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OSEA joins American Federation of Teachers

Affiliation means Oregon AFL-CIO membership will jump 20 percent

The independent Oregon School Employees Association announced Feb. 5 it will become an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers.

Because AFT is an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, the addition of OSEA means 20,000 more union-represented workers will be under the umbrella of the Oregon AFL-CIO. That brings the total membership of the state labor federation to about 110,000 workers (and that's not counting the open-to-all Working America community organization, which is now 65,000-strong).

AFT-Oregon represents approximately 12,500 school employees and health care professionals. The national union has 850,000 members.

Dating back to 1996, when OSEA and AFT-Oregon signed a "no-raid" mutual assistance agreement, the two organizations have developed a close relationship.

OSEA staff have taken part in AFT training sessions at the AFL-CIO's National Labor College George Meany Campus in Silver Spring, Maryland. And last year, the OSEA Board passed a resolution that laid the groundwork for formal affiliation with AFT. OSEA members approved the affiliation proposal by a five-to-one margin in mail ballots counted Feb. 5 by the League of Women Voters.



Surrounded by staff from OSEA and AFT, OSEA President Merlene Martin takes the call from the League of Women Voters with the news that OSEA members voted overwhelmingly in favor of affiliating with American Federation of Teachers-Oregon. (Photo by Jayna Bergerson)

"This is going to make us stronger," explained OSEA president Merlene Martin.

OSEA, founded in 1938 by a group of school janitors in Lane County, today represents 20,000 workers in 139 bargaining units; 16,000 of them are full-fledged members, while about 4,000 are

non-members who pay their "fair share" of the cost of union representation. OSEA members include employees of school districts, community colleges, education service districts, Head Start agencies, libraries, and park and recreation districts. For the most part, they are so-called "classified employees" —

school support staff in occupational classifications that aren't required to hold teaching certification. They include secretaries, bookkeepers and payroll and accounting clerks; custodians; maintenance workers; groundskeepers; bus drivers; special education, instructional, and library assistants; food service workers;

school nurses; and many other specializations.

AFT-Oregon meanwhile represents many of the same kinds of workers, plus some higher ed teaching faculty and graduate assistants, and nurses and health professionals.

In the late 1990s, OSEA discussed affiliation with AFT and with several other unions, including the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the American Federation of State, County, & Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and the National Education Association (NEA).

OSEA's decision to affiliate comes after two-and-a-half years of internal discussion. AFT has a reputation for autonomy, Martin said, with locals allowed wide latitude to set their own direction. Martin said that was important to OSEA members. With this affiliation, OSEA becomes in effect a second statewide local of AFT; it will keep its own name, identity and structure, including 40 staff, eight field offices and its headquarters in Salem. It will be AFT's fifth-largest local, and the largest on the West Coast.

"This is good for the movement," said Oregon AFL-CIO president Tom Chamberlain. "It helps OSEA members build strength in their political program and in their organizing program."

Portland Public Schools backs off hardline stance

Portland Public Schools (PPS) appears ready to bury the hatchet after a long-running standoff with three of its unions.

On Feb. 5, PPS announced a tentative agreement on a new contract with Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757, covering 85 special ed school bus drivers. Hours later, the district announced a tentative deal with 500 custodians and cafeteria workers who belong to Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503. And three bargaining sessions are scheduled for the second half of February with the union that represents 1,400 clerical and

support staff — Portland Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees (PFTCE), Local 111 of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon.

PPS' most dramatic turnaround was with SEIU. For months, the district had been demanding pay cuts of up to \$4.25 an hour for the custodians, many of whom were reinstated in 2006 four years after the district illegally outsourced their jobs.

SEIU ramped up pressure on the school board and the district's new superintendent. The union held large protest rallies at district headquarters, got sympathetic state and local elected

leaders to call the district, and aired radio ads on four stations for two weeks to shame the district for its draconian treatment of the custodians. The ads asked listeners to call PPS Superintendent Carole Smith, and made it clear SEIU was prepared to question the district's campaign to get voter approval for funds to upgrade school buildings.

"At some point somebody in the district figured out that trying to get a pound of flesh from this group wasn't worth it," said SEIU Local 503 spokesperson Ed Hershey. "We made the point subtly that with a \$1.4 billion bond issue on the horizon, the last thing

they wanted was for us to question their commitment to maintaining those buildings."

In the end, the district agreed to let custodians keep their current pay — \$13.25 to \$23.62 an hour, depending on experience and the level of responsibility. Cafeteria workers, who make from \$9.62 to \$13.96 now, will get three annual wage increases of 2.5 percent; the first raise will be immediate, but won't be retroactive to July 1, 2007, when the last contract expired.

Cafeteria workers will also get Martin Luther King, Jr. Day as a paid holiday for the first time.

And the district will begin paying as much as \$826 a month for custodian and cafeteria workers' health insurance under a complex formula that now gives them an average of \$698. The district contribution was capped at \$779 in the last contract.

Bargaining unit members reacted to the deal with a combination of exhilaration and relief. They will vote Feb. 16 on whether to ratify the three-year agreement.

With the ATU contract, neither side was releasing all the details as of press time, but both said it's a fair deal, a four-

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Labor has short agenda for legislative session in Salem

SALEM — No workers' rights legislation is up for discussion in the special session of the Oregon Legislature that began Feb. 4. But that doesn't mean unions are going to sit out the month-long experiment with annual sessions. A handful of issues to be voted on would impact union members and working people.

A bill to reform mortgage industry lending practices is the session's top priority for the Oregon AFL-CIO [See related story below]. And trade union-

ists will also be watching bills that address crime, health care, and the state's response to global warming.

The Legislature is working to craft a response to a tough-on-crime ballot measure submitted by former Republican gubernatorial candidate Kevin Mannix. The Mannix measure would increase penalties for property crimes, burglars and drug dealers, but it would take away discretion of judges and prosecutors, and mandate a new round of prison building that could sap the

state's ability to take care of its other priorities. Estimates are that Mannix's measure could add 4,000 to 6,000 inmates to the state prison system, and cost taxpayers \$128 million to \$200 million a year. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Oregon Council 75, which represents corrections officers and other public employees, is on board with a compromise put forward by Oregon district attorneys that would be tough on repeat offenders but more lenient with first-time offenders and would stress counseling and rehabilitation for those whose crimes were fu-

eled by drug addiction. The bill would be referred to voters in November as an alternative to Mannix's measure.

Last year, the Oregon AFL-CIO backed a proposal to expand health coverage to Oregon children by raising the cigarette tax. But voters rejected it. Now, the Legislature is considering HB 3614, which would expand the rolls of an existing kids' health program to thousands more children; it will come down to whether lawmakers think the state can afford the \$15 million a year extra.

Labor will also be watching as lawmakers hash out more details of a state

response to climate change. Major state legislation isn't expected until 2009, but a bill being considered this month will direct state agencies to gather information about the state's emissions of greenhouse gases.

"We can't bury our head in the sand and not worry about global warming," said Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain. "We want to be sure we're incentivizing [new green] industries, but also that those industries produce good jobs for Oregonians."

The session is scheduled to end by Feb. 29.

AFL-CIO backs mortgage reforms

SALEM — Following the lead of the national AFL-CIO, Oregon's state labor federation is joining consumer groups in pushing for state-level mortgage reforms to put a stop to lending practices that have put many homebuyers at risk.

At a Feb. 1 meeting of the Oregon Senate Commerce and Labor Committee, Oregon AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Barbara Byrd testified in favor of Senate Bill 1090. SB 1090 would prohibit lenders from making home loans if they don't think borrowers will be able to make payments. It would also put a one-year limit on pre-payment penalties, require that all fees, rates, and payment amounts be clearly disclosed, and ban loan fees of over 5 or 6 percent. Backers have a Web site — www.responsiblehomebuying.com — to explain the details. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Ben Westlund (D-Tumalo), a Democrat who is running for state treasurer.

But mortgage industry professionals packed the room, and protested that the reforms would put them out of business

and curb lending to low-income homebuyers. By the following week, it looked like the bill was in trouble and would end up being watered down. In an amended bill, the loan fee cap was dropped.

No Republican has said they'd sup-

port the reforms, so the bill's backers need Democrats solidly on board to pass the bill. Among Democrats reportedly opposed to the bill were Betsy Johnson in the Senate and Mike Schauler in the House (where Democrats have only a one-vote lead.) Westlund, who began politics as a Republican,

hopes to get some Republican votes for the bill. Westlund aide Stacey Dycus said part of the problem is that lawmakers don't have enough time to learn about the bill because it's being introduced in a special 30-day experimental session. As of press time, the bill's backers were still hopeful that they can get the votes to pass some mortgage reforms, just not all of them.

Still, leaders of the Oregon AFL-CIO expressed surprise that reforms would have any trouble given the current mortgage industry meltdown. The United States may be in the beginnings of a full-blown recession sparked by financial crisis in the mortgage industry. More than 12,000 Oregonians could face foreclosure in the next two-and-a-half years, according to the General Accounting Office. And nearly half of homeowners with adjustable rate mortgages are expecting to have to cut back on everyday expenses like groceries, clothing, and gasoline when their payments increase — according to an AFL-CIO-commissioned national survey by Peter D. Hart Research Associates.

"The goal should be home ownership and stability for homeowners in danger — not protecting the credit industry," says Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain. "Lenders should be expected to offer consumers the loan that is best for the consumer, not the one loaded with the most fees and 'pieces of the action' for the lenders and paperwork processors."

"The goal should be home ownership and stability for homeowners in danger — not protecting the credit industry."

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LERC to celebrate 30th anniversary March 7

EUGENE — The Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at the University of Oregon will celebrate its 30th anniversary Friday, March 7, with a dinner at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland.

Over the last three decades, LERC has opened the university's door to rank-and-file workers, union officials and community leaders, providing them access to the resources and expertise of the higher education system.

As was noted in UO's "Oregon Quarterly, Autumn 2007" newsletter: "Each year, thousands of union members attend LERC classes to address an array of issues from how to handle workplace bullying to public speaking. Its collective bargaining institutes have achieved statewide renown. Summer schools bring together groups such as organizers and labor relations professionals to catch up on current developments, learn new strategies, and network."

The vision for LERC was an obscure one that began in 1971 in the form of a resolution adopted at the annual convention of the Oregon AFL-CIO. "Creation of a labor education center at the University of Oregon" was one of among 63 resolutions passed that year — a time when the focus of the country was on the Nixon Administration's wage-price freeze. Labor wanted President Nixon out of office and the Oregon convention revolved around ways to rally the troops to elect a new president.

Still, with that resolution in hand, union officials began lobbying lawmakers and administrators on the importance of a labor center for Oregon's workforce.

In 1975, then-State Rep. Ted Kulongoski of Eugene (now governor, and a keynote speaker March 7) introduced a bill to create a center at UO. It failed. Two years later another measure was introduced. This time lawmakers were convinced. They passed the bill along with nearly \$250,000 in funding.

The bill was signed by Gov. Bob Straub on July 15, 1977, at a dinner in Springfield celebrating the 20th anniversary of the merger in Lane County of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO).

"This is one of the major pieces of legislation labor has gotten passed in years. It will have a long-lasting effect," Pat Randall, then secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, said at the time.

Randall and retired Oregon AFL-CIO President Irv Fletcher were lauded for their efforts lobbying for LERC. At the time, Fletcher was secretary-treasurer of the Lane County Labor Council.

The labor center was the first of its kind in the Pacific Northwest, but was modeled after similar education programs at public universities, including Cornell, Rutgers, Indiana, UC Berkeley and Wisconsin (which was the first to be established in 1924).

LERC caught on quickly. Recognition and demand were so great that the Legislature nearly doubled its budget in 1979. By 1986, a Portland Center had been established and a full-time faculty position was created for it.

"The visions of decades ago were on the mark," Steven Deutsch, professor emeritus of LERC, wrote last April in a retrospective. Deutsch, a sociology pro-

fessor at the university, was LERC's interim director in 1977 as a labor advisory committee searched for a director. He wasted no time establishing courses on stewards' training, contract negotiations and contract administration.

In 1978, Emory Via was hired as the first permanent director. It was his ties to national labor leadership that raised LERC's profile nationally. Within a year of Via's hiring the George Meany Center for Labor Studies selected the labor center to lead the development of a national program in grievance handling for transit industry unions.

Via retired in 1988 and Margaret Hallock, a state economist and former director of research of the Oregon Public Employees Union, was hired. Under her leadership, LERC broadened its research and programming and began to emphasize strategic approaches to workplace change, labor-management relations and union operations. The new focus included an aggressive outreach to workers, unionists and scholars worldwide.

Hallock left in 2001 to take over as founding director of the Wayne Morse Center for Law and Politics at UO. She was succeeded by Bob Bussel, a former union rep for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (now UNITE-HERE) and Service Employ-

ees International Union. Bussel taught in the labor education program at Penn State University for seven years before coming to Eugene.

Under Bussel's leadership, LERC has continued in its tradition of providing direct, hands-on education, training and consultation to workers and unions. Faculty also provide technical assistance to legislators, community activists and government agencies, and frequently furnish background information on labor and employment issues to the news media.

Bussel said LERC is continually developing its course content to reflect changes in the workplace and job markets. The decline in manufacturing and growth in service sector, governmental and alternative energy jobs — plus the influx of immigrants and women into the workforce — requires it.

"I'd say there's more emphasis on research in support of organizing and the right to organize, immigrant workers and sustainable business development," Bussel said.

Today, LERC reaches more than 3,000 workers each year on a biennial budget of about \$1.2 million. It has five full-time and three part-time faculty, plus a staff of five. Faculty includes associate professors Gordon Lafer and Marcus Widenor; instructors Barbara

Byrd, Lynn Feekin and Helen Moss; and research associates Jennifer Hess, Laurel Kincl and Marc Weinstein.

Lafer has taken his research on union election procedures before Congress, testifying last year on the right of workers to organize. Byrd coordinates the Portland Center. Her research has included apprenticeship training in the building trades and women in non-traditional jobs. She also serves as secretary-treasurer of the Oregon AFL-CIO, a part-time post. Moss coordinates the U-LEAD (Union-Leadership Education and Development), a non-credit certificate program.

The March 7 celebration starts with a reception at 6 p.m. at the Oregon Convention Center. Keynote speakers at the dinner will be Gov. Kulongoski, UO President Dave Frohnmayer and Ruth Milkman, director of the UCLA Institute for Research on Labor and Employment.

From 2 to 5 p.m. LERC will hold a symposium entitled, "Creating Labor-Community Alliances That Work."

At the dinner LERC also will launch a new Strategic Training and Action Research (STAR) Fund. Net proceeds from the celebration will benefit the fund, which will be used in part to provide more training programs and to bring visiting union leaders to Oregon.

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4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150,
Portland, Ore. 97213
Telephone: (503) 288-3311
E-mail: Michael492@comcast.net
Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

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OFFICIAL NOTICES

Auto Mechanics 1005

Executive Board meets 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 19.

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 16, preceded by a 9 a.m. shop stewards' training session. ELECTION: Election of one Trustee will be Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008 the same day as our regular meeting. The polls will open at 8 a.m. and close at 5 p.m.

Members nominated: Dwain Panian, Riller Clegg, Jason Ovalle, Mike Housley, Varman Khem.

ALL MEMBERS are invited to shop stewards' training. Stewards must attend steward meetings to be compensated.

All meetings are at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland. PLEASE NOTE: Rachel Conrad will be available from 8 a.m. to noon during the Regular Lodge meeting to answer any questions you may have about Health and Welfare and Pension plans.

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers 114

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26, followed by a 10:30 a.m. General Membership Meeting, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 102, Portland.

Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

Carpenters 247

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26, at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Carpenters 1388

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 5, at 276 Warner-Milne Rd., Oregon City.

Carpenters 1715

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, preceded by a 5 p.m. Executive Board meeting at 612 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver, Wash.

Cement Masons 555

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

Clark, Skamania & W. Klickitat Counties Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, 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, Feb. 19, Feb. 26 and March 4, in Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th, Portland.

Elevator Constructors 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 13, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 12779 NE Whitaker Way, Portland.

Exterior & Interior Specialists 2154

Members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, at 1125 SE Madison, Suite 207, Portland.

Fire Fighters 1660

Members meet 8 a.m. Thursday, March 13, at 4411 SW Sunset Dr., Lake Oswego.

Glass Workers 740

Executive Board members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Eugene area members meet 5 p.m. Monday, March 10, at Best Western Grand Manor Inn, 971 Kruse Way, Springfield.

Salem area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at Candalaria Terrace, Suite 204, 2659 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

Insulators 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 5.

Members meet 8 p.m. Friday, March 7. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Iron Workers 29

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6, preceded by a 5:30 Executive Board meeting, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir. #200, Portland.

Iron Workers Shopmen 516

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

Labor Roundtable of Southwest Washington

Delegates meet 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 29, at Home Town Buffet, 7809-B Vancouver Plaza Dr., Vancouver, Wash.

Laborers 320

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 13, at Joe Edgar Hall, Teamsters' Complex, 1850 NE 162nd Ave., Portland.

Laborers/Vancouver 335

Members meet 7 p.m. Monday, March 3, preceded by a 6:15 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at the Vancouver Labor Center, 2212 NE Andresen Rd., Vanc., Wash.

Laborers 483

Municipal Employees

Members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th Ave., Portland.

Lane County Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 27, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Lane, Coos, Curry & Douglas Building Trades

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 27, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Linn-Benton-Lincoln Labor Council

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 5, preceded by a 7 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

Linoleum Layers 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Executive Board meets 5 p.m. Monday, March 3, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Machinists 63

Executive Board meets 4 p.m. Wednesday, March 5.

Members meet 10 a.m. Saturday, March 8, preceded by a 9 a.m. stewards' meeting.

Meetings are at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland.

Machinists 1432

Swing and graveyard shift members meet at noon Wednesday, March 12.

Regular membership meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 12.

Shop stewards' training session 9 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 16.

Meetings are at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland.

Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Council

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at SEIU Local 503, 1730 Commercial St. SE, Salem.

Metal Trades Council

Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26, at IBEW #48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

Executive Board meets 8 a.m. Monday, March 10, at NOLC board room, 1125 SE Madison, Portland.

Molders 139

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting at the Carpenters Hall, 2205 N. Lombard, Portland.

Multnomah County Employees 88

General Membership meets 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards meeting.

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, March 5.

Meetings are at the Council 75 office, 6025 E Burnside, Portland.

Northwest Oregon Labor Council

The February meetings have been canceled.

Painters & Drywall Finishers 10

Members meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., 2nd Floor, Portland.

PLEASE NOTE: Trailblazer tickets will be raffled off at the Feb. 20 meeting.

Pile Drivers, Divers & Shipwrights 2416

Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 22, preceded by a 6 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 2205 N Lombard, Portland.

Plasterers 82

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

Portland City & Metropolitan Employees 189

General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26.

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 11.

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

Roofers & Waterproofers 49

Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6.

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, March 13.

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

Salem Building Trades

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Thursday, March 6, at the IBEW 280 Training Center, 33309 Hwy. 99E, Tangent.

Sheet Metal Workers 16

Coos Bay area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

Portland area VOC meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 5, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Portland members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

Medford area members meet 5 p.m. Wednesday, March 12, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N. Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, March 13, at the Local 16 Hall, 4748 Franklin Blvd., Eugene.

Sign Painters & Paint Makers 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 18, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

Southern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at the Labor Temple, 4480 Rogue Valley Hwy. #3, Central Point.

Southwestern Oregon Central Labor Council

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Monday, March 3, at the Bay Area Labor Center, 3427 Ash, North Bend.

Transit 757

Charter members meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 18, in the Machinists Building, 645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland. Charter day members meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at Schoppert Hall, 1801 NE Couch, Portland.

Salem members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the West Salem Branch Public Library, 395 Glen Creek Rd., Salem.

Eugene members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, and Eugene day members meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Woodworkers Local Lodge, 1116 South A St., Springfield.

Corvallis members meet 7:45 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at Woodstock Pizza, 1045 NW Kings Blvd., Corvallis.

Medford members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Hampton Inn, 1122 Morrow Rd., Medford.

Portland school bus members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at Rigler School, 5401 NE Prescott, Portland.

Vancouver members meet 7 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Laborers Hall, 2212 NE Andresen, Vancouver, Wash.

Tillamook members meet 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24, at the Odd Fellows Hall, next door to the Bay City Fire Hall in Bay City.

AMR Northwest Josephine County, LAMAR Advertising and Valley Transit - See your liaison officers.

PLEASE NOTE: ATU members are invited to attend any of the above-listed meetings.

United Association 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. PLEASE NOTE: At the February 15th meeting we will be voting on the monetary distributions for April and October 2008.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria.

Bend area members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the Local 290 Training Center, 2161 SW First, Redmond.

Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26, at Curry County Search and Rescue, 417 Railroad St., Brookings.

Coos Bay area members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Eugene area members meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 18, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at 4816 S. 6th St., Klamath Falls.

Medford area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at 650A Industrial Circle, White City.

Roseburg area members meet 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at 742 Roberts, Roseburg.

Salem area members meet 6 p.m. Monday, Feb. 18, at 1810 Hawthorne Ave. NE, Salem.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Humboldt-Del Norte Co. area members meet 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, at the Eureka Training Center, 832 E St., Eureka, CA.

USW 1097

Members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20, preceded by a 3 p.m. Executive Board meeting, in the union office building, 91237 Old Mill Town Rd., Westport.

RETIREE MEETING NOTICES

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd Ave., Portland.

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, March 13, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, Portland. All retirees are.

BAKERS 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

CARPENTERS

Retired Carpenters meet for lunch 11 a.m. Monday, March 10, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet for lunch 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, March 11, at Hometown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland. Senior lunch is \$7.39. A brief business meeting will follow. Sugges-

tions for trips are welcome. For more information, call Vera at 503 252-2296.

SAVE THE DATE: April 18 for a FREE luxury bus trip to Lucky Eagle Casino in Rochester, WA.

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

INSULATORS 36

Retiree breakfast 9:30 a.m. Thursday, March 6, at the Dockside Restaurant, 2047 NW Front Ave., Portland.

IRON WORKERS 29

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 12, at JJ North's Grand Buffet, 10520 NE Halsey, Portland.

MACHINISTS

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Wednesday, March 5, at 3645 SE 32nd Ave., Portland, followed by a no-host lunch at a restaurant to be determined at the meeting.

NORTHWEST OREGON LABOR RETIREES COUNCIL

Business meeting from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. Monday, March 10, in the Northwest Oregon Labor Council board room, at 1125 SE Madison, #100G, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information at 503-239-9858, ext. 124.

TRANSIT 757

Retirees meet 9:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 5, at Westmoreland Union Manor, 6404 SE 23rd, Portland.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland area retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Rusty Pipes meet 2 p.m. Thursday, March 6, at the Springfield Training Center.

Salem area retirees meet at noon Wednesday, March 12, at Almost Home Restaurant, 3310 Market St.

NAFTA-style trade pact with Colombia unlikely to pass Democratic Congress

WASHINGTON (PAI) — Leading congressional Democrats plan to withhold ratification of President Bush's "free trade" agreement with Colombia, at least until aid is renewed to workers who lose jobs to unfair foreign imports.

Even then, Dems say, approval is unlikely for the Colombia pact and similar treaties with South Korea and Panama.

The Democratic statements came after Bush, in his State of the Union address, put the Colombia pact first in line. He did not mention the murder of thousands of unionists by right-wing government-backed "paramilitaries." The deaths are among the key reasons unions oppose legislation implementing the Colombia trade pact.

Instead, Bush said passing the Colombia pact would send a signal

the U.S. is willing to aid Latin American democracies via trade pacts that he said would benefit Latin American workers.

But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nevada) said Democrats had "widespread concern" about the murders of the unionists.

Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), who chairs the Senate committee that looks at trade agreements, said renewing the government's Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program must come first. The program expired Dec. 31, and new Senate Minority Whip John Kyl (R-Ariz.) was able to block its renewal. U.S. workers are anxious about the impact of trade and globalization on their jobs, Baucus told the National Press Club Jan. 30.

Last year, the House approved legislation extending and expanding the TAA program, opening it to service workers who lose their jobs to unfair foreign competition and to workers who lose jobs when their services are no longer needed by workers who lost their jobs to unfair imports.

So, for example, TAA would become available to workers at a diner next to a textile mill that closes due to imports. Right now, only the textile mill workers, and factory workers in general, are eligible for TAA.

Baucus also wants to double annual TAA money for retraining to \$440 million, expand a tax credit to help trade-dislocated workers pay for health insurance, and extend TAA to workers who lose jobs regardless of whether the imports come from a nation with a free trade pact with the United States.

... PPS: One union still without contract

(From Page 1)

and-a-half-year contract that covers the period Jan. 1, 2006 to June 30, 2010.

It's also a better deal than the one ATU members rejected last year, said Local 757 Vice President Sam Schwarz. It contains 2.5 percent annual pay increases; right now, the drivers earn \$12.66 to \$16.51 an hour. The employee share of monthly health insurance premiums would go down to \$160 a month from the current \$200, though doctor's visit co-pays would rise from \$5 to \$20. The school board is scheduled to approve the deal Feb. 25; the

union hasn't scheduled a contract ratification vote yet, but the bargaining team will recommend approval.

Incredibly, the two sides have been negotiating since December 2005.

The school board is scheduled to approve the SEIU and ATU contracts at its Feb. 25 meeting.

Meanwhile, negotiations will continue on a new contract for PFTCE — the classified employees union. Informal bargaining sessions are scheduled for Feb. 15 and 22, and if no agreement is reached, a state-appointed mediator will work with the two sides Feb. 26.

After two years of 1.5 percent raises, PFTCE wants cost-of-living adjustments tied to increases in the Consumer Price Index — and an end to a freeze on step increases. The district's wage counteroffer hasn't gone above about 2 percent. Members currently make \$12.50 to \$19, depending on classification and experience.

The union has begun conducting informational pickets at least a week. Thus far, pickets have gone up outside Benson High School, Cleveland High School and Pioneer Middle School. But PFTCE President Tom Smith is hopeful the district may be ready to settle.

Negotiations are expected to begin in March on the next contract for the district's largest bargaining unit — the Portland Association of Teachers, an affiliate of the Oregon Education Association.

"At the banquet of nature, there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take and you keep what you can hold. And if you can't take, you can't get. And if you can't hold, you can't keep. And without organization, you can't take."




— A. Phillip Randolph (1889-1979)
Civil rights and union movement leader, and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters

Local Motion

January 2008

Union activity in Oregon and Southwest Washington, according to the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board

Election results

Company	Date	Union	Location	Results:		
				Union	No Union	
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan (print, copy, mail ctr)	1/3	SEIU Local 49	Portland	2	0	
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan (materials specialists)	1/3	SEIU Local 49	Portland, Salem	9	1	

Representation petitions

Company	Union	Location	# of employees
McKay's Market (deli) (decertification)	United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555	Bandon	5
McKay's Market (grocery & produce) (decertification)	United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555	Coos Bay	106
Wildish Sand & Gravel (decertification)	Teamsters Local 206	Eugene	57

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Labor battling Washington Legislature

OLYMPIA — Washington labor leaders are doing battle in the State Legislature. Sometimes it's with Democrats.

When it comes to health care, the most common sense reforms often run aground if monied stakeholders are opposed to it. Case in point this month is a "prescription privacy bill" backed by a coalition that includes the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO. The

bill (HB 2664 in the House and SB 6241 in the Senate) would restrict pharmaceutical companies from purchasing physicians' prescribing histories for marketing purposes. WSLC reports that the bill is in trouble. A large majority of House Democrats support the bill, but it will not get to the House floor unless they can show that 50 Democrats are on board. A media campaign was planned for this week targeting De-

mocrats who seem to be favoring the pharmaceutical lobby on this issue. Two were in Southwest Washington: Vancouver Representative Deb Wallace (D-Dist. 17) was reportedly opposed to the bill, while Rep. Bill Fromhold District 49 (D-Clark County) had concerns and questions about it. WSLC is asking constituents to call their representatives.

Several other health care reforms are part of the package the coalition is pushing. One (SB 5261) would give the state insurance commissioner the ability to review any rate increases proposed by health insurance companies. That bill passed the Senate Jan. 31 by 31-18; a companion bill (HB 1234) is being taken up by the House. Another proposal would create a committee to envision the future of health care in Washington, which would come back with a proposal for lawmakers to consider.

The Washington State Building and Construction Trades Council is also pushing a set of bills, including one aimed at reviving career and technical education in Washington high schools. High schools would be encouraged to start programs in high demand, high wage fields like construction.

On the employment front, labor is supporting a green jobs measure proposed by Gov. Chris Gregoire. The bill would provide more than \$7 million in the next five years for workforce training and education programs to increase so-called "green-collar" jobs. The sector employs about 12,000 Washingtonians now, and backers say they want to triple that number by 2020. SB 6516 and its companion measure HB 2815 have each been approved in committee.

AFL-CIO blasts Bush renomination of anti-union NLRB chairman

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — AFL-CIO President John Sweeney blasted President Bush for renominating Robert Battista to a new 5-year term as chair of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Sweeney called the nomination "poisonous."

Battista has presided over arguably the most anti-worker, anti-union labor board in history. His last five-year term expired in December.

"Under the Bush Board, the National Labor Relations Board abandoned its statutory mission to protect workers' right to form unions and promote collective bargaining," Sweeney said. "In a series of results-oriented decisions, the Bush Board stripped workers of their rights while protecting employers — and with breathtaking bias."

The NLRB's party-line 3-2 rulings under Battista produced nationwide labor-led protests in November and a formal AFL-CIO complaint to the International Labour Organization that the agency breaks international rules. ILO is investigating the charges.

Along with Battista, Bush nominated management attorney Gerard Morales of Arizona and former NLRB member Dennis P. Walsh. Walsh has served on the Board twice, beginning with a recess appointment in December 2000.

Bush's nominees must now be confirmed by the Senate.

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Law tilts against unions, but labor can't give up fight

By **DON McINTOSH**
Associate Editor

Over 230 people packed the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48 hall Feb. 1 for the 11th Annual Oregon Labor Law Conference, and yet there was hardly a labor lawyer in the room. That's because the conference is about teaching labor law to folks in unions who need to know it — union reps and elected leaders whose job is to defend members.

In a day's worth of legal workshops, they learned that workers have muscular laws to defend them if they are cheated of breaks or overtime pay or discriminated against on the basis of race, gender, religion, disability. But if they get fired for trying to unionize their workplace ... good luck to them.

The conference is a labor of love for IBEW Local 48's staff attorney, Norm Malbin, who sees it as a way to empower the wider labor movement with legal knowledge. No speakers are paid, and yet it draws prominent trainers. Highlights included a vision of how different things could be if states could pass stronger labor relations laws; a candid update from the National Labor Relations Board's top regional official; a walk through recent court rulings from an attorney who's normally a union adversary; and a catalogue of the last year's legislative achievements from the Oregon Senate Majority Leader.

"The National Labor Relations Act, that great bell of freedom for my father's generation, has failed," declared Henry Drummonds, professor of law at Lewis & Clark Law School. "It doesn't protect the worker's right to concerted action. It boxes the worker in. It confines the union. And it unlevels the playing field."

The NLRA is supposed to protect workers' rights to organize and bargain collectively. But unlike most other landmark federal laws, the NLRA "pre-empts" state legislatures from going any farther. Instead of setting a federal "floor" like the laws that created

the minimum wage, overtime, or occupational safety protections, the NLRA sets a federal ceiling that states can't exceed, and that so-called "right to work" states can lower.

So it's no accident, Drummonds argued, that state and local public sector unions are flourishing — the NLRA doesn't apply to public workers, so states have been free to pass laws that make it easier for public sector workers to unionize. Imagine, Drummonds said, if states could pass laws more favorable to private-sector unions — banning so-called "permanent replacement" of strikers, forbidding employers from holding mandatory-attendance anti-union meetings, giving union organizers equal access to workers at the workplace, or providing real penalties for employers who fire workers for supporting a union.

Richard Ahearn, Seattle regional director of National Labor Relations Board, didn't take issue with the description of recent NLRB legal decisions in the packet that introduced him: that they've been diminishing "already pathetic remedies" for workers' rights violations, and that they are known for "astonishing delays," like the workers who were awarded backpay last year because they were illegally denied reinstatement — in 1990! Instead, Ahearn took participants through the practicalities of decisions that make it harder for employers to voluntarily recognize unions, easier for employers to refuse to hire pro-union workers sent in by the union, and denying union rights to workers who supervise others even partially.

For the third year in a row, Malbin was able to get management-side attorney Rick Liebman to speak. Liebman, a partner in the Barran Liebman law firm, is the only management attorney to have spoken, though, as he pointed out, sometimes he works for unions too, because unions are themselves employers. Liebman delivered an update on recent employment law court decisions.

At least things are getting better in state law, said Oregon Sen-

ate Majority Leader Kate Brown (D-Portland), a former family law attorney and a classmate of Malbin's in law school. It was the first time Brown accepted the invitation to speak at the conference, and she had a lot to report.

Last year, for the first time in over a decade, Democrats controlled the Oregon House, Senate, and governor's office. Brown's list of the pro-worker laws passed last year left her almost out of breath: a ban on employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation; the right of nursing mothers to unpaid breaks for expressing milk; time off work for crime victims to get restraining orders; a ban on golden parachutes for top school officials; making safety a mandatory subject of bargaining for firefighters; prohibiting "non-compete" contracts for low-level employees; extending unemployment benefits to all workers locked out in labor disputes; and more. It was a very successful legislative session for labor, Brown said, and even more progress is likely in 2009.

Labor Bowl for MDA April 27

The 19th annual Labor Bowl Challenge to benefit the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) will be held Sunday, April 27, from 1 to 4 p.m. at Cascade Lanes, 2700 NE 82nd Ave., Portland. Registration starts at noon.

Portland area labor unions have collected \$276,041 for the charity since its inception. Money raised from pledges and a silent auction helps provide wheelchairs and braces for youngsters, medical care, research and summer camps.

Pledge packets are available at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council or by calling Tor at MDA at 503-223-3177.

For more information, call Kelly Pendell, a member of Letter Carriers Branch 82 and coordinator of the event, at 503-493-5903.

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Labor ally to leave Congress

Union leaders will be paying close attention to Oregon's 5th Congressional District this year. Democratic Rep. Darlene Hooley announced Feb. 8 that she'll retire at the end of the year, meaning her seat is up for grabs in the November 2008 election.

For organized labor, it means a scramble to replace a reliable union ally, and keep the seat in worker-friendly hands. Hooley's district encompasses Marion, Polk, Tillamook and Lincoln counties, and parts of Clackamas, Multnomah and Benton counties. Registered Republicans outnumber Democrats, and yet Hooley has won election six times, starting in 1996 with the defeat of Republican Jim Bunn.

Hooley may be best known as a staunch defender of veterans' benefits and an activist for doing something to combat methamphetamine addiction. But she's also been a friend of labor, with an 86 percent favorable rating from the national AFL-CIO's Committee on Political Education.

"She called them as she saw them," said Tim Nesbitt, former Oregon AFL-CIO president who is now an adviser to Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski.

Nesbitt cited Hooley's 2003 vote against the Medicare prescription drug bill as a turning point. The bill split Democrats, many of whom wanted a drug benefit for seniors but saw this bill as an expensive giveaway to drug companies.

"It took a lot of courage for her to go that way," Nesbitt said.

A notable black mark in labor's tally was Hooley's 2002 vote for a law that made it harder for people to escape debt by declaring bankruptcy.



DARLENE HOOLEY

But as Oregon AFL-CIO President Tom Chamberlain pointed out, Hooley was an early co-signer of the Employee Free Choice Act, the union-backed reform of the nation's basic labor law.

"She's been beyond accessible," Chamberlain said. "If we needed to get in, we could see her. And she was never afraid to give me a call and ask how I feel about an issue."

Chamberlain said Hooley has been good on the minimum wage, and she came around on NAFTA-style trade agreements, voting for several early on, but opposing recent trade agreements that have come up for a vote.

Chamberlain predicts an exciting race to replace Hooley. Several Democrats will compete in the May primary, including Paul Evans, an Iraq war veteran who had labor's backing in his unsuccessful 2006 run for the State Senate. Oregon Labor Commissioner Dan Gardner, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 48, said he also is considering running.

Whoever wins the primary will face off against the Republican nominee in November.

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Underpaid professors plan to picket PSU

Anyone who thinks being a college professor is a cushy middle-class meal ticket probably hasn't gotten up close to Oregon's higher ed system lately.

At Portland State University, a quarter of the classes are taught by part-timers working on term-to-term contracts. Hundreds of PSU adjunct professors have PhDs in their fields and yet gross less than \$15,000 a year, with no benefits of any kind.

During any given term, PSU employs over 600 faculty who work half-time or less. About two-thirds are paid the minimum, union-negotiated rate — \$676 per credit per term, which works out to \$2,704 for a typical four-credit class. While some have full-time employment elsewhere, many others make ends meet by piecing together part-time teaching assignments at PSU and at other area

colleges and universities.

Last year, embarrassed at the prospect of malnourished state college professors, the Oregon Legislature approved an 18 percent increase in higher ed funding. PSU, for example, got \$23 million more, including \$10 million earmarked for faculty raises. So why is PSU's part-time faculty union having such a terrible time getting an acceptable contract?

The Portland State University Faculty Association Local 3571, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, wants what amounts to 7.5 percent annual raises in base pay in its next two-year contract, which the union estimates would cost \$1.4 million.

The PSU administration is offering about 4.5 percent, and says the first raise wouldn't be retroactive to the June 30, 2007 expiration of the previ-

ous contract.

Units at other Oregon colleges have already settled contracts with raises of up to 12 percent, said AFT Staff Rep Eban Pullman. "Why they're standing so firm is kind of a mystery to us," Pullman said.

Chief negotiator and unit Vice President Margie McCue says faculty are feeling discouraged; they thought because of the funds released by the Legislature for bringing up faculty salaries that the two sides would be able to come to agreement. "We're trying to get adjunct salary brought up to a living wage," McCue says.

After more than nine months of unsuccessful negotiations, the two sides began mediation Feb. 11. The union planned to put up informational picket signs outside Smith Memorial Center on Feb. 14, Valentine's Day — after this issue went to press.

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