains. The union contends that the framing of the cab creates significant visual obstructions for operators, resulting in them "driving blind."

"Until these serious safety defects are corrected, we will demand that TriMet indemnify all operators from any disciplinary actions arising out of situations which implicate the Type 4

problems," said ATU Financial Secretary Evette Farra.

The second issue was over a recent notice by TriMet that it will no longer mediate grievances that are scheduled for arbitration.

Hunt said it is irresponsible for management, which is claiming poverty, to refuse to mediate workplace disputes. He said the average cost to mediate a grievance is \$300, while the traditional arbitration process costs TriMet about \$22,000 per grievance. Currently there are 91 grievances pending.

"TriMet is now forcing these cases

to full-blown arbitration at an estimated cost to taxpayers of over \$2 million, while they could resolve the same 91 grievances through mediation for a total cost of around \$27,300," Hunt said.

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 Vancouver, WA
 360-574-8181

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 482 Lancaster Dr. NE,
 Salem, OR
 503-391-8920

Official Notices

BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS 114

Executive Board meets 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22, followed by a 10 a.m. General Membership meeting at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE TIME CHANGE.**

BOILERMAKERS 500

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 12, at 2515 NE Columbia Blvd., Portland.

BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CEMENT MASONS 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CENTRAL OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 28, at UA 290 Training Center, 2161 SE 1st St., Redmond.

COLUMBIA-PACIFIC BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, Feb. 8 and Feb. 15, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, in the Executive Boardroom.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, at Northern Wasco County PUD, 2345 River Road, The Dalles. Sound and Communication Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, in the Meeting Hall.

Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, in the Dispatch Lobby.

Vancouver Meeting, 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at Round Table Pizza, 5016 NE Thurston, Vancouver.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, Feb.

Home foreclosure workshop Feb. 25 at UFCW Hall

Union members facing foreclosure on their homes can attend a free workshop Feb. 25 at United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 Hall, 7095 SW Sandburg St., Tigard.

The workshop, "Getting Traction," is presented by Good Grief America, a nonprofit organization based in Central Point, Oregon. It has held two workshops at the Machinists Hall. Both were well attended.

"Past attendees have reported that all who are pushing back are getting positive results," said Nancie Koerber who, along with Mark Thomas, founded Good Grief America. The couple is sharing their experiences in dealing with foreclosure. They do not give legal or tax advice, Thomas said, but focus more on providing moral support and help direct homeowners who are feeling lost in the shuffle.

The workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is required. To do so, call 541-690-8334 or go online to www.goodgriefamerica.ning.com.

16 and March 2, in the Executive Boardroom.

Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21, in the Executive Boardroom.

General Membership Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, in the Meeting Hall. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for sandwiches.

Your Business Manager Meeting, Saturday, Feb. 26, in the Meeting Hall. Call Kierstan at 503-889-3662 for an appointment.

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 28, in the Meeting Hall.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The following deaths have been declared - No. 2255, Scott Blackmore; No. 2256, James E. Reeves; No. 2257, Kenneth W. Lickar; No. 2258, William R. Stevenson; and No. 2259, Roger L. Funston. Death Assessments are \$1.50 per month per active member.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** There will be nominations for delegates to the convention at this meeting.

FIRE FIGHTERS 452

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

FIRE FIGHTERS 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

INSULATORS 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 11.

Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

IRON WORKERS SHOPMEN 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

LABORERS 483

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Municipal Employees

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

LABORERS/VANCOUVER 335

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

LABORERS 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at Joe Edgar Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

LANE COUNTY LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

LANE, COOS, CURRY & DOUGLAS BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

Executive Board meets 5 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7, at the Union Office 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 24, at the Union Office, 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

MARION-POLK-YAMHILL LABOR COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at 2110 State St., Salem.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 10. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22.

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

MID-COLUMBIA LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

MULTNOMAH COUNTY EMPLOYEES 88

General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, preceded by 6 p.m. stewards meeting.

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at the AFSCME union office.

Meetings are held at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 28, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

OFFICE & PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES 11

Membership meets 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 8, at Laborers/Teamster Hall, 2212 Andresen Rd., Vancouver.

The purpose of the meeting: Conduct the general business of the local and accept nominations for open Officers & Executive Board seats: Vice President *, Secretary-Treasurer*, Recording Secretary,

Sgt-at-Arms, 4 Executive Board Seats, 1 Trustee.

Nominations may be made by mail, email or at the meeting; acceptance at meeting or by prior written or electronic medium. Elections will be in April, if necessary. *Delegate to Int'l Convention.

OPERATING ENGINEERS 701

District 1 & 5 members meet 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 4, at 555 E. First St., Gladstone.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, at Holiday Inn Express, 285 Peninger Rd., Central Point.

NEW LOCATION

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

District 1 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at Longview Electricians Hall, 1145 Commerce Ave., Longview.

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at the Hermiston DTC Office, 148 Main St., Hermiston.

District 4 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at The Comfort Inn, 351 Lone Pine Dr., The Dalles.

PAINTERS 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 16, at Insulator's Hall, 11105 NE Sandy Blvd. 2nd Floor, Portland.

Website: www.iupatlocal10.org

PORTLAND CITY & METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEES 189

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22.

Meetings are held at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

ROOFERS & WATERPROOFERS 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 3.

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

SALEM BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 3, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 9, Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at Sheet Metal Local 16 Hall, 1887 Laura St., Springfield.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 2, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

SOUTHERN OREGON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

SOUTHWESTERN OREGON CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 24, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the ILWU Local 4 Hall, 1205 Ingalls St., Vancouver, Wash.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 18, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area meetings resume in Sept. Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 29, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 22, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 24, at 950 Industrial Circle, White City.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 21, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area meetings resume in Sept. Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the Eureka Training Center, 634 California St. Eureka, CA.

The Dalles area meetings resume in Sept. Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the Eureka Training Center, 634 California St. Eureka, CA.

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The Dalles area meetings resume in Sept. Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 23, at the Eureka Training Center, 634 California St. Eureka, CA.

Workers' Rights panel to hear about postal service crisis

The Portland-area Workers' Rights Board, a project of Jobs with Justice, will hear testimony from U.S. Postal Service customers, mailers, letter carriers, clerks, and industry experts about customer service, closures, financial woes, working conditions and ideas for positive change, Monday, Feb. 21 at 6 p.m. at Augustana Lutheran Church, 2710 NE 14th Avenue, at Knott St.

A panel of elected officials, a minister, academic, small business and a public interest research group will listen to the testimony and make recommendations to the public, postal management and Congress.

For more info, call 503-752-5112.

Oregon AFL-CIO to hold legislative summit Feb. 5

The Oregon AFL-CIO will hold a legislative conference for unions from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 5, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

The conference will review organized labor's priorities for the session and explore opportunities and strategies, as well as meet and talk with labor-friendly legislators and elected officials. Gov. John Kitzhaber has been invited.

Registration is \$25 and covers tuition and materials, lunch, and refreshments. Registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 28. Registration received after that date will be accepted on a space available basis.

For more information or to register, call the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon at 503-412-3721 or from Eugene call 541-346-5054.

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Retiree Meeting Notices

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, followed by an 11 a.m. General Membership meeting, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE DATE CHANGE.**

All retirees are welcome to attend.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at Elmer's Restaurant (Parkrose), 10001 NE Sandy Blvd, Portland. For additional information, please call Glenn Hodgkinson at 503 656-0028.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Retirees and wives meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 2, at Denny's Restaurant, 15815 SE 82nd, Clackamas.

FLOOR COVERERS 1236

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

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at Izzy's Pizza, 1307 NE 102nd Ave., Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 14, at 1125 SE

Madison #100G, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 15, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 1-800-521-5954 ext. 226.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 10, at The Spaghetti Factory, 18925 N.W. Tanasbourne Dr., Hillsboro.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 17, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Union spy finds kidnap ring in second mystery novel

The Portland of 1902, recreated by a local union attorney, was prime ground for the practice of shanghaiing

Using the pen name S.L. Stoner, union attorney Susan Stoner has published the second installment in her series of historical mystery novels.

Drawing on meticulously researched local history, the books follow fictional trade union spy Sage Adair as he meets up with actual historic individuals in the Portland of the early 1900s. In the first installment, *Timber Beasts*, Adair uncovered a timber fraud, learned of the savage exploitation of loggers, and pursued a murderer. *Land Sharks*, the second in the series, finds Sage in a search for two disappeared union organizers, which leads him to discover a true-to-life Portland underground where the unwary are shanghai — kidnapped and placed in serv-

ice aboard ocean-going ships bound for whaling regions or China.

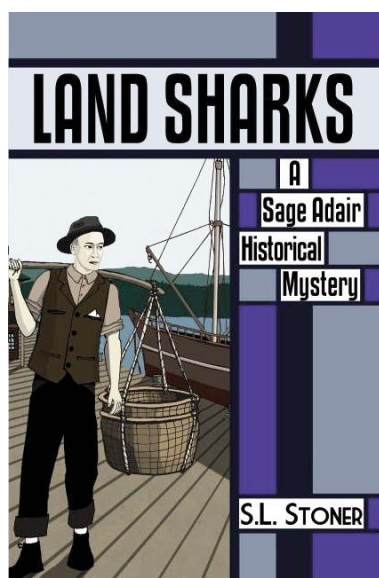
Stoner, who is staff attorney at Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757, researched the book by reading period accounts and digging through the archives of the San Francisco Maritime Museum.

“By the end of the book, readers will know more about the history of shanghaiing and the major players involved in it than most historians,” Stoner told the Labor Press. “Shanghaiing is how [business leaders] kept their shipping costs down.”

The book also contains an account of canneries on the Columbia River, and of a real-life massacre of Chinese gold miners in Eastern Oregon.

Stoner will read from *Land Sharks* Thursday, Feb. 10, at 7:30 p. M., at Powell’s Books on Hawthorne, 3723 SE Hawthorne Blvd.

The two books are available at most local bookstores, including Barnes and Noble, Borders, Murder by the Book,



and Annie Bloom’s Books, as well as union-represented Powell’s Books, the Oregon Historical Society, and online at www.yamhillpress.com.

Stoner said *Dry Rot*, a third book in the series, is in the final editing stage; it relates true tales of construction fraud in city contracts that led to a bridge collapse. *Black Drop*, a fourth book, deals with the 1903 visit to Portland of then-President Teddy Roosevelt, and is several chapters from completion.

Gay trade unionists in Oregon to form Pride at Work chapter

Pride at Work, a group for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered union members, is forming an Oregon chapter, with a founding meeting 6 p.m. Feb. 22, at the 1125 SE Madison offices of UNITE HERE Local 9.

The group is one of a handful of AFL-CIO-sponsored “constituency” groups, and as such will have a representative on the Oregon AFL-CIO General Board. Pride at Work is open to members and staff of AFL-CIO-affiliated unions as well as partner organizations, such as unions that are part of the Change to Win labor union federation.

The group is intended to be a bridge, to make sure gay civil rights issues are

considered in the labor movement — and that economic and class issues are considered within the gay civil rights movement.

Several dozen people attended the group’s Jan. 27 kickoff meeting. At the founding meeting Feb. 22, Oregon Pride at Work is expected to get official status as an AFL-CIO-chartered organization, and elect officers.

...Middle class shrinking fast

(From Page 2)

According to a recent study by the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

When unions were stronger in the middle part of the last century, American workers wages rose as they became increasingly more productive. But today, as union strength has decreased, this link has broken down: even though American workers grow increasingly more productive, their wages have stagnated. At the same time, more and more income has become concentrated at the very top of the income scale.

The fall in unionization rates is not just bleak news for the ranks of the unionized, it’s also bad news for the rest of the middle class.

(Karla Walter is senior policy analyst, and David Madland is director of the American Worker Project at the Center for American Progress Action Fund.)

...Union membership

(From Page 2)

wage of \$856, or 88.5 percent of the union men’s median of \$967. Nonunion women had a median wage of \$639, or 81 percent of the \$789 median weekly wage for men.

Walker said the BLS data are based on the Current Population Survey of 60,000 households nationwide, a rolling survey conducted over the year. He said it does not include the self-employed or retirees who are still paying dues — or people for whom their unionized job is their secondary job. Those workers are counted as nonunion.

Willamette Heritage Foundation releases book depicting mid-century millworkers at Crown Z

The Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation has released a limited edition book on the history of millworkers at Crown Zellerbach in West Linn.

“1.09 an Hour and Glad to Have It — Conversations with 17 mid-20th Century Crown Zellerbach millworkers,” was written by Sandra Hickson Carter, and is based on an oral history project conducted by the non-profit Heritage Foundation that tells the story

of paper mill work in the 1930s-’90s through the voices of 17 Crown Zellerbach “career” workers.

It contains many stories of unionism and recollections of strikes at the mill, as well as workers’ descriptions of the hard industrial jobs and workplace conditions prior to safety equipment and safety committees.

One of those interviewed was Harold King, a former union official with the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers (AWPPW) and secretary-treasurer of the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council. King worked for his union’s members through some of the most turbulent times in the industry’s history of labor/management issues and inter-union competition.

King died last June at age 88.

Carter, through a couple of small grants, helped with the oral interviews and produced two documentaries that are occasionally aired on local cable channels. She donated her time editing and publishing the anthology of mill work stories — fulfilling the foundation’s goal of putting mill history into the hands of the communities of Clackamas County.

The 424-page paperback book is available at Clackamas County libraries. It can also be purchased for \$35. You can order a copy by calling the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation at 503-650-9570 and leaving a message, then sending a check to: Book, P.O. Box 635, West Linn, OR 97068.

All proceeds go to support the project, which was grant-funded by the

Clackamas County Cultural Coalition and the Kinsman Foundation.

For more information, go online to www.willamettefalls.org.

Unionists will bowl for MDA on March 13

Mark your calendars for Sunday, March 13, and the 22nd Annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

This year’s event will again be held at Hollywood Bowl, 4030 NE Halsey St., Portland. Registration starts at noon, with bowling under way at 1 p.m.

Money is raised by pledges and a silent auction. The goal this year is to have 18 different unions fill the 18 reserved lanes. Prizes will be awarded to high and low bowlers, to top fundraisers, plus a special prize for the bowler who wears the “funkiest hat.”

Since its inception, Portland-area labor unions have collected \$311,828.75 for MDA. Money goes to buy wheelchairs and braces for children, as well as research and summer camps.

For more information, call Jim Cook, president of Letter Carriers Branch 82, at 503-493-5903. To donate items to the auction, call Debbie Burbank at 971-404-5384.

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The GOSH Conference is a joint effort of the ASSE
Columbia-Willamette Chapter and Oregon OSHA.

Fishing Derby to benefit Guide Dogs of America

The inaugural Salmon Fishing Derby fundraiser for Guide Dogs of America will be held Saturday, April 2, at the Red Lion Hotel on the River — Jantzen Beach.

The fishing derby is sponsored by the International Association of Machinists District Lodge W24.

Guide Dogs of America was founded in 1948 by the Machinists Union to train and provide guide dogs

for the visually impaired.

The Machinists also host an annual golf tournament fundraiser in late summer.

Registration for the Salmon Derby is \$200 per person and includes an experienced guide service, bait, tackle and lunch. The limit is four persons per boat. Prizes for biggest fish will be awarded.

Sponsorships are available starting at \$100 for a bronze all the way up to \$1,500 for a diamond. Sponsors will be recognized at the event and in a special ad in the Northwest Labor Press.

Registration deadline is Feb. 15. For more information, call Dan Sass at 503-238-5550, extension 117, or e-mail him at dan@iamdl24.org.

All proceeds benefit Guide Dogs of America.



BENJAMIN LAWVER

Lawver to join AFL-CIO as Western field representative

Benjamin Lawver, political director for the Washington State Labor Council, has resigned from the Council effective Jan. 31 to join the national AFL-CIO staff as senior field representative for the Western Region, a position formerly held by Janet Conner.

As senior field representative, Lawver, 33, will represent the interests of the national AFL-CIO with state federations, central labor councils, local union affiliates and constituency groups in Washington, Oregon and Alaska. His primary responsibility will be to help build state and local labor federation structures that will strengthen and grow the labor movement.

"I see myself as a humble servant, willing to do whatever I can to help out," Lawver said. "I'm excited about the opportunity."

Lawver was raised in Kettle Falls in Northeast Washington. Since joining the WSLC staff in May 2006, he has helped to build the labor federation's Labor Neighbor grassroots political program, establish DIME (Don't Invest in More Excuses) political action committee, and revise the Council's legislative voting record and assessment process.

He is a member of Office and Professional Employees Local 9.

Lawver will travel extensively throughout the region, but will be based in Seattle. He can be reached at 206-419-7287.

Oregon AFL-CIO forms group for the unemployed

The Oregon AFL-CIO is forming a new group for unemployed workers, Oregon Wants to Work. The group is part of a national AFL-CIO effort to organize unemployed workers, not in a traditional union sense, but along the lines of the AFL-CIO's community affiliate, Working America. But unlike Working America, Oregon Wants to Work is expected to meet monthly to serve as a support network for unemployed workers to share resources, tips, and ideas. The group will also serve as a collective voice to advocate politically for jobs, and unemployment benefits.

Oregon AFL-CIO spokesperson



Roofers say 'Shame on Fred Meyer'

Bud Williams, Russ Garnett, James Barrett, Kelly King and Vance Ricks — out-of-work members of Roofers Local 49 — hold an informational picket line Jan. 26 at the Fred Meyer store under construction in Wilsonville. The roofing contract was awarded to nonunion Mountain States Roofing of Idaho, even though several local roofing contractors bid on the job. Garnett said Mountain States Roofing pays its workers about \$15 an hour, about half of what a local union roofer earns, not including fringe benefits. The 12-man nonunion crew is expected to be on the project for more than a month. "We could certainly use the work," Garnett said. Local 49 represents about 450 workers in Oregon and Southwest Washington. It is experiencing nearly 35 percent unemployment. Roofers are handing out fliers at the busy corner of Southwest Boones Ferry and Wilsonville roads informing residents of the out-of-state contractor. The union is asking union members to call the Kroger-owned Fred Meyer and let them know they are unhappy with its use of out-of-state contractors and workers. The phone number is 503-232-8844. The general contractor is CSI Oregon.

Elana Guiney said the intent is to create a movement of out-of-work union and nonunion workers — to re-create community, and to testify at the legislature any time lawmakers discuss issues of employment and unemployment.

Oregon Wants to Work will have its founding meeting 5:30 to 7 p.m., Wednesday, Feb. 16, at the PCC Workforce Center, 5600 NE 42nd Avenue (42nd and Killingsworth) in Portland. The Northwest Oregon Labor Council, Labor's Community Service Agency, and Working America are also taking part.



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Filibuster lives on in U.S. Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — A campaign backed by organized labor to curb the power of Senate minorities to halt virtually every piece of legislation by filibustering against it went down in flames Jan. 27.

After eight hours of debate on rules changes, reform proposals backed by unions failed not only to get the 67 votes Senate leaders decided they needed, but didn't even get a majority of lawmakers.

Instead, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky), promised to voluntarily limit filibusters on motions to debate bills and on presidential nominations.

Some Democrats voted to keep filibusters going, remembering when they were in the minority — or fearing they would be again. In 2012, Dems must defend 21 Senate seats, compared to 10 for the GOP. Democrats now hold a 51-47 seat advantage, plus two Demo-

cratic-leaning independents, who are also up for election in 2012.

The defeats on the filibuster means a 41-person minority in the 100-member chamber can still bring business to a halt, or prevent measures from being debated, even if those measures have majority support.

One proposal that was voted down was by Senate Labor Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), that would permit limited filibusters, but with smaller majorities needed to shut them off each time a vote was called. He lost, 84-12.

Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), and Tom Udall (D-N.M.), argued for changing vote requirements and said a senator who wants to filibuster must actually stand and talk against it until 60 votes shut down debate. Right now, just the threat of 41 votes for the filibuster is enough to keep it going — even when no one is talking. Their plan lost 51-46.

Curbing the filibusters has been a particular cause of Communications Workers of America President Larry Cohen, chair of the AFL-CIO Legislative Committee. Cohen has seen filibusters and threats block everything from the Employee Free Choice Act to extensions of unemployment benefits. A minority bloc uses the threat of a filibuster to strong-arm majorities into agreeing to their demands. That's how McConnell combined the Bush tax cuts for the rich with the extension of unemployment benefits late last year.

"We commend Harkin, Merkley and Udall for their efforts, and we and the 60

other progressive groups who worked on these changes will continue our efforts to get real reform," CWA said.

In a statement, Merkley said: "We now have 46 senators on record supporting making the filibuster real. We will build on that support in the future

to restore deliberation to this chamber. Until the Senate returns to being a deliberative body where debate is encouraged and obstruction is rare, I'll continue waging the fight to make the institution serve the American people the way it ought to."

GREED AT A GLANCE

Corporations are beginning to release their CEO pay figures for 2010, and last month brought the official news that Walt Disney CEO Bob Iger pulled in \$28 million last year, a 30 percent boost over his 2009 take-home. The Disney board calls the generous boost for Iger a reward for his "exceptional performance" amid a tough economic environment. Disney, overall, netted \$4 billion in 2010 profits. Yet the company is still insisting that Disney workers making under \$9 an hour take on as much as another \$500 per month in added health care costs ...

Disney workers have been pushing, unsuccessfully, the last two years for an advisory shareholder vote on the company's executive pay. But that vote will now be coming anyway. The Dodd-Frank financial reform signed into law

last summer requires all publicly traded companies to give their shareholders a "say on pay," and last month the federal Securities and Exchange Commission okayed new regs that put that mandate into actual effect. The nation's top companies, under the new rules, will have to hold advisory shareholder votes on top exec pay at least once every three years and also disclose, in their SEC filings, "whether and how" they took the vote results into account. Some firms already let shareholders take advisory votes on top pay. Last year, at about one in every 10 of these firms, shareholders turned thumbs down on the pay plans presented.

(From Too Much, an online weekly publication of the Institute for Policy Studies; editor@toomuchonline.org.)

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At City of Portland

AFSCME 189 elects Hussey president

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

In ballots cast at members' workplaces Jan. 25, Debbie Hussey, a long-time union steward at Portland's 9-1-1 call center, outpolled fellow state executive board member Carol Justice to win election as president of American Federation of State, Local, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 189. Hussey won by a margin of 189 votes.

The union represents workers at the City of Portland and the City of Cornelius. Local 189 has just under 900 members, and is down by several hundred because of layoffs in recent years.

Hussey, 51, grew up in a strongly union family in outer-Eastside Portland. Her father worked for the phone company and her grandfather was a machinist. Every year as a child, she attended the union picnic at Oaks Park.

"We were raised that you never crossed a picket line," Hussey told the Labor Press.

After working a nonunion office job at Freightliner, Hussey got a job in 1994 as a 9-1-1 dispatcher at the City of Portland Bureau of Emergency Communications (BOEC). She stayed, and became lead worker and coach. She got involved with her union, became a steward in 1998, and eventually a trustee on the Oregon AFSCME Executive Council. She continues in that position.

As president, Hussey said she hopes to forge a collaborative relationship with City management. City of Portland workers just signed a three-year contract, so she won't face major contract bargaining during her two-year term. Instead she plans to recruit members to get involved in the union, recognize members for the work they do, and undertake community outreach — to counteract the present mood of public resentment against union members and public employees for having comfortable pay and benefits.

"Union people are working families," Hussey said. "That's middle class America. I don't think that having a home, food for our families, and health care, are luxuries."

The public has been led to think of public workers as "bureaucrats," easy to hate in the abstract, Hussey said, but that attitude is harder to maintain when public workers have faces and

personalities, and are known as such by their neighbors and friends.

"It's important the citizens know who we are, and see what we do," Hussey said. "We're people who go to work and do good work every day."

Hussey, a mother of six, has one grandchild, and lives with her husband in Oregon City.

She succeeds three-term Local 189 president Carol Stahlke, who decided to run for local organizer — a less time-consuming position that frees up time for her to care for her two-year-old.

Local 189 members elected other officers as well: Mike Gipson, executive vice president; Victoria Hellman, secretary-treasurer; Joanne Hampton, recording secretary; Stephanie Babb, chief steward; and Kathryn Alsworth, communications editor. All candidates except Hellman ran unopposed.

None of the offices are considered paid staff positions, though some come with a stipend.

James Hester has long been the full-time union rep for Local 189. But the retirement last month of Local 328 rep Dave Raahahn at Oregon Health and Science University led to a reshuffle at Oregon AFSCME Council 75: Multnomah County union rep Val Andreas assumed Raahahn's OHSU workload, Hester replaced Andreas, and Rob Wheaton, who represented workers at several non-profits, now represents Local 189 members at the City of Portland.



Debbie Hussey, pictured at a work station in the City of Portland's 9-1-1 call center, was sworn in Jan. 25 as president of AFSCME Local 189. (Photo by Don Loving, courtesy of Oregon AFSCME.)

OPEN FORUM

Daughter turns anger against asbestos into action, joins ADAO

To The Editor:

In 1982 my father, Stan "Swede" Grimberg died of mesothelioma, and I would never be the same. Justice knows no timeline.

With excellent medical care and his fighting spirit, my father lived a painful 18 months. He wanted to know his granddaughter, but he left us six days before her first birthday.

I was introduced to the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization (ADAO) last year, and I now have a place to turn my anger into action.

I am dedicated to this organization doing its vital and important work. To do that work, it takes leadership, volunteers, and money.

Please join me in honoring those we have lost, and those who are still fighting, for their lives. When you make an ADAO family tribute program donation or register for the ADAO 7th Annual Asbestos Awareness Conference, "Asbestos: Impact on Public Health, Environment, and the Economy" to be held April 1-3 in Atlanta, you are supporting advocacy, education, and outreach.

The northwest region has lost many tradesmen and women to asbestos diseases such as mesothelioma and asbestosis. Anything you can do to help me spread the word to help this organization raise awareness, and keep doing its vital and important work is really appreciated.

My heart soars as I honor my Dad. He is not forgotten. He would be proud.

For more information about the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organiza-

tion, go online to www.adao.us.

**Ann Samuelson
Jewell, OR**

(Editor's Note: Stan "Swede" Grimberg was a 28-year member of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 and owner of Astoria Plumbing.)

Korean trade deal mirrors NAFTA; is bad for workers

To The Editor:

If the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)-styled Korean Free Trade Agreement had the "unprecedented support of business and labor," as President Obama declared in his State of the Union address, he would not have to ask Congress to pass it. It would have fallen into the category of a no-brainer.

The truth is, the Korean agreement has very little labor support. It was originally negotiated by former President George W. Bush, but never passed by Congress because it was modeled after NAFTA, which has been a disaster for U.S. workers and their families. Obama should fix or repeal NAFTA before working on any other trade deals. I remember that as one of his campaign promises when he ran for president.

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I ♥ worker rights

For Valentine's Day, choose union-made, shun sweat-shop products

Love may be priceless, but not all Valentine's Day gifts are created equal. With a union, the workers who make them can bargain for decent wages and working conditions; without one, not so much. The good news is that consumers who care about humane working conditions can buy candies and chocolates made by workers represented by a union — Bakery Confectionery Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM).

One of the oldest and best-known Valentine's candies — pastel sugar hearts with quirky sayings — is made by members of BCTGM Local 348 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The so-called Sweethearts, made by New England Confectionery Company (NECCO) since 1902, are also the nation's top-selling Valentine's candy. Just be sure to look for the Sweethearts brand; otherwise the pastel hearts you're buying are imitators made by nonunion competitors.

Three national brands sell Valen-



tine's candies manufactured by members of BCTGM Local 125 in the San Francisco Bay area: Ghiradelli Chocolate Company sells Valentine's Day chocolates in tins, boxes and packs; See's Candies sells Valentine heart boxes with hard, soft and nut chocolate candies; and Jelly Belly Candy Com-

pany sells Valentine's Day gift boxes, tins, and packs.

But the tradition of the dozen red roses, sad to say, is tricky from the standpoint of worker rights. Most cut flowers sold in the United States are

grown in Colombia and Ecuador by workers — mostly female — who are exposed to unhealthy pesticides, paid poverty level wages of about \$8.25 a day, and forced to work long hours in the period leading up to Valentine's Day. Colombian flower worker unions aren't asking U.S. consumers to boycott their products, says Steven Coats, executive director of U.S. Labor Education in the Americas Project (US/LEAP) — a union-supported worker justice group. But there are no certification systems in place to tell consumers that flowers were produced by workers treated humanely.

Meanwhile, the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) is urging the public to take a stand — on Valentine's Day — against forced labor and child labor in the West African cocoa industry. Most major chocolate companies have committed to using independent, third-party programs to certify that

their cocoa suppliers comply with international labor standards, ILRF says. But Hershey continues to lag behind the industry. ILRF is asking supporters to send a "Valentine" card to Hershey CEO David West, and to watch or host a screening of "The Dark Side of Chocolate," a documentary exposé available online for a \$6 suggested donation. Visit laborrights.org to take part in the campaign.

Some Hershey's Kisses and other Hershey's chocolates are still made by members of BCTGM Local 464 in Hershey, Pennsylvania. But increasingly, the company's products are made in Mexico or in nonunion plants in the United States, says BCTGM spokesperson Corrina Christensen.

The same goes for Nestlé Chocolate, which makes some products at BCTGM-represented factories in Illinois, but others at nonunion facilities and in Mexico.



Portland Auto Show is eco-friendly

A solar/electrical vehicle charging station — the first of its kind in the Pacific Northwest — was unveiled at last month's Portland International Auto Show. Also known as an Energy Transfer Merchant (ETM), the charging station prototype was designed by newcomer EV4 Oregon and installed by Portland's Christenson Electric, a union company signatory with IBEW Local 48. The charging station will be built by Oregon companies, using Oregon products, as a kit that can be assembled anywhere quickly. The charging station includes a quick charger that electric car owners can plug their vehicles in with a "shade" made of solar panels. The solar energy collected from the panels can be used to run the station's lights during the night or it can be used to help charge the electric cars, depending on how the station is set up. The first station in Portland will be located at a Portland Development Commission parking lot on NE Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., and will be fully operational in March. "People who drive electrical cars don't want to use coal or petroleum to charge them. We're using energy that was on the surface of the sun eight minutes ago," said Chad Biasi, managing member of EV4 Oregon. "We were thrilled to partner with Christenson Electric on this project and use their extensive knowledge and expertise." Biasi is pictured above left with Lynn Frank, Five Stars International, a consultant to EV4 Oregon; Hans van der Meer of EV4 Oregon; and Dean Skaar, vice president of business development at Christenson Electric. They are standing next to a quarter scale model of the charging station.

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