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Portland school custodians could get millions in back pay

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

The return to work of 330 Portland Public Schools (PPS) custodians is still full of uncertainty, six months after the Oregon Supreme Court declared that their 2002 firing was illegal. When they'll return, whether they'll receive back pay, and what their pay and benefits will be, remain to be determined.

Four years ago, the school district's leaders decided to contract out the work, citing the need to save money during a budget crisis. Portland Rehabilitation Center (PHC), a private nonprofit, proposed to do the work more cheaply by paying janitors as little as half what the in-house custodians made. PHC's workers were represented by the same international union — the Service Employees (SEIU) — but different locals. The school custodians were represented by School Employees Local 140 and PHC janitors are members of SEIU Local 49. After the custodians were fired, Local 140 folded and later was merged with SEIU Local 503, where it represents school cafeteria workers.

SEIU fought the decision to contract out the custodians for six months, denouncing it as inhumane. Now, it looks like the district's willingness to sacrifice the custodians may end up costing it — and taxpayers — tens of millions of dollars.

In 2002, Chad Debnun, chair of the Custodian Civil Service Board, warned the PPS Board that contracting out was illegal — it violated a 1937 state law that required the district's custodians to be hired through civil service procedures using open competitive examinations to assure custodians are "fit for service and pose no danger to school children."

Attorney James Coon of Swanson, Thomas & Coon made the same argument, and added a common sense suggestion: Since the union planned to challenge the legality of the contracting out, the district should hold off until the matter was settled. Otherwise, it would be liable for back pay and other

costs.

The Board didn't heed Debnun or Coon, and voted 5-2 to contract out.

Because the district's in-house custodial budget was \$15.6 million a year, and its bids from PHC were \$9.6 to \$10.8 million a year, the district says privatizing saved \$5 million a year, or \$20 million over the four years.

But that figure ignores an important fact: With the loaded gun of privatization pointed at their heads, the bargaining team for the custodians union had agreed to compensation cuts that totaled \$2.4 million a year. So to go ahead with privatization was to save \$2.6 million a year — a little over half a percent of the district budget — and only if the district prevailed in court.

Which it did, at first. The Employment Relations Board, and Multnomah County Circuit Court, and the Oregon Court of Appeals agreed with the district's argument that the civil service law governed only how "employees" were to be hired, and because PHC's janitors weren't district employees, the law didn't apply.

But Coon and Local 140 kept appealing, all the way to the Oregon Supreme Court, which ruled 4-3 in December 2005 that such an interpretation would make the 1937 law mean-

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Trojan cooling tower imploded

On May 21, in 10 spectacular seconds, the cooling tower at the Trojan nuclear plant in Ranier, Ore., was imploded by explosives, falling 499 feet to the ground. Crews from Controlled Demolition, Inc. ignited almost 2,800 pounds of dynamite, causing the tower to buckle, lean to the side and collapse upon itself. Union work crews drilled the holes for the dynamite, and are now removing all the debris. The steel inside the tower will be recycled and the concrete is being crushed into 3-inch pieces or smaller and will be left on the tower site. Over the next three years, PGE plans to demolish several facilities at the site, part of its 1996 decommission plan approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. (Photo courtesy of PGE)

Laborers bolt AFL-CIO; SEIU leaves Oregon state fed

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — After repeated postponements, the Laborers Union formally told the AFL-CIO that they would leave the federation effective June 1. The announcement came in a May 22 letter from Laborers President Terry O'Sullivan to AFL-CIO President John Sweeney — a letter that only had to cross I Street in Washington, D.C., from the union's headquarters on one side to the AFL-CIO headquarters on the other.

The Laborers are one of seven unions that formed the Change to Win federation last July, unveiling it during the national AFL-CIO convention in Chicago. The other six — the Service Employees, Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers, UNITE HERE, the Carpenters and the United Farm Workers — left the AFL-CIO then, or soon after the conven-

tion.

Like the others, the Laborers pulled out of the AFL-CIO because they dispute its larger emphasis on politics. While the AFL-CIO, in response to complaints from the CtW unions, has put more money into organizing, it also plans to spend \$46 million on politics this year. By contrast, CtW's smaller \$16 million federation budget is supposed to be devoted largely to helping its member unions and their organizing drives.

But on the ground, locals of the seven CtW unions have worked closely with AFL-CIO-affiliated state federations and central labor councils, especially on politics. To help aid that joint work the two federations agreed on Solidarity Charters, with unions or their internationals paying per capita dues to stay in state feds and labor councils for the remainder of 2006.

It is not yet clear whether Laborers local unions will be allowed to sign Solidarity Charters.

The Laborers Union has 500,000 workers nationwide with another 200,000 retirees and associate members. It has five locals with approximately 2,350 members in Oregon, including Portland area Municipal Employees Local 483, Portland construction Locals 296 and 320, Local 121, with offices in Bend, Eugene and Hermiston, and Central Point-based Local 1400. There are 13 locals in Washington, including Vancouver Local 335 and Longview Local 791.

In another development, on May 20, SEIU Locals 503 and 49 voted to end their charter agreements with the Oregon AFL-CIO. The two unions accounted for more than 42,000 members at the state labor federation.

Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



George Brown, a legend

GEORGE BROWN, a legendary lobbyist and political strategist for the Oregon labor movement, gets the spotlight in this edition as a new member of the Labor Honor Roll, which the Northwest Labor Press started to salute labor stalwarts of bygone years.

The Labor Honor Roll provides recognition to men and women of the past who are not eligible for the Labor Hall of Fame sponsored by the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council because the Hall of Fame was established to honor retired unionists while they are still living.



GEORGE BROWN

BROWN SERVED the Oregon AFL-CIO as its elected director of political education and legislation from the 1956 merger of the state councils of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations until his retirement in 1969. Prior to the merger, Brown was the executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon CIO State Council, a post he was first elected to in 1949. That year he took over the the state leadership of the CIO from Stanley Earl, who left to undertake an assignment in Korea for the United States Government. Upon Earl's return from Korea, he was

elected as a Portland city commissioner in 1952 and continued at City Hall until his death in 1970.

BROWN AND EARL had started working together at the old Multnomah Plywood Co. sawmill in 1934; Earl became president with Brown as vice president of the AFL Lumber and Sawmill Workers local union at the mill. Later, because of dissatisfaction with their union's national leadership in the big 1935 strike to organize the Northwest lumber industry, Brown and Earl broke away and helped form the International Woodworkers of America as a CIO union. Brown became an IWA organizer, achieving his first big success in Longview, Washington. In a series of bargaining rights elections there, the IWA got 5,000 members in two days. That had a two-fold significance: It was the key to organizing the rest of the industry in the Northwest, and it provided the votes needed within the union to oust Communist-leaning leaders.

FOR 14 YEARS, Brown dedicated his energies to the rough-and-tumble job of organizing logging and sawmill workers. He spent some of his organizing years in the South, where he insisted that the locals he organized be racially integrated. Brown did some of his organizing in Oklahoma, where he was born on Nov. 6, 1902, which was five years before it became the nation's 46th state. While trying to organize a sawmill in a small Oklahoma town, Brown was alerted by some of the mill's workers that the bosses and their goons were planning to tar-and-feather him and chase him out of town. Forewarned, Brown left before the gang got ready to look for him.

Brown, who eventually became the IWA's director of organizing, did extensive organizing in Canada. When he left the IWA job in 1949 to head up the State CIO Council, the Portland-headquartered IWA had grown from a membership of 15,000 to 150,000.

IN THE YEARS prior to the 1956 merger of the AFL and CIO, Brown and his AFL counterpart James T. Marr (profiled in the last issue), cooperated on politics and legislation so they could be more effective in representing workers' interests. That cooperation reaped rewards, as was noted in the Marr article, in the mid-1950s elections of Democrats to federal and state offices.

Over the years, George Brown put in countless hours as a spokesman for organized labor and a representative of workers' interests while serving on governmental and civic boards, commissions and committees. Among his major contributions was service on a committee appointed by Portland Mayor Terry D. Schunk that eventually saw the formation of the TriMet Transit System as a public agency which replaced a privately-owned bus line.

(Continued in Next Issue)

Providence bosses frown on state official's role on 'Fair Elections' panel

After Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury agreed to look at the union election rights of workers at Providence Health Systems, he got a pair of threat letters from Providence and its industry association.

Service Employees International Union Local 49 has been engaged in a massive organizing campaign at several Providence hospitals in the Portland area for over a year, but the union has been hesitant to file for a union election unless Providence commits to a set of ground rules. In campaigns in other states, Providence — a Catholic-owned nonprofit health system — has used legal avenues under the National Labor Relations Act to mount vigorous anti-union campaigns that sometimes slow or defeat union drives.

Bradbury had agreed to chair a May 25 hearing of a "Fair Election Oversight Commission," made up of members of the activist group Jobs with Justice's Workers Rights Board. The Board is comprised of religious, political and community leaders who agree to use their moral authority to advocate for workers' rights, usually with letters to employers and sometimes in unofficial but quasi-judicial "hearings" that result in recommendations for neutrality.

As secretary of state, it's Bradbury's duty to ensure free and fair elections for public office.

But intervening in a union election was going too far, said Providence CEO Russ Danielson.

"Your decision to insert the office of

secretary of state into a private organization's labor issues is both perplexing and disturbing," Danielson wrote in a May 17 letter to Bradbury. "There simply is no merit, precedent, or legal foundation for your attempts to use your office as a vehicle for attempting to legislate the union and labor issues of a private company."

"It would be ineffective and legally questionable to attend the meeting of a commission that — by law

— should not exist. We officially request that you disband this commission.... My belief is that responsible Oregonians would strongly encourage you to refocus your energies (and the taxpayer's dollars) on the official duties prescribed to you as Oregon's secretary of state."

CEO Andrew Davidson, president of the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, sent a similar letter the same day, inquiring about what statutory authority Bradbury had to convene such a meeting. The letters can be viewed in their entirety on the Northwest Labor Press Web site at www.nwlaborpess.org/2006/6-2-06WRB.html

"They vaguely threatened, without directly saying it, that I've broken the

law," Bradbury said. "If that's their response to me, a statewide elected leader, it makes me wonder what it's going to be like for the workers who want to form a union."

'If that's their response to me, a statewide elected leader, it makes me wonder what it's going to be like for the workers who want to form a union.'

Undeterred, Bradbury went ahead with the hearing, and in a phone call to Danielson and a letter to the hospital association, explained why: Democratic principles are not limited to elections for public office. Just as he advocates for democratic principles

when he meets with foreign dignitaries, Bradbury said, he encourages public support for the right of Providence workers for a free and fair election.

The hearing at the Portland Building was packed wall-to-wall with Providence workers, union leaders and pro-labor activists. SEIU brought Providence workers from New York, California, and Yakima, Wash., to testify along with workers from the Portland area. There was a note-taker, and simultaneous translation into Russian and Spanish.

"NLRB [National Labor Relations Board union certification] elections look more like the discredited practices of rogue regimes abroad than like anything we would call American," testified

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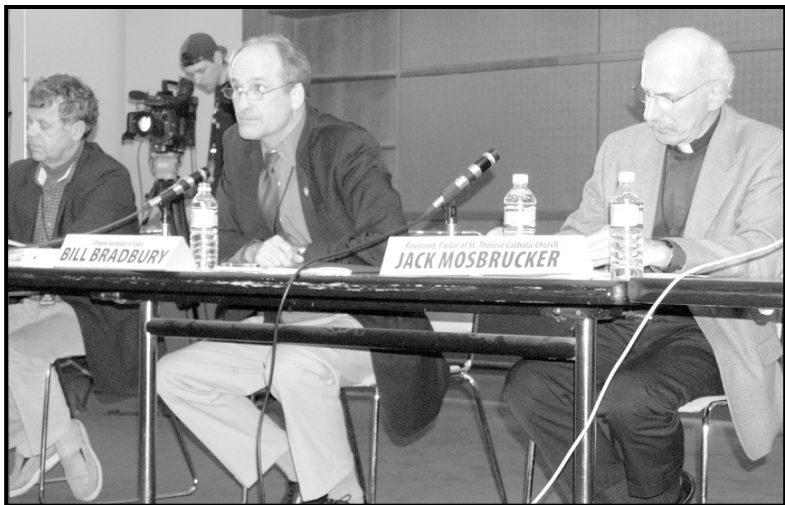
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Oregon Secretary of State Bill Bradbury (center) listens to testimony from workers who want a union at Providence hospitals. Bradbury chaired a "Fair Elections Oversight Commission" hearing under protest by Providence's CEO.

...Workers seek neutrality

(From Page 2)

University of Oregon professor Gordon Lafer, who co-chairs the Labor Caucus of the American Political Science Association. That's because, under the law, the party in power — management — has every electoral advantage over the opposition party — the union. Management has complete access to the voters, and can compel them to attend anti-union informational meetings. Unions don't have that access, and don't even get a list of employees until 20 days before an election, on average.

Portland Providence workers complained of shortstaffing and unanswered petitions to management. One brandished a stack of paper she said was anti-union literature she'd received.

Workers from other Providence locations told of free lunches and personal loans to workers during union campaigns; pro-union workers, including a priest, being fired; anti-union films shown at mandatory-attendance staff meetings; union literature torn down from bulletin boards; and restrictions on workers' rights to talk about the union on break or off the clock.

Besides Bradbury, the Commission included Reverend Alcena Boozer of St. Philip the Deacon Episcopal Church, family physician Jill Ginsberg,

Portland State University economics professor Mary King, Reverend Jack Mosbrucker of St. Therese Catholic Church, former Oregon House majority leader Dick Springer, and Rabbi Joseph Wolf of Havurah Shalom.

After hearing testimony, the group issued a resolution calling on Providence management to agree to fair election ground rules: Allowing open discussion in the workplace, promoting truthful and positive communications, and refraining from the use of anti-union consultants, forced-attendance anti-union meetings, or legal delays.

Providence was invited to attend the hearing and offer their own testimony, but Danielson declined.

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Asbestos Workers 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 7. Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, June 9. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 27, followed by a 10:30 a.m. General Meeting, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland.

Boilermakers 500

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

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Carpenters 1388

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at 276 Warner-Milne Rd., Oregon City.

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the ILWU Local 4 Hall, 1205 Ingalls St., Vancouver, Wash.

Columbia-Pacific Building Trades

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesdays, June 6 and June 13, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Electrical Workers 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Monday, June 26. Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, in the Executive Boardroom.

Residential Unit Meeting will now be combined with the General Membership Meeting 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 28.

General Membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 28, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. pre-meeting buffet.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, at the Wasco PUD, 2345 River Rd., The Dalles.

Coast Unit meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

EWMC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, in the Executive Boardroom.

Sound & Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 21.

Electrical Women of Local 48 meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 20 at NIETC, 16021 NE Airport Way.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays, June 7 and June 21.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: The following death assessments have been declared for June and are payable at 50 cents each: No. 2109, Neal O. McDowall; No. 2110, Michael S. Jost; and No. 2111, Leo R. Olson.

Electrical Workers 280

Executive Board meets 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at 32969 Hwy. 99E, Tangent, OR.

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, June 8, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Joint Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at the Central Electrical Training Center, Tangent.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 8, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland. NOTE NEW LOCATION.

Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

Fire Fighters 452

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir, #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, June 8, 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir, #300, Portland.

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, June 9, at Old Country Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

Laborers 483

Municipal Employees

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

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, June 5, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, preceded by a 7 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Executive Board meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, June 5, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at SEIU Local 503, 1730 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

Metal Trades Council

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, June 12, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Mid-Columbia Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

Millwrights & Machinery Erectors 711

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, June 3, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland, for the purpose of nominations of delegates and alternates to the PNWRCC, reading of the bylaws and a vote by secret ballot to approve the bylaws.

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, June 24, preceded by a 9 a.m. Executive Committee meeting, at the Carpenters Local 247 Hall, 2205 N. Lombard St., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is "Special Called" for the purpose of elections of delegates and alternates to the PNWRCC.

Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, June 15, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Multnomah County Employees 88

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

General membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards' meeting, at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** Nominations and elections of delegates to the AFSCME 37th International Convention in Chicago will be held at this meeting.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, June 26, in at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Operating Engineers

Members meet 1 p.m. Saturday, June 3, at Gladstone Union Hall, 555 E. First St., Gladstone for the Semi-Annual Meeting.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

PLEASE NOTE: Local 10 is now accepting nomina-

tions for Trustee. Please call the hall if you are interested at 503 257-0589.

Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, June 23, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, at 6025 E. Burnside Portland.

General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, June 8. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, July 6.

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

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

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

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 8, at 1174 Gateway Loop, Springfield, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. VOC meeting.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, June 14, at Abby's Pizza, 7480 Crater Lake Hwy., White City.

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, June 15, at the Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

PLEASE NOTE: There will be a **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS** at the regular Portland union meeting held at 6 p.m. June 13, 2006 at the Sheet Metal Training Center at 2379 NE 178th, Portland for nominations of all SMWIA Local 16 elected officers. Potential candidates refer to the SMWIA Constitution, Article 12, Section 3, regarding qualifications. To be eligible, June dues must be paid in full not later than May 31, 2006.

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 1:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday, June 19, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, June 13, at the South-

ern Oregon Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, June 5, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, June 16, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Astoria area members meet 6 pm Wednesday, June 21, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, June 27, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 19, at the Eugene #290 Hall.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, June 20, at the Moose Lodge, 1577 Oak Ave., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at 650A Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at the Roseburg Labor Temple, 742 SE Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, June 19, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 21, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E. St., Eureka, Calif.

United Steel Workers 1097

Members meet 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, June 7, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Union Hall, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

Confab aims to help health care workers prevent back injuries

The second annual Health Care Ergonomics Conference will be held Monday through Thursday, June 26-29, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland,

Participants will learn and share information about best practices in dealing with employee and patient safety issues. Keynote speakers will be Audrey Nelson, director of the VA Patient Center of Inquiry, and Bill Marras, director of biodynamics laboratory at Ohio State University.

An exhibitors event will feature a variety of ergonomics-related needs in health care, from computer workstations and devices to housekeeping and material handling equipment.

The conference is presented in cooperation with the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the Oregon Coalition for Health Care Ergonomics and the Oregon Nurses Foundation.

For more information, or to register, log on to www.orosha.org or call toll-free at 888-292-5247, option 1.

Korean War Veterans

organization is looking for new members. The group meets the 4th Tuesday each month

(June 27), at noon at Milwaukie Elks Lodge, 13121 SE McLoughlin Blvd.

For more information, call Max Loucks at 503-286-1464

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, June 8, at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, June 22, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

BAKERS 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, June 22, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, June 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 13, at Elmer's Parkrose Restaurant, 10001 NE Sandy Blvd., for brunch. Plans for

summer outings and trips will be discussed at the business meeting to follow. Please bring your suggestions. For more information and reservations, call Vera Larson 503 252-2296.

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, June 20, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

LINOLEUM LOCAL 1236

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Friday, June 9, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland

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Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 20, at the AFSCME office, 6025

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Retirees and spouses meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, June 8, at Amelia Wanous' home, 6919 NE 102nd Ave., Vancouver, WA. Small donation to the hostess who will provide lunch. Please RSVP by June 1. 503 730-0789 All retirees and friends welcome.

TRANSIT 757

Retirees meet 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 7, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd, Portland.

UFCW 555

Retirees meet noon Tuesday, June 27, at Heidi's Restaurant, 1230 NE Cleveland, Gresham.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland and Eugene area meetings have been canceled for the summer. Meetings resume in Sept.

Enron executives Kenneth Lay and Jeffrey Skilling found guilty

Enron founder Kenneth Lay was convicted May 25 of all six counts against him, including conspiracy to commit securities and wire fraud. Former Enron Chief Executive Jeffrey Skilling also was convicted of conspiracy to commit securities and wire fraud in one of the biggest business scandals in U.S. history.

"I am thrilled, absolutely thrilled! This finally settles things," said Debbie Perrotta on hearing the verdict. Perrotta, along with 21,000 of her co-workers, lost everything when Houston-based Enron went belly-up five years ago in a maze of bogus offshore companies, lies and fraud.

Among the hardest hit were some 1,000 Electrical Workers Local 125 members employed at Portland General Electric, a subsidiary of Enron.

While Enron's top managers sold \$1 billion of their stock before they announced that the company had lied in its financial reports, PGE workers were locked out from changing the stock allocations in their 401(k) pension plans. When they finally were allowed access the stock was at trading at 26 cents a share. Workers lost millions of their pension dollars.

Local 125 filed grievances under the union contract, arguing that PGE had failed to act prudently to protect workers pensions. The grievance got to step

two of the process, but then PGE decided the issue was outside the scope of the grievance process and successfully filed suit against the union, asking a judge to rule that the issue was not subject to arbitration.

During the nearly four-month trial, Lay and Skilling claimed there were no crimes at Enron and blamed investor loss of confidence and media reports for the company's downfall, according to news reports.

Perrotta says she feels vindicated that Lay and Skilling were convicted. "I know they will probably appeal. But let them use all their money on lawyers. I'm so glad the jury didn't believe them. They were so sure of themselves on the stand."

Perrotta has no sympathy for Lay's reported financial problems. Lay said he made more than \$100 million in cash and stock gains in 2000. Since Enron collapsed, Lay said he and his wife sold three houses in Galveston, Texas, and three in Aspen, Colo. Lay, whose defense has cost nearly \$23 million, said he now is worth negative \$250,000—and still owes \$7.5 million to Enron for money he borrowed from a corporate revolving credit account.

"I don't feel sorry for him at all," says Perrotta, who was unable to make mortgage payments after she lost her job at the same time her husband lost

his. She says the Enron disaster bears an important lesson for workers. "I want to tell workers that you have to watch out for yourself and fight for your rights."

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said, "The collapse of Enron exposed the culture of greed that permeates corporate America, often in wanton disregard of workers' and investors' rights and interests."

Enron's collapse took with it more than \$60 billion in market value, almost \$2.1 billion in pension plans and 5,600 jobs.

"The Enron bankruptcy exposed major vulnerabilities in working families' retirement security and the dangers of privatizing Social Security," Sweeney continued. "Enron also showed the fundamental flaws in CEO pay and how executive stock options can create a strong incentive to fraudulently manipulate company stock prices."

"The conviction of Chairman Kenneth Lay and CEO Jeffrey Skilling shows that executives cannot lie their way out of the mess that they created. However, it must be remembered that the collapse of Enron did irreparable harm to working people, and no amount of jail time can fix that."

(Editor's Note: James Parks, a writer for the national AFL-CIO Now Web blog, contributed to this report.)

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Westlund can't win, but he can spoil the race for governor

Oregon's political pundits are calling this a three-way race for governor. If that's the case, put Ben Westlund on the bottom of your tri-fecta ticket, because he's a sure thing to finish third.

Westlund has been getting a lot of attention from the media for his defection from the Republican Party and his announcement that he will run for governor as an independent.

But this is a two-way race between Democrat Ted Kulongoski and Republican Ron Saxton. If Westlund gets in, he'll create a photo finish between those two. But Westlund himself won't even be in the picture.

I respect Ben Westlund. But he's no Jesse Ventura, the professional wrestler who muscled his way to an upset win of the Minnesota governorship as the Reform Party candidate in 1998. Westlund doesn't have that kind of name recognition, nor does he have even a minor party to support him. And, as a Republican who recently abandoned his party, Westlund is not likely to pick up many votes from that party's rank and file.

This means that Westlund will have to compete for votes from unaffiliated voters and disaffected Democrats, which is hardly a prescription for success when you have a polarizing candidate like Saxton in the race.

Saxton is running to the far right on issues of importance to most union members, Democrats and independents who work for a living and worry about their families' well-being. He opposes continuing the voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments to our minimum wage. He'd leave workers to fend for themselves with little or no help from government, opposing limits on usurious payday loans and questioning

whether there's any role for government "to deliver or pay for health care." And, for workers rattled by recent attacks on retirement benefits in the public and private sectors, Saxton's proposal for public employees won't be reassuring: He'd fire all of them if that's what it takes to terminate the pensions that the Oregon Supreme Court ruled are protected by the state constitution.

(Memo to public employees: Kulongoski cut Public Employees Retirement System benefits, but fought to keep a solid defined-benefit pension plan intact for new hires; Westlund voted for the PERS cuts and for even steeper cuts for new hires; and Saxton wants to blow up the PERS system for current employees and new hires alike. There are real differences among these candidates, even on a grudge issue like PERS.)

Westlund can try to run between Saxton and Kulongoski on working family issues. But, on many of those issues, he'll be slogging over squishy ground. What's the point of defending cost-of-living adjustments to the minimum wage, which Westlund promised to do last session, when he also backed the restaurant association's demand for a reduced minimum wage for tipped workers? That's not the kind of principled stand that voters want from an "independent" candidate.

Westlund gets credit, as does Kulongoski, for opposing the artificial spending limits endorsed by Saxton that would create more budget crises for our schools. But Kulongoski comes to the race with bragging rights for securing the revenue dividends we're now getting from a rebounding economy. This gives Kulongoski the resources to be the man with a plan for improving our schools, expanding college aid to middle-class families and stabilizing

the Oregon Health Plan, which should provide the edge he needs to outflank Saxton...unless Westlund gets in the way.

Westlund can run, but he can't win. Based on voter registration and turnout patterns, the votes cast for governor this fall will come almost equally from Democrats (40 percent) and Republicans (40 percent) with the balance from unaffiliated and minor-party voters (20 percent). Saxton and Kulongoski will win large majorities of their parties' rank and file. So Westlund will have to build his campaign on the voters who are unaffiliated or disaffected, who tend to wander all over the political track. It will be difficult for Westlund to secure the large majorities among these voters that Saxton and Kulongoski can deliver from their parties' registrants. And, even if he could, there aren't enough votes there to make up the difference.

Remember Ross Perot's impressive showing in Oregon's 1992 presidential election? He got 24 percent of the vote — a solid third place finish.

Westlund can't win, but he can affect the outcome of this race, more likely by pulling votes from Kulongoski than from Saxton, if only because Republicans are more lock-step loyal to their candidates.

If he runs, Westlund could end up rewarding the extremists in his former party who want workers to live with smaller paychecks, buy their own health insurance and pay for their own retirement benefits. That would be an ironic legacy for a politician who is campaigning against "extreme partisanship."

Tim Nesbitt is a former president of the Oregon AFL-CIO.

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UA #290 obtains \$3.60 an hour raise over next 3 years

Plumbers and Fitters Local 290 have come to terms on an economic package covering the last three years of their six-year collective bargaining agreement with the Plumbing and Mechanical Contractors Association.

In March, members of the union unanimously rejected the contractor association's proposal for a \$4.01 an hour cut over the remaining three years of the pact. Conversely, the

union was seeking a \$6.15 increase.

Under terms of the contract ratified in 2003 (which called for a wage re-opener in 2006), all disputes would be settled by the national Industrial Relations Council for the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry. The council consists of four business managers from UA locals and four signatory contractors.

The council met last month in Sa-

vannah, Georgia, where it ruled unanimously for an increase of \$3.60 an hour over the remaining three years of the Local 290 contract.

Plumbers and fitters received a 65 cent raise June 1, and will get another 35 cents on Oct. 1, 2006; 65 cents on April 1, 2007; 60 cents on Oct. 1, 2007; 75 cents on April 1, 2008 and 60 cents on Oct. 1, 2008.

Local 290 members will meet each

February to decide how to distribute the annual increase.

As of June 1, 2006, the total hourly

wage and benefit package for plumbers and fitters was \$49.28. By Oct. 1, 2008, that will increase to \$52.53.

NLRB rulings could curb union organizing

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The National Labor Relations Board will soon issue rulings on three cases that could handicap labor's ability to organize health care workers and others.

Two cases concern the supervisory status of nurses at Oakwood Healthcare Inc., Taylor, Mich., and Golden Crest Healthcare Center, Hibbing,

Minn., the Wall Street Journal reported May 25. A third case concerns production and maintenance employees, including load supervisors who work in the shipping department loading trucks at Croft Metals Inc., McComb, Miss.

The AFL-CIO expects that in the next few months the NLRB will broaden the definition of supervisors to include more workers, effectively

limiting how many employees unions can organize. The AFL-CIO says the future of several hundred thousand workers — including tens of thousands of unionized nurses with assigning duties — is at stake, the Journal said.

All five members of the NLRB were appointed by President George Bush.

Oregon Lottery workers vote to stay nonunion

SALEM — A majority of workers at the Oregon Lottery are betting they'll be better off on their own — without a union.

In mail-in ballots counted May 23, 127 Lottery workers voted in favor of joining the largest state employees union, Service Employees International Union Local 503, while 165 voted against. Turnout was 96 percent.

Leslie Frane, the union's executive director, said the result was an example of time and delay working against workers who want to organize.

SEIU said a narrow majority of workers had signed union authorization cards as of mid-November, but Lottery director Dale Penn held off on union recognition, saying some card-signers had changed their minds.

Pro-union workers decided to press ahead, and filed for a union election March 14. In the two months that elapsed before ballots were counted, a committee of anti-union employees formed, which ran an energetic campaign. As many as two dozen workers who had signed union authorization cards ended up changing their mind and voting no.

Robert L. Tunstall dies at 64; retired Postal Workers Union officer

Retired American Postal Workers Union Secretary-Treasurer Robert L. Tunstall died May 12 at his home in Gresham, Oregon. Tunstall, who had diabetes, was 64.

Tunstall's service with the APWU began in 1963 at the Portland Post Office, when he was "fresh out of the Marine Corps."

In 1974, Tunstall was elected president of the Portland-area Local. He also held elected positions as national representative (1976-1978), national vice president/business agent for the Seattle Region (1978-1985), assistant director, Clerk Division (1985 to 1992), and director, Clerk Division (1992-1998). In

1998 and again in 2001, he was elected secretary-treasurer. He retired in early 2004.

Tunstall is survived by his wife of 42 years, Rae Ann Tunstall, son Brett Tunstall, daughter Brooke Payne, father Harold C. Tunstall, brothers Ron and James Tunstall, grandson Matthew Martinez and granddaughter Leah Payne.

A Celebration of Life memorial service was held on May 20.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Adventist Health Hospice, 5835 NE 122nd Ave, Suite 135, Portland, OR 97230.



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...PPS custodians will start returning to work

(From Page 1)

ingless.

PPS attorneys asked the Court to rethink its decision. Instead, in April, the Court reiterated it: firing the custodians violated the law. Trouble is, the Court didn't say what the district had to do next.

Cathy Minberg, PPS chief operating officer, told the Labor Press the district expects to recall the custodians starting in July. The current PHC contract expires at the end of June, and won't be renewed. The district will hire an extra manager to oversee the transition. As to wages and benefits, that's not clear; the budget approved by the school board in April did not include money above what was going to PHC.

Minberg said when the custodians return, the district will work to bargain a new contract with the union. As for back pay, Minberg maintains the district doesn't owe any—a position she says PPS attorneys have validated.

To attorney Mark Griffin of Griffin and McCandlish, that stance is preposterous. Griffin is representing the fired custodians in a federal lawsuit that was

put on hold awaiting the outcome of the Civil Service Board lawsuit. Because it's now been established that PPS fired its custodians illegally, Griffin said, the district must make the custodians "whole." That means: offer them reinstatement, pay four years of back pay (minus any wages they've earned in that time), make four years of pension contributions, and reimburse them for any medical costs that would have been covered under their health insurance.

"The school district is going have to follow the law eventually," Griffin said.

On May 20, the fired custodians met once again at the Portland office of SEIU Local 503, and were given forms to fill out to get their claim started. A steering committee elected in December is trying to locate all the custodians, and determine how many are willing to go back to work for PPS.

"There's a whole lot of trust issues right now," said custodian Grant Walter, former president of now-merged SEIU Local 140. "I used to be a very loyal district person. And even I don't trust them."



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