

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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PORTLAND, OREGON

FEBRUARY 20, 2015

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

First Unitarian recognizes a union

Church leaders balk at first, but pressure from the congregation prompts a change of heart

By Don McIntosh
Associate editor

Senior minister Bill Sinkford was more than a little surprised Nov. 18, when 11 of his employees at First Unitarian Church of Portland entered his office to present signatures demanding union recognition.

First Unitarian is one of Portland's most progressive churches, with an activist congregation and a profusion of committees on social, economic, and environmental justice. Its parent organization, the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, teaches that evil originates with "unjust social and economic conditions."

But when church employees announced their plan to tackle unjust economic conditions by signing up with Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901, they got a chilly response from Sinkford and two other church executives: Minister Tom Disrud and Administrator Kathryn Estey.



Jason Chapman, Nicole Bowmer, Josh Mong and Kate Fagerholm fell in love with their jobs at First Unitarian Church of Portland, but were shaken last November when their efforts to unionize were opposed. Fagerholm left her job at the church as of Feb. 6. Church leaders did an about face the next day, and agreed to recognize the union.

The day after the delegation went to Sinkford's office, then-Local 7901 president Madelyn Elder got a phone call from Corbett Gordon — a member of the First Unitarian congregation who's also a management-side attorney at Tonkon Torp law firm. Gordon told Elder that U.S. labor law doesn't require churches to bargain with unions, and First Unitarian wouldn't be recognizing Local 7901.

But that response missed the point, says labor attorney Cathy Hight, who advised the Unitarian workers. "The whole point of this exemption is to allow churches to organize their labor relations in accord with church doctrine," Hight told the Labor Press. Just because churches don't have to recognize a union doesn't mean they can't. Clerical employees at

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John Kitzhaber resigns amid 'media frenzy'

John Kitzhaber's Feb. 13 resignation as Oregon governor generated expressions of sympathy from top labor leaders, who have looked on him as an ally.

The resignation followed a decision by the state attorney general to open a criminal investigation into whether paid advocacy work by Kitzhaber's fiancée Cylvia Hayes crossed legal lines.

"I am confident that I have not broken any laws nor taken any actions that were dishonest or dishonorable in their intent or outcome," Kitzhaber said at the press conference announcing his resignation. But Kitzhaber said he was troubled that a person can be "charged, tried, convicted and sentenced by the media with no due process and no independent verification of the allegations involved." An "escalating media frenzy" had "reached the point of no return," Kitzhaber said, and he became a liability to the cause.

Kitzhaber included efforts to defend workers' union rights among his proudest achievements: "We have stood by our working men and women steadfastly supporting collective bargaining and

the right to form a union," he said.

"If you look at what he's accomplished in the last 12 years, it's pretty phenomenal," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain (referring to the three full terms Kitzhaber served as governor). "When the Republican far right took over the Legislature, he was 'Dr. No.' He stopped this state from being Wisconsin-lite. He took a hostile Senate and House and did everything he could to push a progressive agenda. The bottom line is: More people have health care, and better health care, because of John Kitzhaber."

Kitzhaber was an emergency room doctor when he entered the Oregon House in 1978. He served a two-year term in the House and three four-year terms in the Oregon Senate. As Senate president, he led passage of the legislation that created the Oregon Health Plan — which stretches federal Medicaid dollars to cover more low-income Oregonians than the minimum required by federal guidelines.

Then, as Oregon governor from

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Portland airport: a highly desirable workplace, for managers

After unions advocate for low-wage workers, the Port hires a consultant at \$197 an hour to develop a 'social equity' policy

By Don McIntosh
Associate editor

What do you get when you ask high-paid managers to draft a proposal to improve life for low-wage workers? A whole lot of nothing.

For nearly a year, UNITE HERE and Service Employees International Union (SEIU) have pressed the Port of Portland to do something to improve wages and job security for hundreds of low-wage workers at Portland International Airport (PDX) —

baggage handlers, wheelchair assistants, fuelers, cabin cleaners, and concessions workers.

What Port executives came up with — after months of "stakeholder" meetings — was five pages of management-speak, in which the public agency promises next to nothing. The document, presented to the Port of Portland Board of Commissioners Feb. 11, is full of sentences like these: "Integral to ensuring that airport workers, whether employees of the Port of Portland or the many contractors and concessionaire workers at PDX, are safe, healthy and able to sustain high quality work is the vigilant attention to rights and benefits afforded them. To

this end the Port will monitor and enhance existing programs as well as chart paths to new benefits not currently in place."

Say what? You can take a look at the document yourself at ow.ly/JdesJ. We did our best to boil down the verbiage, and found just two tangible improvements:

- The Port will make it easier for employers to offer subsidized bus passes to workers.
- The Port might make a computer available for workers to search for new jobs.

The other bullet points in the 1,600-word document range from vague to meaningless: The Port will "continue" to do a variety of things it's already doing;

it will "partner with state agencies" to tell workers how to sign up for Obamacare; it will "join with" the City of Portland and the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries to tell airport employers about sick leave; it will make lease-holders submit written plans on how to avoid "disruptive labor strife;" it will require contractors to detail the "minimum level of working conditions" they themselves set for employees; and on and on. There are even bullet points touting past achievements — like last November's airport job fair for pink-slipped concessions workers. The one promising item would come in 2016, when the Port would include "wages

and benefits, quality of safety training, and career development programs" in its criteria for evaluating and scoring concessions proposals.

The document was written by a cross-departmental group of 14 senior managers from human resources, legal, operations, public affairs, and finance.

Nowhere does the management-written draft admit there's a problem with low wages at the airport. In fact, it lauds PDX as "a highly desirable workplace," and "an excellent working environment in terms of safety, security and opportunities for advancement and mutual success."

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**NORTHWEST
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... Unitarian Union

From Page 1

the Catholic Archdiocese of Portland and at Oregon Catholic Press have been unionized for decades.

And Hight says even the federal rules may be changing. A December court decision more tightly defined the religious exemption: Purely religious workers like ministers wouldn't have the right to unionize, but other workers, like groundskeepers or clerical staff, might.

At First Unitarian Church of Portland, 17 of 19 employees were in favor of the union: five administrative staff and 12 sextons (church workers who clean and maintain building and grounds and operate audiovisual systems). Despite the initial rejection, the union supporters kept on pressing their right to unionize.

"We're doing this because we care that the church walks its talk," said Sunday School administrator Nicole Bowmer, one of the leaders of the union effort. "If we didn't care deeply about our jobs, we would choose an easier road of quitting and leaving."

Bowmer spoke with the Labor Press in November, but said then that she and her co-workers weren't yet prepared to go public, because of concern that church

leaders' refusal to recognize the union would lead some members to leave the church. Two weeks after approaching the church executive team, the workers made the first of several appeals to the church board. When that too went nowhere, in early February they began to contact members of the congregation they believed would be sympathetic, such as David

"After 81 days of being told no, it was the congregants that made this happen."

— Nicole Bowmer

Delk, a member of the church's Economic Justice Action Group, and a retiree of AFSCME Local 3135.

"It's outrageous for a church that values love and human rights to say 'no' to employees' efforts to freely associate by forming a union," Delk told the Labor Press.

With word getting out, Sinkford outlined his stance in a Thursday, Feb. 5, post on his blog: "We do not believe it is in the best interest of our church to have employees cut off from direct communication

with management," he wrote. "We believe that such an action would dramatically change the way we function at the church, taking us from a covenantal and relational basis to a contractual relationship and making the relationships between management and staff more and more adversarial."

That afternoon the Labor Press left a message for Sinkford. Two days later, Sinkford reversed course, emailing employees on Saturday to announce that the church will recognize the union.

"The executive team has weighed the social justice issues and our faith's long-held support of people's right to organize, with how it would affect our ability to serve our congregation and its mission," he wrote in the email, which the workers shared with the Labor Press. "While we continue to question whether unionization is the best way to achieve the goals we share, we also recognize that a continued conflict will drive us further apart and begin to change the nature of members' relationship with their church. Congregants come to First Unitarian to be nourished spiritually and to live out their values in the world, not to be forced to take sides in a conflict."

Sinkford didn't talk about labor in Sunday services the next day, but Bowmer says workers got hugs and thumbs-ups from members of the congregation who had

heard.

"After 81 days of being told no, and then four days of emails from congregants, we know it was the congregants that made this happen," Bowmer said. "They took a stand on the right side of history on workers' rights, and we're grateful to them for taking that stand."

Returning a second call from the Labor Press, Sinkford explained the about face. "The issue was becoming extremely divisive in our community, with people lining up pro and con," Sinkford said. "It just felt like there was more damage potentially being done than we were willing to maintain."

Sinkford said there's no disagreement about the need for raises for the lowest paid employees. For their part, workers say they want better wages for the least-paid, more affordable health care for all, written job descriptions, and the security of having conditions spelled out in a binding agreement instead of subject to change at any time.

"This is new territory for me and for the church and I think for our employees too," Sinkford said. "So we're looking forward to sitting down and getting started."

ONLINE EXTRA

To see the blog post explaining why the church wouldn't unionize, and the email three days later explaining why it would, go to: ow.ly/J1r9j

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... Kitzhaber lauded for labor record

From Page 1

1995 to 2003, Kitzhaber set a state record for vetoes. With Republicans in control of both legislative chambers in 1995, 1997, and 1999, Kitzhaber vetoed bills that would have: established a sub-minimum wage for tipped employees; rolled back the state's family leave law; cut capital gains taxes for wealthy individuals; barred Oregon's farm workers' union from using boycotts; limited non-economic damages for workers killed on the job; and lowered penalties on employers who don't pay employees their final wages. He also used veto threats to dodge attacks on the prevailing wage law and proposals to privatize prisons and mass transit.

Kitzhaber did sign a few bills that ended up giving unionists heartburn, including a 1995 change to the public employee collective bargaining law, a 2003 law pre-empting local minimum wage ordinances, and a 1999 bill that would have moved the state's electric power industry toward deregulation (luckily for Oregonians, the Legislature was able to reverse it after Enron price manipulation caused an electricity price crisis in California's deregulated electricity market the following year).

Kitzhaber also sometimes



HAPPIER TIMES: Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber, with First Lady Cylvia Hayes at his side, signs legislation at the 2013 Oregon AFL-CIO convention.

crossed labor, though he made no secret of it when he did. In particular, he antagonized public sector unions with cuts to public employee pensions. In 2013, he won a law capping retirees' cost-of-living increases, and then convened a special legislative session to make further cost-of-living cuts, while giving away over \$500 million in new tax breaks to owners of certain kinds of businesses.

He alienated teachers unions at times, signing a charter school bill in 2009, and in 2013 a set of education reforms opposed by the Oregon Education Association (OEA). Kitzhaber's support for teacher pay-for-performance proposals were one reason OEA, the

American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, and Oregon School Employees Association endorsed his opponent in the 2010 Democratic primary.

Kitzhaber intervened to bring about labor peace from time to time. He arranged a 2002 meeting that led the farmworkers union to cease its boycott of NORPAC, brokered an end to the 2002 nurses strike at Oregon Health & Science University, and got the University of Oregon administration to drop legal objections to a faculty union in 2012.

In 2014, he got sponsors to withdraw an anti-union right-to-

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IN MEMORIAM

Robert Stanfill

Nov. 26, 1923 - Feb. 4, 2015

Longtime Plasterers Local 82 leader Bob Stanfill passed away Feb. 4 at the age of 91.

Stanfill served 16 years as executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council. He retired from that post in 1984.

Stanfill began his labor union career in 1946 after World War II service in the U.S. Army Air Corps, (now the U.S. Air Force). He used his Federal GI Bill benefits to enroll in Local 82's plastering apprenticeship program.

He was elected business agent and financial secretary of Plasterers Local 82 in April 1956. In that job he was instrumental in establishing a health and welfare plan, vacation plan, and pension plan for the membership. In 1959, he helped form the non-profit Plasterers and Lathers Administration Office, which still exists today.

During his career, Stanfill served as president of the Portland Building Trades Council (later renamed Columbia Pacific BCTC). He served as vice president of the Union Labor Retirement Association, which built the Westmoreland, Marshall and Kirkland Union Manors that

provide affordable apartments for hundreds of retired workers.

He also was among the hundreds of delegates to the 1956 merger convention in Portland that produced the Oregon AFL-CIO.

In the mid-1970s he was appointed by Gov. Bob Straub to the first State Building Codes Advisory Board. The board established a uniform building code for all cities and counties in Oregon.

Stanfill was inducted into Labor's Hall of Fame in February 2001. The Hall was a program of the now defunct Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council.

ROBERT LESTER STANFILL was born on Nov. 26, 1923, in the Rose City and grew up in southeast Portland in a family of eight sons and one daughter. His father, Bill, worked as a union grain miller.

Stanfill is survived by his wife of 42 years, Pinky; children Barbara Hess, Cheryl Hemmingsen, Karen Bilyeu, Jeff Woods, John Petty, Bob Petty, and Laura Abernathy; 16 grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren; and two more on the way. Hemmingsen is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555; Bilyeu is a member of Office and Professional Employees Local 11; and Woods is a member of Plumbers and Fitters Local 290.



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Portland, Feb. 26, 3 p.m.**

Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
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ODOT is conducting a study analyzing whether minority- and women-owned businesses have equal access to contracting opportunities within Oregon's transportation contracting industry and with ODOT's own contracts. The findings will help us operate the federal Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program.

**We're also meeting in Bend Feb. 23, Roseburg Feb. 24
and Salem Feb. 25.** And we'll hold a **webinar Feb. 25.**
Details at www.odotdbestudy.org/.

Meeting locations are ADA-accessible. Accommodations will be provided to persons with disabilities, and alternate formats of printed material are available upon request. Please call (503) 986-4355 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting (statewide relay 7-1-1).



UNION MEETING NOTICES

AFSCME 88 Multnomah County Employees

General membership and stewards meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 18. Meeting agendas may be viewed on the AFSCME Local 88 webpage on the Monday prior to the Wednesday meeting.

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4. Any member in good standing may attend as a non-voting visitor.

Meetings are held at 6025 E. Burnside, Portland.

AFSCME 189

General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24. Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, March 10. Meetings are at 6025 E. Burnside St., Portland.

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, followed by a 9:30 General Membership meeting, at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 204, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** Annual disclosure Questionnaire Form 990, Restatement of Previously Approved Actions and Annual Statement of Affiliations.

Cement Masons 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 12, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland.

Fire Fighters 452

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

Fire Fighters 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, March 12, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

Glass Workers 740

Executive Board members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 5 at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** New Local 740 meeting hall at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, March 9, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at Best Western Plus, Mill Creek Inn, 3125 Ryan Drive SE, Salem.

IBEW 48

Marine Unit meets 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, in the Dispatch Lobby

General Membership Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, in the Meeting Hall. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

RENEW meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 3, in the Executive Boardroom.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, in the Executive Boardroom.

Coast Unit meets 6 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: No. 2419, Dale E. Greeley; No. 2420, William H. Cummings; No. 2421, Steven L. Russell; No. 2422, John P. Miller; and No. 2423, Nathan J. Jackson. The Feb. 2015 assessment is \$1.50.

IBEW 280

Executive Board meets 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 32969 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

Bend Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 12, at the IBEW/UA Training Center, 2161 SW First St., Redmond.

Eugene Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, at the LU 290 Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Salem Unit meets 5:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at South Salem Senior Center, 6450 Fairway Ave., SE, Salem.

Insulators 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 11. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, March 13.

Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

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

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Thursday, March 12. Meetings are at 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland.

Laborers 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 12, at Joe Edgar Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 2, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vancouver.

Laborers Local 483

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 17, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is SPECIAL CALL to take wage allocation proposals.

Executive Board meets 5 p.m. Monday, March 2.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 26. **PLEASE NOTE:** This meeting is SPECIAL CALL to vote on wage allocation.

Meetings are at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Molders 139B

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 19, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Office & Professional Employees Local 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the OPEIU LOCAL 11 meeting hall, 3815 Columbia Street, Vancouver, Washington.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 18, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Website: www.iu-patlocal10.org

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, March 16, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Plasterers 82

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Plumbers and Fitters 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. The following locations will be able to participate remotely in the Regular Business Meeting at 7:30 on the 3rd Friday of every month: Bend, Eugene/Springfield, Eugene, Medford, and Salem.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane St., Astoria.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24. Please contact agent Craig Spjut at 707-496-1767 for location confirmation.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 5. Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 12.

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

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Women of Sheet Metal meet 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 20, at Beulahland, 118 NE 28th Ave., Portland. Children are welcome.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE

Governor's Safety and Health Conference March 9-12

The Oregon Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) Conference will be held March 9-12 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. With more than 160 workshops and sessions, it is the largest event of its kind in the Northwest. General topics covered in-

clude: Safety committee training; safety leadership and workplace culture; ergonomics; and regulatory updates.

178th Ave., Portland. Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 11, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, March 12, at 1887 Laura St., Springfield.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, March 19, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCILS

Central Oregon

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at the Social Justice Center, 155 NE Irving, Bend.

Lane County

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25, preceded by a 6:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at 4735 Liberty Road, S., Salem.

Mid-Columbia

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

Northwest Oregon

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 23, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Southeastern Oregon

Delegates meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, March 12, at the Woodworkers Hall, 3836 Altamont Drive, Klamath Falls.

Southern Oregon

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 10, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 2, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 4, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at the Laborers Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver.

BUILDING TRADES COUNCILS

Columbia-Pacific

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24, at 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vancouver.

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 3, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Lane, Coos, Curry & Douglas

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 25, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Pkwy., Springfield.

Salem

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 5, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy 99E, Tangent.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 12. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24.

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

HAPPENINGS

Union retiree group will hold state convention in Portland

The Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans will hold its state convention Saturday, March 14, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Madison's banquet room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

"How Safe Are We? Even in 'Blue' Oregon" is the theme of the convention. Guest speakers include Chuck Sheketoff, executive director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy, and Rich Fiesta, executive director of the national Alliance for Retired Americans.

Registration is \$12.50 and includes lunch. For more information, go to www.orara.org.

LERA conference March 19

The Oregon chapter of the Labor and Employment Relations Association (LERA) is hosting a Public and Private Employment Relations Conference Thursday, March 19, at the World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon St., Building Two, Portland.

LERA brings together labor, management, neutrals, and academics from the private, public and federal sectors to improve labor-management relations.

Morning plenary sessions will review recent cases before the Oregon Employment Relations Board and the National Labor Relations Board. That will be followed by workshops dealing with bargaining related to the Affordable Care Act, attacks on public sector unions, and a Q & A about the arbitration process.

For more information or to register, go to oregonlera.com.

Building Trades Council urges affiliates to take part in Urban League job fair

The Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council is encouraging affiliates to participate in a Career Connections Job Fair put on by the Urban League of Portland. The fair is Wednesday, April 22, at the Double Tree Hotel, 1000 NE Multnomah St., Portland.

The event provides an opportunity for the construction trades and apprenticeship programs to recruit job seekers. Last year over 600 people attended.

For more information, contact Debra Lindsay at 503-280-2600 (ext. 640), or email to dlindsay@ulpx.org.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 17 at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 1-800-521-5954 ext. 226.

Alliance for Retired Americans Oregon Chapter

The 2015 State Convention will be held 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 14, at the Madison Banquet Room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland. Registration is \$12.50, which includes lunch. For additional information, call 503-675-7764 or go to orara.org.

Bakers 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 26, at Izzy's Pizza, 102nd and Halsey, Portland.

Electrical Workers 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 10, at Russellville Park Plaza, 20 SE 103rd Bldg. West, Portland. For reservations and more information, call Glenn Hodgkinson at 503-656-0028.

Electrical Workers 280

Retirees meet between 11:45 a.m. and noon Monday, March 9, at Hometown

Buffet on Lancaster in Salem (Lancaster Mall). If you have any questions, call Don Ball at 541-327-3388.

Elevator Constructors 23

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 11, at Hometown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland.

Insulators 36

Retiree breakfast 9 a.m. Thursday, March 5, at the Dockside Restaurant, 2047 NW Front Ave., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 11, at the Union Hall meeting room, 11620 NE Ainsworth Circle #200, Portland for a catered lunch.

Plumbers and Fitters 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 19, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Rusty Pipes meet 2 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at Eugene Training Center. Salem Retirees meet at noon Wednesday, March 11, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St. NE.

... Airport worker earns minimum wage, for eight years

From Page 1

The Port may indeed be an excellent working environment, for managers. Executive Director Bill Wyatt's \$394,440 public employee salary puts him in the top 1 percent of income earners. But the point of all the union heat at Port board meetings was to bring PDX closer to other West Coast airports that have raised standards for those on the bottom. UNITE HERE surveyed over 100 concessions workers last fall and found one in four on food stamps, one in six on Medicaid, and a median wage of \$9.30 an hour.

In October, Wyatt told board members he'd bring them a "social equity" proposal to vote on. But in the draft proposal his staff



HOW THE PORT OF PORTLAND WELCOMES PUBLIC INPUT: "Sorry there weren't enough seats for everybody, but we didn't expect such a big crowd," said Port of Portland Commission Chair Jim Carter Feb. 11 as members of the public packed the board room. [The front two rows had been reserved in advance for Port managers.] "Unfortunately, I guess you have to stand," Carter continued. "We are going to take up the 'workplace initiative' last on the agenda." Every month for nearly a year, unionists have waited hours to speak for three minutes to ask the Port for better working conditions for airport service workers.

presented Feb. 11, known as the "PDX Workplace Initiative," the word "equity" was nowhere to be found.

Port of Portland public affairs

director Kristen Leonard, returning a phone call from the Labor Press, explained that the "equity" component will come later in a multi-year process. As

Leonard outlined in her PowerPoint presentation to the board, the "Port Strategic Plan Social Equity Initiative Timeline" will start with a "Social Equity Assessment" this year, followed by "Implement Workplace Initiative Strategy" and "Refine Social Equity Priorities" in 2016. Finally, in 2017, the Port would "Develop Social Equity Plan" and "Begin Implementation."

At the monthly board meetings, Port executives won't stop talking about how Travel + Leisure magazine rated PDX as America's #1 airport (in 2013). But back on the ground, PDX is an airport full of workers who can't afford air travel, or even necessities like health insurance

or electricity. During public comment at the end of the Feb. 11 meeting, Kasil Kapriel, an immigrant worker from Micronesia, told board members that she had to turn to the Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization for help with her electric bill. That's because after eight years at her job helping wheelchair-bound airline passengers, she still makes minimum wage.

"We shouldn't have to depend on public assistance if we work at the nation's best airport," Kapriel told board members.

"Eight years and still at minimum wage? That's disgusting," reacted International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8 President Bruce Holte, one of two union members on the nine-member board.

Board Chair Jim Carter — a former top lawyer at Nike — added his own comment later on: "It's easy to react, 'oh my God, eight years at minimum wage.' Carter said at the meeting. "It's more significant to figure out why that's happening, and in that individual situation, what it is about the workplace, themselves, the culture, the challenges that they have, to address these things. It is not a simple solution."

During Leonard's PowerPoint presentation, Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, the other labor voice on the board, sat with his arms folded.

"As written, it doesn't lift workers," Chamberlain told the Labor Press by phone after the meeting. "And it doesn't recognize that many of the policies at the Port ... come at a cost to the workers."

The board will next meet March 11, and a vote on the proposal is scheduled for April 8.

NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT

To craft a policy to help the poorest, the Port hires a consultant at \$197 an hour

The Port of Portland hasn't done much to help impoverished airport workers, but its new "social equity" initiative is already benefiting some high-paid consultants. Last August, the Port agreed to pay

\$34,869 to a Eugene sustainability consultancy to conduct a "social equity audit." Good Company, the consultancy, will "define and recommend opportunities to further integrate social equity consideration into Port program, practices, partnerships, and planning." The contract for that work specifies a project manager at \$197 an hour, a lead re-

search associate at \$117 an hour, and an administrative support person at \$70 an hour, plus reimbursement for airfare, lodging, and meals as needed. The company will also conduct "external interviews, community outreach, and a presentation to Port" and is supposed to complete the work by April 15.



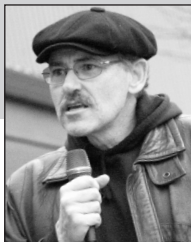
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Who's on our side?

By Tom Chamberlain Oregon AFL-CIO President



Oregonian subscriber no more

I've been a subscriber to the Oregonian since I was 21 years old. It's been the first thing I read in the morning, every day, for decades. Newspapers are important to me: They present the big stories that impact us and determine what we will discuss throughout our day with co-workers, family, and friends. It's a timeless medium that has long served us well.

But these days not all newspapers are equal. And it's for that reason I am no longer a subscriber to the Oregonian.

When considering who has our back, as workers and as Oregonians, we need a statewide newspaper that shares our vision for Oregon's future, one that understands that the minimum wage is too low and that there are serious issues when a workforce's wages require billions of dollars in taxpayer subsidies just to make ends meet.

As reported last month in Labor Press reporter Don McIntosh's article "Up is down," it is very troubling to see a paper like the Oregonian flip-flop on a major issue within the span of a week, especially when that issue is a straight shot at giving thousands of Oregonians a better life by raising our minimum wage.

Sadly, I've grown accustomed to seeing attacks on workers pop up in the Oregonian, and it's made it quite clear whose side they are on. Not ours. Not when ripping PERS, lobbing rocks at our labor movement, and ignoring the issues that Oregon's workers really care about is a common theme.

Newspapers are a hallmark of our society, and we deserve a paper for Oregon's people, not a mouthpiece for the loud opinions of an editorial board that just doesn't understand the economy that we're all living in.

Income inequality is the defining issue of our time. What we do to fight it — whether that be raising wages, forming unions, or working toward a secure retirement — will set the stage for the next generation. I don't want to see my grandkids grow up in a world where 1 percent of the people can create lopsided policies that keep them rich and the rest of us struggling.

Based on their coverage and opinions, I'm convinced the Oregonian doesn't share that perspective. That's not the kind of newspaper I want to read. It's the same reason I don't watch Fox News. There's just too much distortion and not enough balance to their coverage.

I'm done supporting media that vilify workers who are standing up for a fair shot. Anytime a worker speaks out, they should be commended for taking action, for trying to raise the bar, and for inspiring the hopes and dreams of everyone who works for a living. That's why I'm cancelling my subscription to the Oregonian, turning off biased news programs, and seeking the truth from publications who take their journalistic integrity seriously.

Tom Chamberlain is president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, a 120,000-member-strong federation of labor unions.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Who was Bayard Rustin?

By Kenneth Quinell
AFL-CIO NOW blog

Bayard Rustin (1912-1987) has been referred to as the "most important civil rights leader you've never heard of." A key mentor of Martin Luther King, Jr., he served the trade union and civil rights movements for decades as a theorist, tactician and organizer. He conceived the coalition of liberal, labor and religious leaders that supported passage of the civil rights and anti-poverty legislation of the 1960s. And as the first executive director of the AFL-CIO's A. Philip Randolph Institute, he worked to ensure African American workers' rightful place in the House of Labor. Rustin was also silenced, threatened, arrested, beaten and fired from leadership positions because he was an openly gay man in a severely homophobic era.

Rustin was tapped to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, an event for which he was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Organized during a two-month period, Rustin helped create what would be the largest protest in America's history at that point.



The manual that was handed out by Rustin and other leaders of the march made it clear that economic and workers' rights were an integral part of the fight for civil rights for African Americans. The list of demands central to the march included a massive job training and placement program with a living wage, a national minimum wage that gave all Americans a decent standard of living, an expanded Fair Labor Standards Act, and a federal Fair Employment Practices Act that would prohibit discrimination not only by the government, but by employers and unions, too.

LOCAL MOTION → JANUARY 2015

The following are Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces where workers are determining whether to be represented by a union. The thumbs-up symbol means workers will be union-represented. Thumbs-down means they'll be on their own. Decert means a decertification election, where union-represented workers vote whether to remain union. The information comes from the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Election Requests

Employer (Location) Union

ABM Onsite Services (Portland International Airport) IAM District Lodge W24
■ 28 workers – baggage handlers and dispatchers

Election Results

Employer (Location) Union

Curry Community Health (Gold Beach) SEIU Local 503 10-19 🗳️

WASHINGTON

Unions want lawmakers to tie Boeing tax breaks to jobs

A new poll shows more than two-thirds of likely Washington voters support a requirement that Boeing maintain jobs and provide living wages if it's going to get state tax breaks.

In November 2013, a special session of the Washington Legislature extended tax cuts for Boeing through 2040. The \$8.7 billion price tag made it the largest tax subsidy in U.S. history. Boeing started moving work out of state soon after.

Now two unions at Boeing — the Machinists and SPEEA — are calling for legislation to reduce the tax break if in-state employment drops below certain benchmarks, and eliminate it if the company doesn't pay wages equal to the typical Washington worker's paycheck by year three of employment.

The poll, conducted Feb. 2-8 by EMC Research, found that 73 percent of the public supports tying tax breaks to jobs, and 68 percent support establishing a wage standard for companies receiving the tax breaks.

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Indicate which union you are a member of, and send your ad to michael492@comcast.net or by mail to PO Box 13150, Portland OR 97213. We publish the first and third Fridays of each month, and the deadline is one week prior to that.

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Common Sense Economics introduced at Labor Law Conference

The program illustrates why today's economy isn't working for working people, and what steps workers can take to help create an economy that benefits everyone

By Michael Gutwig
Editor-Manager

A capacity crowd at the annual Labor Law Conference in Portland Jan. 30 was introduced to the AFL-CIO's latest program — Common Sense Economics.

With America witnessing the largest redistribution of wealth in its history, the CSE program will bring workers together to talk about how it happened.

"With this information — and knowing how we got to this economy 'of, by and for the 1 percent,' we can then move people to action to build a powerful enough social movement that can actually do something about it," said Bob Bussel, director of the Labor Education and Research Center at the University of Oregon.

LERC is working with the Oregon AFL-CIO to help disseminate the course to workers, unions, and community organizations throughout the state.

The national AFL-CIO has a goal to reach 1 million people.

Bussel told Labor Law Conference attendees that lots of people believe the Great Recession was accidental — the natural byproduct of a free market society. "But this winner-take-all politics and this winner-take-all economy came about because of conscious political



(Photo left) Bob Bussel of LERC gives a presentation of the Common Sense Economics program. (Above) Britt Cornman of Machinists District W24 looks through material at Labor Law Conference



Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian (lower right) waits to speak at Labor Law Conference held Jan. 30 at the IBEW Local 48 union hall in Northeast Portland. Avakian was the keynote luncheon speaker.

choices," he said.

Bussel pointed to the industrial billionaire Koch brothers (Charles and David), who intend to raise a staggering \$889 million from their billionaire buddies to spend in the 2016 election cycle (more than double what they spent in 2012).

That's about as much money

as each political party raises on its own, Bussel said, which makes the conservative Koch brothers a third political party.

"And what is the Koch brothers' agenda?" he asked. "It's an agenda to maintain an economy that is of, by and for the 1 percent."

CSE's goal is to help put workers in the driver's seat so they can start changing the direction of the economy so that it is an economy that works for all workers.

Bussel said union reps from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the Oregon Nurses Association, LERC and the Oregon AFL-

CIO have been trained and are ready to present the course. There is a three-hour program, one- or two-hour versions, even 20 minutes, if need be.

For more information, or to arrange for a presentation, contact Russell Sanders at the Oregon AFL-CIO, russell@orafl-cio.org.

The Labor Law Conference was founded in 1996 by Norm Malbin, who retired last year as general counsel for IBEW Local 48. It is co-sponsored by the Oregon AFL-CIO, Center for Worker Rights, Northwest Oregon Labor Council, LERC, and the Columbia Pacific and Oregon State

Building and Construction Trades councils. Each year it sells out, attracting nearly 300 union officers, staffers, stewards and others who participate in workshops, listen to experts, and learn new ways to better represent their members.

Among the plenary speakers this year were Ronald Hooks, regional director of the National Labor Relations Board, management attorney Rick Liebman, labor attorney John Bishop, Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain, and Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian.

Avakian reported on several bills the Bureau of Labor and Industries supports this legislative session. There's a bill to provide funding for three new investigators in the Wage and Hour Division. Avakian said he will create a team to travel the state spot checking prevailed projects, and businesses with a history of cheating workers. Two other bills would give BOLI cease and desist authority while investigating a wage and hour complaint, and garnishment authority when an employer is found to have cheated their employees out of wages and/or benefits.

Avakian also supports a bill that would give BOLI the authority to enforce an Oregon statute that bans professional strikebreakers.

"There's a statute in Oregon that says it's illegal to be a professional strikebreaker, but there's nobody in charge of enforcing the statute," Avakian said. "A bill this session would give BOLI the ability to step in the middle of professional strikebreakers, find the businesses hiring them, find the strikebreakers that are going to cross your picket lines, and kick them out of our state."

Avakian also supports a raise in the state minimum wage, as well as a series of bills that would eliminate wage disparity among workers.

Labor educator Marcus Widenor will moderate a labor history panel, and labor educator Bob Bussel will moderate a low-wage panel. At the end of the day, Pacific Northwest historian and labor educator Norm Diamond will lead a discussion about the future of labor history in the region.

For more information, contact Verzuh at 541-852-5540, or email him at rverzuh@shaw.ca.



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NW labor history mini conference March 14

Astoria's vibrant and sometimes volatile labor history will be revisited March 14 at a day-long mini-conference at the Columbia River Maritime Museum in Astoria, sponsored by the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association (PNLHA).

"Several of our Oregon mem-

bers identified Astoria as playing an important role in the labor history of the Beaver State, and they wanted to know more about it," said Ron Verzuh of the PNLHA. The Finnish community of radical trade unionists is part of the city's heritage, as are the histories of other ethnic communities, Verzuh said. The celebrated Astoria Labor Temple also speaks to the richness of the region's labor history.

Oregon's new governor, Kate Brown

With John Kitzhaber's resignation, Oregon Secretary of State Kate Brown becomes governor. Like her predecessor, she has a decades-long working relationship with organized labor.

"I've known her since the first day she went to the Legislature," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain. Chamberlain was a lobbyist for the Fire Fighters Union when Brown entered the Oregon House as a state representative for Southeast Portland in 1991. She moved to the Senate in 1997 and served as Senate Majority Leader in the 2005 and 2007 sessions. She was elected secretary of state in 2008 and 2012.

In 2007, Brown helped pass



laws allowing public employees to unionize by majority sign-up, granting state recognition to domestic partnership, and banning discrimination based on sexual

orientation. She also helped pass laws giving nursing mothers the right to unpaid breaks for expressing milk; banning golden parachutes for top school officials; making safety a mandatory subject of bargaining for firefighters; and extending unemployment benefits to workers locked out in labor disputes. As secretary of state, she cracked down on initiative petitioner abuses, and touted the benefits elsewhere of Oregon's vote-by-mail system.

"When we've needed her, she's always been there," Chamberlain said. "I believe she's got a passion for poor folks falling through the cracks."

NATIONAL

Illinois new GOP governor declares war on unions

Last fall, private equity investor Bruce Rauner spent \$27.3 million of his own money and won the race for Illinois governor. Now he's going after unions. Rauner issued an executive or-

der blocking the collection of "fair share" dues by public employee unions, and filed suit in federal court seeking to have his order declared legal. He's also encouraging cities and counties in Illinois to create local "right-to-work" zones —

passing ordinances that would prohibit union contracts from requiring all workers covered to share the costs of representation. It's a legally untested idea that appears to run afoul of the National Labor Relations Act.



Health Care for All rally brings hundreds to Salem

A coalition of more than 100 organizations — including many labor unions — rallied at the State Capitol Feb. 11 where they called on Oregon lawmakers to create a single-payer health insurance system. Bills have been introduced in previous sessions but have gone nowhere. State Sen. Mike Dembrow (D-Portland), a member of American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, is leading the charge. Last session, lawmakers did authorize a study on how such a system could be set up in Oregon. The study was to be funded with private money, and supporters so far have raised about \$50,000 of the \$200,000 needed. Rallygoers on Feb. 11 called on lawmakers to extend the deadline for the study, and have the state match the amount of private dollars raised. Dembrow also re-introduced a bill to implement a single-payer system. SB 631, which has 27 co-sponsors, will get a hearing in March, but it's not expected to pass. "Thank you for sticking with this for so many years," Dembrow told rallygoers. "We have so much work to be done, and it's going to be done in our neighborhoods, churches and organizations, one on one. We have to explain to people that we are talking about a simple system here, so that people do not fall through the cracks and are not denied coverage." Also speaking at the rally were Portland Democratic state representatives Barbara Smith Warner and Jennifer Williamson.

... Kitzhaber legacy

From Page 3

work initiative in exchange for withdrawal by the union-backed group Our Oregon of a set of initiatives to raise taxes on the wealthy and corporations.

Kitzhaber campaigned hard for the ill-fated Columbia River Crossing, even calling a special legislative session in an unsuccessful attempt to get Oregon-only funding of the I-5 replacement bridge after the Washington Legislature failed to pony up matching funds. He also was involved in numerous successful efforts to win infrastructure funding that put Oregonians to work, particularly in the building trades.

John Mohlis, executive secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, called Kitzhaber a longtime friend and advocate for building trades unions, and a collaborator and bridge-builder in efforts to get funding for infrastructure jobs.

"This is an incredibly sad way for him to leave public life after a career where I think he did a lot of good," Mohlis said.

"John Kitzhaber will ultimately

enjoy an excellent historical legacy," predicted Oregon AFSCME in a Feb. 13 statement. "Oregon AFSCME applauds his career, and we applaud him for making this difficult — but correct — decision for Oregon right now."

"Despite recent news and developments out of the governor's office, Kitzhaber's historic terms of service and legacy of healthcare reform and workers' rights advocacy have helped thousands across the state," said leaders of Service Employees Locals 49 and 503 in a joint statement.

State Sen. Michael Dembrow, a longtime leader in AFT-Oregon, said in an email to constituents that Kitzhaber made the right decision.

"His decision to step down really does help us to move on ... my preference would have been to allow the Ethics Commission investigation to play itself out in a thorough, objective manner between now and its March 13 deadline. But events clearly raced ahead of us and compelled quicker action. By the time the governor announced his final decision on Friday morning, it came as a relief — sad, but a relief nonetheless."



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