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Kitzhaber sets March deadline to decide future of I-5 bridge

SALEM — Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber set a March 9 deadline for Oregon lawmakers to re-authorize the

state's financial commitment to replace the Interstate 5 bridge connecting Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washing-

ton over the Columbia River.

The Oregon Legislature is in a 35-day short session that began Feb. 3.

In addition to re-authorizing \$450 million to the project — better known as the Columbia River Crossing — Kitzhaber also wants the Legislature to adopt the necessary statutory changes to ensure appropriate tolling enforcement.

Moving the project forward also will require an executed intergovernmental agreement between the Washington Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for bi-state construction.

In a letter to legislative leaders in Oregon, and to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee (D), Kitzhaber said that without decisive action by the Oregon Legislature (by March 9) and the State of Washington by March 15, he will direct the Oregon Department of Transportation to close the project.

"We'll try to roll this rock up the hill one more time," said John Mohlis, executive secretary of the Oregon State Building and Construction Trades Council, a staunch advocate of the bridge replacement project.

Union officials lobbied Oregon lawmakers to pass HB 2800 in the 2013 legislative session. The bill funded the state's portion of the \$3.5 billion project, which calls for improving highway interchanges, replacing the bridge and extending Portland's light-rail to Vancouver.

HB 2800 included a provision that required the Washington Legislature to contribute an equal \$450 million before any money could be authorized. Washington lawmakers failed to act on a transportation package last year that would have included the money. (Republican leaders in the Senate refused to move the transportation package to a vote.)

When that happened, Kitzhaber and Inslee declared the Columbia River Crossing dead.

A month later, Kitzhaber put forth a scaled down "Oregon-led project." The \$2.8 billion plan relies heavily on bridge tolls, but still includes an \$850 million grant from the federal government.

Over the last decade, Oregon and Washington have spent more than \$180 million on planning, designing and permitting for the replacement bridge. Substantial local and federal resources, and thousands of hours of public and community participation are also in-

vested in the project.

"For Oregon there is no alternative plan that is less complicated or less expensive," Mohlis said.

In his letter to legislative leaders, Kitzhaber wrote, "Although this is an Oregon-led project, it certainly is not an Oregon-only project. All of our project partners — TriMet, C-Tran, the City of Vancouver, the Washington State Department of Transportation, the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration — are still part of the Oregon-led project, some with modified responsibilities to reflect the state of Washington's postponed funding of the Washington interchanges.

"Importantly, our federal and local partners concur that the Oregon-led project continues to meet the safety and mobility benefits required in the federal Record of Decision, and they stand ready to move forward."

But support has been shaky, especially in the Oregon Senate, where Senate President Peter Courtney (D-Salem), is opposed. Courtney has repeatedly told the media that Oregon lawmakers did their job last year when they approved the \$450 million. He says Washington needs to step up and do its part.

"I've done my duty," Courtney told the Oregonian. "It's time for them (Washington) to do their duty."

Mohlis encourages union members to contact their state legislators and urge them to again support funding for the Columbia River Crossing.

"We're another 10 years away if we don't do this now," Mohlis said.



The Interstate Bridge seen from Vancouver, Washington, looking south toward Hayden Island in north Portland, Oregon, where Interstate 5 crosses the Columbia River. (Photo from Wikimedia Commons)

ATU #757 not happy with TriMet audit

Leaders of Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 757 are unhappy with the results of a comprehensive audit of TriMet by the Oregon secretary of state.

The audit, released to the public Jan. 29, made 23 recommendations for change, from safety and scheduling to labor-management relations and unfunded liabilities. The audit was ordered by the Oregon Legislature last year after the Oregonian exposed secret pay raises for TriMet managers and shift scheduling practices that left bus drivers so sleep-deprived as to be potentially unsafe on the road.

Since then, TriMet general manager Neil McFarlane has promised more transparency, and a policy was worked out by union and management that requires at least 10 hours off between shifts for drivers.

The audit concluded that strained re-

lations between management and ATU, low morale and employee mistrust of management, are adversely affecting TriMet and its operations. Its recommendations include:

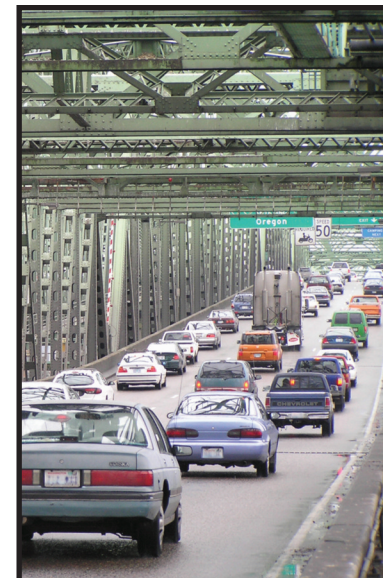
- A waste, fraud and abuse hotline for employees to report concerns;
- Formal meetings with the union outside of contract negotiations in order to repair a contentious relationship;
- Addressing the adequacy of bathroom facilities;
- Ensuring adequate time for operator breaks;
- Reducing the complexity and cost of bus operator signups;
- Allowing hiring of maintenance employees with prior training or experience;
- A formal evaluation process for all frontline employees that includes written constructive and positive feedback when warranted; and

• Following up with operators about whether their suggestions can be implemented.

"TriMet must work to improve a contentious labor-management relationship in order to solve its fiscal challenges and continue to provide critical services to Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas County residents," said Secretary of State Kate Brown in a press statement accompanying release of the audit report. Brown said TriMet's \$1.1 billion in health care and pension liabilities are its most significant challenge.

But Local 757 President Bruce Hansen, in a press statement responding to the audit, said he felt disheartened on reading the report. Union representatives met with the auditors and provided them a list of 25 concerns about

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Arbitrator tells Clark County to follow the union contract

OPEIU Local 11 wins redress after a worker loses out to a less qualified junior co-worker

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

VANCOUVER — It may not be obvious, but the point of seniority rights in union contracts is not to give workers with seniority an advantage over their co-workers. Seniority rights are meant to promote co-worker solidarity and create a more dignified workplace for all. When promotions, layoffs, and choice of work assignment are driven by seniority in a workplace, there's less potential for management favoritism, and thus less incentive for workers to curry favor with bosses or

badmouth coworkers to management. But a contract is only as good as its enforcement.

In November 2012, the County Clerk's office in Clark County, Washington passed over a senior employee, Melissa McLachlan, and gave a sought-after promotion to a less-qualified worker whom she herself had trained. McLachlan immediately called Maureen Colvin, a union business representative at Vancouver-headquartered Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 11, to file a grievance. Colvin investigated, and working with Katelyn Oldham of Tedesco Law Group, put together a case when the grievance went to arbitration.

Local 11's contract with the County states that qualified employees may apply for open positions, and when two or more internal applicants are substantially equal in qualifications, knowl-

edge, skills and abilities, "seniority shall prevail."

McLachlan started at Clark County in 1988. By 2012, she was the most senior "judicial proceedings specialist" in her department, and she was the one routinely asked to train new hires. When a job as senior court assistant opened up, several supervisors encouraged her to apply. She submitted an application and cover letter, took a skills test and a practical exam, and received 91 percent, the highest test score among seven applicants. She was even asked to fill in several times as a senior court assistant.

But none of that mattered, County HR told arbitrator Katrina Boedecker, because all those things were treated as "pass/fail." The only part of the hiring process where applicants were ranked against each other was an oral interview, scored by a four-person panel of coworkers.

McLachlan had been uncomfortable during that interview, in which panelists took turns asking questions gathered from the Internet about "leadership." But they weren't making eye contact, or asking followup questions.

The panelists had signed a pledge that they would not be biased for or against any applicant. But one was the best friend of another applicant, and gave that person the top rating. Another had a relative who'd had a legal dispute with McLachlan over some construction work. A third panelist had encouraged another applicant to apply, and gave that person the top rating, and McLachlan a much lower score.

McLachlan was told by a manager that she lost the promotion because of her interview scores, even though she had the most experience and had scored the highest on the test. The promotion instead went to a coworker McLachlan had trained, who'd been at

the County since 2008, who'd listed less than half McLachlan's skills on a skill list, had never trained a coworker, and whose sole leadership experience was organizing volunteers during a college clothing drive.

Arbitrator Boedecker held a hearing Sept. 6 in Vancouver, and on Dec. 13 found in favor of the union, ordering the county to give McLachlan the promotion, pay the union's legal fees, and restore any pay and benefits McLachlan had lost since the day she was passed over.

"Seniority is a much cherished right of union members," Boedecker wrote. "A seniority preference clause curbs an employer's ability to make hiring decisions in an arbitrary manner ... [and] allows workers to gain job security rights based on length of service rather than favoritism."

"The employer did not rebut the union's record that McLachlan was superior ... in qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities," Boedecker concluded. "It merely stood on its theory that it could rank the applicants solely on their interview scores. The plain language of [the union contract] does not support this theory."

Northwestern University football players petition to form union

EVANSTON, Ill. (PAI) — With virtually unanimous player support, and with Steelworker backing, football players at Northwestern University filed a formal petition and signed union recognition election cards with the National Labor Relations Board's (NLRB) Chicago regional office on Jan. 28.

If the players win the vote — which will occur only after NLRB hearings and rulings and possible appeals to the courts, they admitted — they would set a national precedent for recognizing college athletes, in football and men's basketball at Division I schools, as "employees" under labor law and eligible to be organized.

The new College Athletic Players Association (CAPA) contends that scholarships actually pay for the players' services, and the players in turn

earn their colleges millions of dollars. But labor law now doesn't cover the players, said Northwestern player Kain Colter and CAPA leader Ramogi Huma in a telephone press conference.

The organizing drive grew out of contacts college players at UCLA had with the Steelworkers Union more than a decade ago.

The union is backing a non-profit group to publicize the players' plight and agitate for public pressure on colleges to change their ways.

The colleges didn't listen, so the organizing drive started. It picked up steam when leaders of the National Collegiate Athletic Association — the organization representing colleges — said colleges "have no legal responsibility" for taking care of players who are injured.

That lack of responsibility and ques-

tions about college responsibility for injured players, especially football players who suffer permanent brain damage through on-field concussions, drove the organizing drive, Huma said.

Steelworkers International President Leo Gerard said that when the UCLA contact began, "we thought they had a good deal. But we heard story after story of them struggling to pay for basics like food and rent, or how they got cut off" of scholarships "by a coach's whim."

The Northwestern players were very

enthusiastic, as "they've been taught to think outside the box," Colter said. Their head coach told him, "If this is what the team feels, and there's a right way, then let it play out."

Huma said the players want to unionize so they "can have a seat at the table" on issues such as injury coverage, adequacy of their scholarships, post-injury care and establishment of an educational trust fund for players to let them finish college and graduate even after their athletic eligibility, and their scholarships expire.

2-1-1 can be a lifesaver

2-1-1 is an easy to remember telephone number that connects callers to information about critical health and human services available in their communities. In Oregon, it is run by 211info, in partnership with United Way. It can be accessed online at www.211info.org.



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Middle classes stronger in unionized states

By DAVID MADLAND and KEITH MILLER

Why should anyone — especially those who are not union members — care that union membership is at record lows and likely to fall even further? Because if you care about the middle class, you need to care about unions.

Critics of unions claim they are unimportant today or even harmful to the economy, but unions are essential for building a strong middle class. And rebuilding the middle class after decades of decline and stagnation is essential for restoring our economy.

Unions make the middle class strong by ensuring workers have a strong voice in both the market and in our democracy. When unions are strong they are able to ensure that workers are paid fair wages, receive the training they need to advance to the middle class, and are considered in corporate decision-making processes. Unions also promote political participation among all Americans, and help workers secure government policies that support the middle class, such as Social Security, family leave, and the minimum wage.

But as unions became weaker over the past four decades, they are less and less able to perform these functions — and the middle class withered. The percentage of workers in unions steadily declined largely because the legal and political environment prevents private-

sector workers from freely exercising their right to join or not to join a union. Membership in private-sector unions stands at less than 7 percent today, from around 30 percent in the late 1960s. Public-sector unionization remained

stable for decades — it was 37 percent in 1979 and is 36 percent today — but is now under significant threat from conservative political opposition and could start declining as well. All told, less than 12 percent of the total workforce is unionized, and this percentage is likely to continue falling.

Without the counterbalance of workers united together in unions, the middle class withers because the economy and politics tend to be dominated by the rich and powerful, which in turn leads to an even greater flow of money in our economy to the top of income scale. The percentage of unionized workers tracks very closely with the share of the nation's income going to the middle class — those in the middle three-fifths of income earners.

In recent years, the middle class accounted for the smallest share of the na-

tion's income ever since the end of World War II, when this data was first collected. The middle three income quintiles, representing 60 percent of all Americans, received only 46 percent of the nation's income in 2009, the most recent year data is available, down from highs of around 53 percent in 1969.

The middle class weakened over the past several decades because the rich secured the lion's share of the economy's gains. The share of pretax income earned by the richest 1 percent of Americans more than doubled between 1974 and 2007, climbing to 18 percent from 8 percent. And for the richest of the rich — the top 0.1 percent — the gains have been even more astronomical — quadrupling over this period, rising to 12.3 percent of all income from 2.7 percent.

In contrast, incomes for most Americans have been nearly flat over this same time period, and median income after accounting for inflation actually fell for working-age households during the supposedly good economy in the re-

covery between 2001 and 2007. The importance of unions to the middle class is not just a historical phenomenon, but is relevant to our lives today. To be sure, not everything unions do benefits the broad middle class, but unions are critical to defending the middle class, and their resurgence is key to rebuilding the middle class.

Indeed, it is hard to imagine a middle-class society without a strong union movement.

Across the globe, the countries with the strongest middle classes all have strong union movements. And in America today, states with higher concentrations of union members have a much stronger middle class. The 10 states with the lowest percentage of workers in unions all have a relatively weak middle class, with the share of total state income going to households in the middle three-fifths of income earners in these states below the average for all states.

Our analysis indicates that each percentage point increase in union membership puts about \$153 more per year into the pockets of the middle class — meaning that if unionization rates increased by 10 percentage points (about the level they were in 1980) — then the typical middle class household would earn \$1,532 more this year. This figure indicates how much better off all members of the middle class would be — not

just those who are union members — if unions regained some strength. And these gains would continue year after year. To put these results in context, our analysis indicates that increasing union membership is as important to rebuilding the middle class as boosting college graduation rates, results that while shocking to some, are consistent with previous research.

In our democracy, when workers are joined together in unions they are able to more forcefully and effectively speak for their interests. Unions give workers a greater voice not only by promoting political participation among all Americans — ensuring that more of the middle class vote and get involved in politics — but also by being an advocate on behalf of the middle class in the daily, inner-workings of government and politics.

This provides a check on other powerful political interests, such as corporations and the very wealthy, and ensures that our system of government has the balance of interests that James Madison, a chief framer of our constitution, thought necessary to properly function. This counterbalancing role is essential for democracy to function properly and respond to the interests of all Americans.

In the workplace, workers who join together in unions are able to negotiate on more equal footing with their employers, providing a check on the inherently unequal relationship between employer and employee. As George Shultz, secretary of labor during the Nixon Administration and secretary of state during the Reagan Administration argued in support of trade unions, in "a healthy workplace, it is very important that there be some system of checks and balances."

Indeed, the ability of workers united together to provide a check on corporate power was the very reason Congress guaranteed private-sector workers the right to join a union, writing in the findings section of the National Labor Relations Act of 1935:

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Republicans in Washington Senate take a hard right turn

Republicans demote Democratic chair; push ALEC-written attacks on workers

By DAVID GROVES

OLYMPIA, Wash. — A year ago, the new Majority Coalition Caucus (MCC) of Senate Republicans and two defecting Democrats vowed “governing from the middle, governing from the center” when they seized control of that body from the Democratic majority elected by voters. The MCC promised a new era of bipartisanship and moderation.

What a difference a special elec-

tion makes.

With the addition of another Republican senator, Jan Angel of Port Orchard, the MCC no longer needs both Democratic defectors to vote with them, and on Jan. 27 they demonstrated that the era of bipartisanship (such as it was) is finished.

Over the objections of Senate Democrats, Republicans voted to make Angel the new co-chair of the Financial Institutions, Housing and Insurance Committee. Democratic defectors Sens. Tim Sheldon of Shelton and Rodney Tom of Medina both voted with Republicans to demote their former “Roadkill Caucus” compatriot, Sen. Steve Hobbs (D-Lake Stevens), who had been sole chair of the committee, leading Hobbs to declare that

the moderates had lost control of the Senate.

Also on Jan. 27, the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee heard SB 6300, a bill sponsored by Sen. Randi Becker (R-Eatonville) that would create new administrative reporting burdens for all public employee unions and require them to file multiple reports with the Public Employment Relations Commission, including financial reports listing all of the unions’ expenditures, and to have that information posted publicly online.

The bill’s co-sponsors include Angel, state chairwoman of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a corporate-funded organization that pushes controversial right-wing agendas in state legislatures across the country. An investigation of ALEC by The New York Times found that “corporate interests effectively turn ALEC’s lawmaker members into stealth lobbyists, providing them with talking points and signaling how they should vote.”

Sen. Angel is among several state legislators who have received thousands of dollars worth of “scholarships” to attend ALEC conferences, but during last fall’s campaign she portrayed herself a “moderate” and called criticism of her role with the

corporate group “a bunch of hoovey.”

SB 6300 turns out to be cookie-cutter “model legislation” from ALEC called the “Union Financial Responsibility Act.” The heart of SB 6300 is its proposed new Section 2, which lists the contents of the new reports that would be required. It is an identical list — word for word — to the list under the ALEC model legislation’s Section 3. ALEC’s language has literally been copy-and-pasted into the Washington bill.

Greg Devereux, executive director of the Washington Federation of State Employees, AFSCME Council 28, testified in opposition to the bill on Jan. 27, calling it “unnecessary, duplicative, burdensome and punitive,” noting that his union is already subject to federally required reporting and that information is already posted on U.S. Department of Labor website.

Geoff Simpson of the Washington State Council of Fire Fighters also testified in opposition, pointing out that unions are democratic, transparent organizations with information about their finances readily available to their members. On the other hand, he noted that the Freedom Foundation, a right-wing think tank that testified in support of the bill, is secretly funded and refuses to disclose where it gets money and how it’s spent.

The angry chairman of the committee, Sen. Janéa Holmquist Newbry (R-Moses Lake), did not appreciate the comparison, claiming that union dues are “mandatory” and Freedom Foundation funding is voluntary.

“I’d ask that you not bring this argument before our committee,” she said, raising a few eyebrows in the room.

On Jan. 28, Sen. Holmquist Newbry’s committee heard another ALEC-inspired bill. SB 6307 would set aside Republicans’ aversion to state government control over local issues by preempting any county, city or town from setting employment standards. The goal is to repeal the voter-approved \$15 minimum wage in SeaTac and the City Council-approved paid sick leave ordinance in Seattle, and block any local jurisdictions from creating any similar standards in the future.

The bill is part of a national campaign by ALEC to block pro-worker policies adopted in cities and counties across America.

(Editor’s Note: David Groves is communications director for the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and editor of the labor news website The Stand.)

Postal workers launch national protest against outsourcing mail jobs to Staples

The opening of Postal Service retail centers at Staples stores nationwide is being met with protests and threats of boycotts by the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) and the National Letter Carriers Association.

The so-called “Retail Partner Expansion” program began in November in 80 Staples stores in northern California, Atlanta, Pittsburgh and central Massachusetts in a trial, but Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe says he wants to expand the program “as soon as possible” to approximately 1,500 Staples stores nationwide.

The union is demanding that postal employees be assigned to perform the postal work at Staples stores. If Staples and the USPS refuse, the APWU says it will ask customers to take their business elsewhere.

On Jan. 28, more than 200 APWU members and supporters demonstrated outside Staples stores in San Francisco and San Jose challenging the arrangement.

APWU President Mark Dimondstein said the union supports the expansion of postal services and retail hours, but added: “We cannot accept USPS plans to replace good-paying union jobs with nonunion low-wage jobs held by workers who have no accountability for the safety and security of the mail.”

Supreme Court rules collective bargaining determines pay for putting on protective gear

WASHINGTON, D.C. (PAI) — If Clifton Sandifer and his co-workers want to get paid for the time they take putting on steel-toed boots, protective jackets, hard hats and other gear before starting their shifts at their U.S. Steel mill in Northwest Indiana, their union will have to successfully bargain for it for them, the U.S. Supreme Court says.

That same rule applies, the court adds, in cases where union workers take time to put on or take off protective gear. Otherwise, it’s considered “changing clothes.”

That’s because, in a 9-0 decision on Jan. 27, justices said time used in taking off and putting on work gear is a bargainable subject under labor law, even though another federal law, the Portal to Portal Act, says workers should get paid for the time they need to put on and take off protective gear.

In Sandifer’s case, the United Steelworkers Union and U.S. Steel had agreed the workers would not be paid for the time involved.

The high court’s decision could potentially affect tens of thousands of workers covered by union contracts, who must take time to put on and take off protective gear such as hard hats, steel aprons, work gloves and steel-toed boots.

That time is a bargaining subject, Associate Justice Antonin Scalia’s ruling said.

Because the Steelworkers contract said the workers could not get paid, Sandifer and his allies sued, saying the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act — the law that enacted the minimum wage and overtime pay — governed their time. Had they won, U.S. Steel and other firms would have had to pay tens of thousands of dollars each for lost time. But the workers lost in the lower courts, and they lost at the High Court, too.

“U.S. Steel does not dispute” the lower courts’ conclusion that “had the clothes-changing time in this case not been rendered non-compensable” un-

der a labor law section that let the union and the firm bargain on the issue, “it would have been a principal (job) activity,” and thus the workers would have been paid, Scalia said.

Instead, U.S. Steel argued that, thanks to the union contract the workers were just “changing clothes,” and labor law does not order firms to pay them for that.

The object of the relevant section of labor law “is to permit collective bargaining over the compensability of clothes-changing time and to promote the predictability achieved through mutually beneficial negotiation. There can be little predictability, and hence little meaningful negotiation, if ‘changing’ means only ‘substituting,’” Scalia added. “If the vast majority of the time is spent in donning and doffing ‘clothes’ as we have defined that term, the entire period qualifies, and the time spent putting on and off other items need not be subtracted.”

...Middle class stronger in unionized states

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“The inequality of bargaining power between employees who do not possess full freedom of association or actual liberty of contract and employers who are

organized in the corporate or other forms of ownership association substantially burdens and affects the flow of commerce, and tends to aggravate recurrent business depressions, by depressing wage rates and the purchasing power of wage earners in industry and by preventing the stabilization of competitive wage rates and working conditions within and between industries.

And government employers, like corporations, sometimes need to be reminded by organized workers to treat their employees fairly. That’s why Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. traveled to Memphis in 1968 to help city sanitation workers gain recognition for their union as they faced low pay, terrible working conditions, and racist supervisors. Even the conservative icon Ronald Reagan recognized that public sector workers should be able to join unions and collectively bargain. Reagan signed a bill to grant municipal and county employees the right to do so when he was governor of California.

Critically, the benefits of workers having a voice in the economy and in democracy spill over to all of society. In these ways, unions make the middle class. The challenge of rebuilding the middle class will take a long time, but would be impossible without a clear understanding of what makes the middle class strong. This paper will explore in detail why we need to do this and how we need to go about it. To rebuild America’s middle class, we need to re-

build the labor movement. It’s that simple—and that challenging.

(Editor’s Note: David Madland is director of the American Worker Project at the Center for American Progress Action Fund. Keith Miller is a research assistant with the American Worker Project. This article was published by Center for American Progress Action Fund, www.americanprogressaction.org.)



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OSEA in major fight to save school bus jobs at Parkrose

School Board will vote Feb. 24 on whether to privatize

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

Parkrose School District, in outer Northeast Portland, is preparing to outsource its school bus service. Oregon School Employees Association (OSEA) is fighting to oppose it, and save the jobs of 18 school bus drivers, a mechanic, and a dispatcher — its members.

In lawns all over the district, union-made signs shout “Keep it Local.” School bus drivers are canvassing neighborhoods and lobbying parent-teacher organizations and neighborhood associations. Union ads are running online at *Oregonlive.com* and *midcountymemo.com*. School board members are getting phone calls from residents about the plan, and board meetings are preceded by noisy union rallies.

The board is expected to vote at its Feb. 24 meeting whether to contract out, and in the weeks leading up to that, the union will be running television ads targeted to Comcast cable subscribers in outer Northeast Portland.

Parkrose is one of Oregon’s poorest school districts, with about 75 percent of its 3,500 students eligible for free or reduced priced meals. It’s the farthest north of four small independent school districts on the outer east side of Portland, and is situated roughly between I-205 and NE 142nd Ave, and from the airport to NE Halsey. Many Parkrose residents see their community as a small-town oasis on the edge of a big city. But efforts to dump the district’s school bus drivers and contract with an outside firm like giant multinational school bus contractor First Student are putting that neighborliness to the test.

At the Jan. 27 school board meeting, board chair Ed Grassel cut off an elementary school mom who spoke up for the union, then countered her comments with the district’s perspective. And it had taken her a real commitment to get to that point. Parkrose School Board meetings are four-hour affairs, with a talkative superintendent, hours of staff reports, and decision-making on subjects as minute as whether to waive \$174 in space rental fees when the Holly Hills Homeowners Association meets at Parkrose High School.

OSEA has tried to mobilize community members to speak out at board meetings, but the board makes visitors sit through hours of proceedings before providing an opportunity to comment,

and refuses to hear comment from any but Parkrose residents.

Last fall, Parkrose school bus driver Pat Koenig — a former Parkrose resident whose kids attended schools in the district — sat through hours of a Board meeting only to be told he could not speak because he’s not a current resident. The same treatment was given to 15-year Parkrose bus driver and educational assistant Colleen Van Houten, and to Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board member Tim Stoelb, who is state president of the 18,600-member OSEA. The Board tells its OSEA-represented employees that only chapter president Rick Doyle can speak for them.

And when Doyle speaks, he gets a chilly reception. At the Jan. 27 board meeting, superintendent Dr. Karen Fischer Gray praised board members and every other speaker, but looked down at her papers when Doyle took the podium for his allotted spot. When Doyle called for the district to engage in open dialogue with the union, she shot back in a combative tone.

“I’m here, Rick,” Gray said. “My door is always open.”

Board Chair Grassel moved as if to calm Gray, but she waved him off. “I get to say what I think,” she said.

Gray told the Labor Press the move to outsource busing is dictated by the district’s need to look for economic efficiencies. Budget cuts have resulted in a 182-day school year, down from 191 days before the recession. The district has no reserves, and ended the most recent school year with \$209,000 in its bank account. For a district with a \$30 million annual budget, that’s a cushion of less than 1 percent.

Any contractor would have to offer current drivers a job, Gray said, and would have to pay the same wages; under the OSEA contract, drivers start at \$14.57 an hour, and rise to \$17.32 after six

years.

Gray also defended the board’s public comment policies.

“You do not, by any law, have to give any union president time at your board meeting,” Gray said.

“People showed up to that meeting that have never showed up to a meeting in my district ever,” Gray said. “I’ve never seen those people. They haven’t been in all the meetings we’ve talked about busing. Why are they showing up now?”

The union may challenge the outsourcing effort in court. In the 2009 session of the Oregon Legislature, OSEA was able to win passage of HB 2867, a law that requires local public employers — when they’re considering contracting out services normally provided



OSEA members and supporters rally Jan. 27 before a Parkrose School District board meeting. The board is considering contracting out school bus service.

by their employees — to conduct a cost comparison estimating the cost of doing the work in-house and by a contractor. If the estimate shows savings come solely from lower wages and benefits, the law says they may not contract out the work.

But OSEA legislative director Tricia Smith says some employers are gaming the law, claiming non-personnel savings without substantiation, in order to move forward with outsourcing.

“Districts are thumbing their noses at the intent of the law, creating bogus cost analyses with made-up numbers,” Smith told the Labor Press.

Smith said the Parkrose School District is a good example. To comply with the law, Parkrose paid transportation consultant John Fairchild \$3,500 to produce a two-page spreadsheet. The cost comparison, which includes no written explanatory notes, claims the district would save \$26,677 a year in material costs — and \$247,368.67 a year in salary and benefit costs.

Because the district is required to negotiate with the union over the impact of laying off its drivers, OSEA staff representative Hal Meyerderk had an opportunity to question Fairchild about the spreadsheet. In the meeting, Meyerderk says, Fairchild confirmed that the personnel cost savings would come from slashing worker retirement and health benefits.

Meyerderk says he asked Fairchild what his estimates of non-personnel cost savings were based on. He says the consultant replied that an assumption of 30 percent lower materials costs was based on his “gut feeling” and 30 years experience in the transportation industry. Meyerderk pointed out that profit had been left out of the cost comparison, and Fairchild added an estimate of \$30,000 profit.

A similar analysis by Fairchild for the Central Point School District, near Medford, was the basis of a legal challenge by OSEA. The school district won in a lower court, but OSEA has an appeal pending before the Oregon Court of Appeals.

Parkrose school bus driver Steve Wilson lives less than a block from the bus yard. But he says he’ll move if First Student gets the school bus contract. Wilson previously worked for First Student — after his career driving a semi truck was cut short by medical limitations. He says he would not go back, because First Student annually terminates its drivers at the end of the school year with no promise of rehire, leaving them to collect unemployment insurance and lose their health insurance unless they can afford COBRA payments.

OSEA’s Meyerderk says First Student has 30 percent annual employee turnover.

For the union, the most important part of the Jan. 27 board meeting was a vote to accept Fairchild’s analysis. OSEA urged board members to reject the Fairchild cost comparison, but in the end the board voted 4-1 to accept it. Board member Erick Flores, a Portland school teacher, was the sole member to vote no.

“Nobody is in favor of giving up our school buses,” Flores said at the meeting. “I haven’t received a call from anybody saying this is a good idea.”

Parkrose board member James Trujillo, a senior HR manager at the Port of Portland, explained his yes vote.

“In a resource-constrained environment, it is our duty to augment the resources that make the biggest impact on student learning,” Trujillo said.

The board will hold a work session Feb. 10 at which it will give 30 minutes to OSEA Budget and Research Special-

ist Sara Connors to present a counter to Fairchild’s cost comparison. It’s expected to vote at its Feb. 24 meeting. If it contracts out, the employees would be laid off at the end of the school year. They’d be eligible to stay on with the new contractor, but most likely would not have benefits.

OSEA is calling on supporters, particularly Parkrose residents, to call school board members. It hopes to send a message that the employees aren’t “just” bus drivers; they look out for the kids, model behavioral expectations, and teach them right from wrong. School bus drivers are the first district employees the children of Parkrose see in the morning, and the last they see at the end of the day. Current drivers have many years of positive relationships with students, something a high-turnover contractor could never match. And it’s anti-worker to outsource school bus transportation, OSEA argues, since over 90 percent of the estimated cost savings would come from slashing health and retirement benefits.

Chair Ed Grassel
503-253-0988

Vice Chair Thuy Tran
503-267-3262

James Trujillo
971-285-2195

Erick Flores
503-686-1655

Mary Lu Baetkey
503-253-4423

Superintendent
Dr. Karen Fischer Gray
503-408-2135

Official Notices

BAKERY, CONFECTIONERY, TOBACCO WORKERS AND GRAIN MILLERS 114

Executive Board meets 9 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, followed by a 9:30 a.m. General Membership Meeting, in the meeting room at 7931 NE Halsey, Suite 205, Portland. **PLEASE NOTE:** Two Executive Board positions will be filled at this meeting. If interested, please contact Local 114.

BRICKLAYERS AND ALLIED CRAFTWORKERS 1

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CEMENT MASONS 555

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at 12812 NE Marx St., Portland.

CENTRAL OREGON LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24, at the Social Justice Center, 155 NE Irving Ave., Bend.

COLUMBIA-PACIFIC BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet 10 a.m. Mondays, Feb. 10 and Feb. 17, at Kirkland Union Manor II, 3535 SE 86th.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Electrical Workers Minority Caucus meets 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, in the Executive Boardroom. Residential Unit meets 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, in the Dispatch Lobby.

Wasco Unit meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at Northern Wasco County PUD, 2345 River Road, The Dalles.

Sound and Communication Unit meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, in the Meeting Hall.

Washington Unit Meeting meets at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Round Table Pizza, 5016 NE Thurston Way, Vancouver, Washington.

Bylaws Committee meets 5:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17, in the Executive Boardroom.

Executive Board Meeting meets 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, in the Executive Boardroom.

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

DEATH ASSESSMENTS: No. 2375, John A. Yeager; No. 2376, Andrew A. Delgado; No. 2377, Travis J. Olsen; and No. 2378, Vincent S. Bennett. The February 2014 assessment is \$1.50.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, 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 5, at 2807 NW Fruit Valley Rd., Vancouver, Wash.

FIRE FIGHTERS 1660

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

GLASS WORKERS 740

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

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

INSULATORS 36

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12. Members meet 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 14. Meetings are at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

IRON WORKERS 29

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

IRON WORKERS SHOPMEN 516

Executive Board meets 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13. Members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27. Meetings are at 11620 NE Ainsworth Cir., #300, Portland.

LABORERS 320

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

LABORERS 483

MUNICIPAL EMPLOYEES

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18, preceded by a 5:30 p.m. stewards' meeting, at the Musicians Hall, 325 NE 20th 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.

LANE COUNTY

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26, at 1116 South A St., Springfield.

LANE, COOS, CURRY &

DOUGLAS BUILDING TRADES

Delegates meet at noon Wednesday, Feb. 26, at the Springfield Training Center, 2861 Pierce Parkway, Springfield.

LINN-BENTON-LINCOLN

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26, preceded by a 6:30 p.m. Executive Board meeting, at 1400 Salem Ave., Albany.

LINOLEUM LAYERS 1236

Portland area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

MARION-POLK-YAMHILL

LABOR COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 26, followed by a 7 p.m. general meeting at 1400 Tandem Ave. SE, Salem.

METAL TRADES COUNCIL

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 13. Delegates meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25. Meetings are at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

MID-COLUMBIA

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at 3313 W. 2nd, The Dalles.

MOLDERS 139B

Members meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, 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. 19, preceded by a 6 p.m. stewards' meeting, at the AFSCME Union Office, 6025 E Burnside, Portland.

NORTHWEST OREGON

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 24, at IBEW Local 48 Hall, 15937 NE Airport Way, Portland.

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL

EMPLOYEES 11

Members meet 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 11, at 3815 Columbia St., Vancouver. **PLEASE NOTE:** Nominations will be accepted for the following positions: Executive Secretary-Treasurer (3 year term); Utilities (2 year term); Public Employees (2 year term); Labor Organizations (2 year term), At-Large (2 year term); Trustee (3 year term); and Trustee (2 year term). Nominees must be present to accept, or have written acceptance of nomination submitted at this meeting. Nominations will be held in accordance with Article VII, Sections 1-4 of the Constitution of the Office & Professional Employees International Union, Local No. 11 which states the following:

NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS
Section 1. Nomination of officers shall take place on the second Tuesday in March at the General Membership meeting of each year. No person may be nominated, appointed or elected, or in any way represent the members of this Union unless he or she has been a member of this Union in continuous good standing for at least twelve (12) months preceding the election.

Section 2. No member shall be a candidate for more than one (1) office.

Section 3. Members need not be present to be nominated for any union office. Those members, who by virtue of geography are unable to either attend or have other members from their area attend to place their name in nomination, may notify the Union office of their desire to be nominated. The Executive Secretary Treasurer shall nominate or cause to be nominated those same members. The members, who are not present at the nomination meeting to accept the nomination, must have their acceptance of the nomination in writing, available at the nomination meeting. Only those candidates who accept the nomination shall be considered valid candidates.

Section 4. Except as provided for in Section 3 above, write-in nominations or nominations by proxy shall not be allowed.

***only members that reside outside of Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington Counties in Oregon, and Clark County in Washington may utilize the geographical exception in Section 3.

OPERATING ENGINEERS 701

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

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at North Bend/Coos Bay Labor Center, 3427 Ash St., North Bend.

District 3 members meet 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at Holiday Inn Express, 285 Peninger Rd., Central Point.

District 2 members meet 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Comfort Suites, 969 Kruse Way, Springfield.

PAINTERS & DRYWALL

FINISHERS 10

Members meet 6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 11145 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland. Website: www.iupatlocal10.org

PORTLAND CITY & METROPOLITAN EMPLOYEES 189

Executive Board meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11. General membership meets 6:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25.

Meetings are at 6025 E Burnside, Portland.

ROOFERS & WATERPROOFERS 49

Members meet 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13. Executive Board meets 7 p.m. Thursday, March 6. Meetings are at 5032 SE 26th Ave., Portland.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

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

Medford area members meet 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at Wild River Pizza, 2684 N Pacific Hwy., Medford.

Eugene area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Local 16 Hall, 1887 Laura St., Springfield.

Coos Bay area members meet 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at Abby's Pizza, 997 First St., Coos Bay.

Women of Sheet Metal Workers Local 16 (WOSM) meet 4:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at Beaulahland, 118 NE 28th Ave., Portland. Children are welcome.

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

SIGN PAINTERS &

PAINT MAKERS 1094

Members meet 3:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 17, in the District Office, at 11105 NE Sandy Blvd., Portland.

SOUTHEASTERN OREGON

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at the Woodworkers Hall, 3836 Altamont Drive, Klamath Falls.

SOUTHERN OREGON

CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 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.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON

LABOR COUNCIL

Delegates meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, preceded by an Executive Board meeting, at a location to be determined.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Portland area members meet 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 21, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin. The following locations will be able to participate remotely in the Regular Business Meeting at 7:30 on the 3rd Friday of every month: Bend, Eugene/Springfield, Eureka, Medford, and Salem.

Astoria area members meet 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, at the Astoria Labor Temple, 926 Duane, Astoria. Brookings area members meet 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25. Please contact Craig Spjut at 707-496-1767 for location information.

Coos Bay area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the Coos Bay Training Center, 2nd & Kruse, Coos Bay.

Klamath Falls area members meet 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 4816 S 6th St., Klamath Falls.

The Dalles area members meet 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the United Steelworkers Local 9170 Union Hall, The Dalles.

Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council disbands

The Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council has disbanded.

Low turnout and an abundance of other active union retiree groups, including the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, led to the decision to dissolve, said interim secretary-treasurer Ambrose Bittner.

The group was formed in 1997 and met monthly in Southeast Portland. For many years it selected retired union members to its "Labor Hall of Fame." They quit doing that in 2008.

Bittner said the group has filed paperwork with the national AFL-CIO to dissolve. Once approved, the council's general fund of approximately \$500 will be handed over to the Oregon AFL-CIO.

Bittner encouraged union retirees to attend their respective local union retiree clubs, and/or to join the Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans.

"There was a lot of duplication in what our group did, and what the other groups were doing," Bittner said. "It's not like we're going away. We'll still be active."

12th annual Faith and Labor breakfast Feb. 19 at St. Philip Neri Parish

The 12th annual Faith and Labor Breakfast will be held Wednesday, Feb. 19, at 7:15 a.m. at St. Philip Neri, Carlin Hall, 2408 SE 16th Ave (off Division).

The keynote speaker will be Kim Bobo, executive director and founder of Interfaith Workers Justice. Bobo is the author of "Wage Theft in America: Why Millions of Americans Are Not Being Paid, And What We Can Do About It" and co-author of "Organizing for Social Change." She was named one of UTNE Reader's 50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Your World in 2009.

The breakfast is sponsored by Portland Jobs with Justice, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Northwest Oregon Labor Council.

"We will bring together workers to tell us about their efforts to gain respect on the job, and faith leaders who will describe how and why they act on behalf of workers' dignity. Together we will explore ways to dignify work and take action," said Chris Phillips of Portland Jobs with Justice.

Cost is \$15, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

For more information, or to register, email Marco at marco@jwjpdx.org or call 971-242-8704.

Retiree Meeting Notices

ALLIANCE FOR RETIRED AMERICANS OREGON CHAPTER

Executive Board meets 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, followed by an 11 a.m. General membership meeting at 3642 SE 32nd, Portland. All retirees are welcome to attend.

BAKERS 114

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 27, at Izzy's Pizza & Buffet, 1307 NE 102nd Ave. & Halsey, Portland.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS 48

Retirees, wives and friends meet for lunch 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11, at Tebo's Restaurant, 19120 SE

McLoughlin, Gladstone. For reservations and more information, please contact Glenn Hodgkinson at 503-656-0028.

ELEVATOR CONSTRUCTORS 23

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12, at HomeTown Buffet, 10542 SE Washington St., Portland.

GLASS WORKERS 740

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at Izzy's Pizza & Buffet, 1307 NE 102nd Ave. & Halsey, Portland.

OREGON AFSCME

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Tuesday,

Feb. 18, at the AFSCME office, 6025 E. Burnside, Portland. Call Michael Arken for information 1-800-521-5954 ext. 226.

SHEET METAL WORKERS 16

Retirees meet 11:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at Taste of Asia, 2605 NE Fourth Plain Blvd., Vancouver.

UNITED ASSOCIATION 290

Retirees meet 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 20, at 20210 SW Teton Ave., Tualatin.

Local Motion

December 2013

A list of Oregon and Southwest Washington workplaces deciding whether to be union-represented – as reported by the National Labor Relations Board and the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Voting in union elections

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Yes	No	
12/12	Canby Telecom (Canby) IBEW Local 89	5	13	☞
12/20	OnTrac express messengers (Vancouver) Teamsters Local 58	6	3	☞

Unionizing by majority sign-up

Date	Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
11/5	City of Dallas Emergency Medical Services EMTs (Dallas) IAFF Local 4196	6

Requesting a union election

Workplace (Location) Union	Number of workers in unit
No unionization elections were requested in December 2013 for Oregon or SW Washington.	

LEGEND

☞ : workers will be union-represented ☞ : workers will be on their own

Oregon AFL-CIO prioritizes bills for 35-day legislative session

SALEM — Oregon lawmakers began a short legislative session Feb. 3, with plans to adjourn by March 9. Coordinating for organized labor, the Oregon AFL-CIO is prioritizing several bills.

One would make it illegal for large employers to cut workers' hours in order to avoid the obligation to provide health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. Federal penalties of \$2,000 a year per full-time employee were supposed to kick in Jan. 1 for companies with over 50 employees — if any of their employees purchased government-subsidized coverage through the new individual insurance exchanges because their employer wasn't providing it. But President Barack Obama last fall announced he would delay enforcement of that provision for one year. Some companies are seeking to avoid the penalty by reducing hours below 30 in a week — the law's threshold for defining full-time. Under **Oregon Senate Bill 1543**, sponsored by State Senator Michael Dembrow, companies could owe back pay and punitive damages if they reduce hours for the sole purpose of evading the law's requirements. SB 1543 also contains a provision making health insurance available to community college and public university faculty whose part-time hours at several

schools add up to full time.

The other priority bill, says Oregon AFL-CIO Legislative Director Elana Guiney, would make it clear that apprenticeship training programs are part of Oregon Governor John Kitzhaber's "40-40-20" education goal. Under legislation passed in 2011, the state set a goal that by 2025, all adult Oregonians would have at least a high school diploma: 40 percent would have a bachelors degree or higher, 40 percent would have an associates degree or some kind of post-secondary certificate, and 20 percent would have just a high school diploma or GED. **SB 1543**, which passed unanimously out of committee on the session's first day, would add apprenticeship programs registered with State Apprenticeship and Training Council to that middle 40. They were overlooked previously.

Guiney said the state labor federation will also be pushing to revive plans for a new I-5 bridge over the Columbia River. The Oregon Legislature last year approved spending \$450 million for the bridge on condition that the Washington Legislature match it and the project get federal funding. But the Washington Senate refused to vote on a transportation funding package. Since then, Kitzhaber has tried to renew funding on

a go-it-alone basis, but Oregon legislators have balked. If it's ever built, the bridge would be a massive employer of construction workers. But Kitzhaber has said he will declare the project dead if the Oregon Legislature doesn't act during this session to resuscitate it. As of press time, no bridge building bill had been introduced.

Guiney said the Oregon AFL-CIO will also act to support bills backed by affiliates and other unions. Those could include bills that would:

- Curb initiative petition circulator abuses;
- Bring certain firefighters currently classed as supervisors into the category of workers eligible for union representation;
- Let private individuals hire home care workers for themselves or family from the state registry maintained by the Home Care Commission; and
- Require agencies employing individuals with disabilities to pay state minimum wage and otherwise comply with state labor and occupational health and safety laws.

IMPORTANT DATES: Work session for bills must be set by Feb. 7. Only bills that make the deadline and are scheduled for a hearing by Feb. 13 will move forward this session.



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Bellevue - 425.450.9500

Bellingham - 360.734.1999

Bonney Lake - 253.862.1015

Bothell - 425.806.0077

Carnation - 425.333.4101

Everett - 425.513.2000

Federal Way - 253.838.3232

Issaquah - 425.391.7645

Kent - 253.856.3384

Lakewood - 253.581.2888

Lynnwood - 425.744.1022

Maple Valley - 425.432.4131

Marysville - 360.651.1882

Monroe - 360.794.0717

Mount Vernon - 360.848.6777

Olympia - 360.866.7669

Poulsbo - 360.697.2777

Puyallup - 253.770.4342

Renton - 425.430.2029

Redmond - 206.953.5850

SeaTac - 206.243.7788

Seattle - 206.623.2666

Sequim - 360.797.1100

Shoreline - 206.542.4444

NEW! Silverdale -

360.915.5977

Snohomish - 425-374.8451

Tacoma - 253.759.9291

Tukwila - 425.291.9555

Eastern Washington

Ellensburg - 509.790.0080

Kennewick - 509.737.8555

Pasco - 509.542.9981

Spokane - 509.536.9999

Spokane (North) - 509.468.0866

Spokane Valley - 509.924.0055

Walla Walla - 509.522.2220

Wenatchee - 509.886.0500

Yakima - 509.457.5050

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Machinists Union challenge slate moves forward

A Portland Boeing worker is in the running for national IAM office

A team of seven candidates has cleared the first hurdle in a challenge to the national leadership of 577,000 member International Association of Machinists (IAM). The slate is led by Connecticut railroad mechanic and former union rep Jay Cronk, and it includes Pat Maloney, a Local Lodge 63 member at Boeing's Gresham aircraft parts plant.

On Jan. 25, roughly 800 local lodges around the United States held nominating meetings. Cronk's slate received nominations in about 95 of them. In 14 local lodges, candidates on Cronk's slate were the only ones nominated, and thus were automatically endorsed by those locals. The other 80-plus local lodges will choose who to endorse in meetings that are scheduled to be held Feb. 8.

In the Portland area, Maloney's Local Lodge 63 was the only local to nominate the Cronk slate; the slate of incumbent Thomas Buffenbarger was also nominated in Local 63, so it will hold the Feb. 8 special meeting to de-



PAT MALONEY

cide which to endorse.

Any candidates winning the endorsement of at least 25 local lodges on Feb. 8 will appear on the national ballot, which will be voted on by members at the first regularly scheduled meeting of each local lodge in April.

The entire process is being overseen by the U.S. Department of Labor, which found last year that IAM election rules ran afoul of a federal law, and called for a re-run election.

Besides Cronk, who's running for IAM international president, the slate includes Dale Cancienne for general secretary treasurer and five candidates for general vice president, including Maloney. Because election rules require that locals nominate for all eight general vice president positions, the Cronk slate also added three incumbent vice presidents to its list: Mark Blondin, Gary Allen, and Lynn Tucker. That means that regardless of whoever prevails in April, those three will continue on as vice presidents. Allen is currently assigned to IAM's western region, while Blondin, who for years was assigned to the aerospace division, has been reassigned to IAM's southern region.

Bernard changes mind, votes to give county ambulance contract to AMR

Clackamas County Commissioner Jim Bernard has had a change of heart and will vote to award the county's emergency ambulance service to American Medical Response (AMR).

At a commissioners work session Feb. 4, Bernard proposed that the county negotiate a new ambulance contract with AMR. He was supported by Commissioners Martha Schrader and Paul Savas, and opposed by Chair John Ludlow and Commissioner Tootie Smith.

About 140 paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and dispatchers are members of Teamsters Local 223.

AMR won the open bidding process on April 24, 2013, as it was the only company to submit a proposal. Nonunion rival Metro West Ambulance had a bid prepared, but missed the filing deadline.

Commissioners voted 3-2 in May to "issue an intent to award" the contract to AMR, with Bernard and Ludlow dissenting. AMR then entered into negotiations with county staff and other stakeholders and came to terms on a final contract.

But when Savas and Schrader tried to move the contract forward, they were opposed by Ludlow and Smith. Bernard abstained from voting, leaving the board deadlocked at 2-2. In recusing himself, Bernard

claimed he had been "threatened" by AMR: An email by AMR General Manager Randy Lauer said he would raise money to back a candidate to run against Bernard and refers to Bernard as "enemy #1."

AMR and the Teamsters Union think that Bernard — a former mayor of Milwaukie and the board's longest-serving member (since 2008) — orchestrated putting the ambulance service contract out for bid in 2012. AMR has held the ambulance service contract in Clackamas County since 1993.

Bernard, who is up for re-election this year, denies the allegation.

The board's inaction spurred residents of Clackamas County and employees of AMR to attend weekly commission meetings and work sessions, where they pressed commissioners to finalize the contract. The county's Emergency Medical Services Council and all of the county's fire departments agreed that AMR should get the contract.

At a standing-room-only work session on Jan. 21, Bernard surprised everyone when he voted with Ludlow and Smith *not to accept* AMR's bid, and to reissue the request for pro-

posals (RFP).

AMR then filed a \$20 million tort claim demanding that commissioners approve its proposal or, at least extend its existing contract for four years. The company said confidential information had been published on the county's website that revealed trade secrets, which put it at a disadvantage should the county issue a new RFP.

Bernard surprised everyone again at the Feb. 4 work session.

"Two weeks ago, I made a decision that I felt strongly about," Bernard said. "On quiet reflection, I've realized that the decision I made was the wrong one."

Bernard apologized to residents of Clackamas County and to AMR employees, "who are my heroes."

Bernard said his goal has always been to provide the best emergency response service possible for the best price. "I failed to see that we had achieved a contract that is not only responsive, but is at a reduced price, is innovative, and has a greater partnership," he said. "These are all things that we can be proud of, and now it's time to move forward."

"I am grateful that it's not too late to do the right thing."

AFSCME backs Bailey in Multnomah County

At its Jan. 15 meeting, members of AFSCME Local 88 voted to endorse Jules Bailey for Multnomah County Commission. Local 88 represents 2,600 employees of Multnomah County. Bailey and fellow candidate Brian Wilson are vying for the commission seat vacated by Deb Kafoury, who's running for County chair.

Local 88's political action committee interviewed Bailey and Wilson, and held a forum for members to hear from the two. In the members-only discussion that followed, members praised both candidates, but Bailey was the unanimous pick in the vote to endorse.

Bailey is a three-term state representative with a stellar pro-labor voting record. In the 2013 legislative session, Oregon AFSCME awarded him a 110 percent rating: Not only did he vote in accord with the union 100 percent of the time, but he worked behind the scenes to advance legislation.

Bailey was one of only a handful of legislators to publicly criticize Gov. John Kitzhaber's "grand bargain" legislation in a September 2013 special session, and he voted against the legislation, which cut public employee pensions (PERS) and gave big tax breaks to small businesses. Ironically, the Oregonian editorial board singled out Bailey for that defiance, writing that "County voters should remember his

position on PERS reform." Bailey said he'd be only too glad if they did: Cutting pension benefits of retired workers is wrong.

For Bailey, PERS is personal, too: His father, a lifelong AFSCME member, collects a public employee pension after a career at the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. Bailey credits his dad's union-negotiated health benefits for the affordable medical treatment he received when at age 15 he fractured his spine in three places.

As a legislator, he also helped pass "green jobs" legislation, including the law that created Clean Energy Works Oregon and set wage, benefit, and apprenticeship standards for workers on publicly subsidized residential weatherization projects.

Bailey came to labor's aid outside the Capitol too: walking strike picket lines with members of AFSCME at the Metropolitan Education Service District, officiating in a card-check unionization effort, and writing a letter to Xerox calling on them to settle a contract.

The other contender for county commission, Brian Wilson, is a commercial real estate developer and investor. At the Local 88 forum, he said all the right things on the labor litmus issues: Prevailing wage, he said, is the right thing to do, while as for "union busting" Ini-

tiative Petition 9, "it's bullshit." Wilson also earned kudos from Local 88 members for his volunteer service on countless task forces and commissions, including his work alongside the union to pass a special library funding district.

But between the two it was hard not to see Bailey as the union pick.

Bailey said he would commit to raising money to oppose IP 9, which he said is part of a national effort to attack unions.

"We don't just want to defeat it," Bailey told Local 88 members. "We want it to go down in flames."

Besides Local 88, Bailey is endorsed by Communication Workers of America Local 7901, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 555, and IBEW Local 48.

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LERC to host PERC March 20

The University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) will host its 28th Public Employment Relations Conference (PERC) Thursday, March 20, at the Salem Conference Center. PERC is a gathering of public sector labor relations professionals from across Oregon, including attorneys, neutrals, and representatives from both unions and management.

This year, a morning plenary session will cover recent cases before the Oregon Employment Relations Board. That will be followed by workshops dealing with labor lawyer ethics, Obamacare's impact on public employee health insurance, and mediation, arbitration, and family and medical leave and other topics. The conference will conclude with a social hour.

For more details and registration information visit lerc.uoregon.edu or contact Helen Moss at hmoss@uoregon.edu.



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TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP: \$24 million given to Congress by companies with access to working documents

By **DONNY SHAW**

The United States is currently engaged in secret negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a multinational trade agreement with the goal of liberalizing trade among a dozen or so countries that border on the Pacific Ocean. A draft of the TPP chapter on intellectual property that was published by WikiLeaks shows that the U.S. has been pushing the other countries involved in the negotiations to make their laws on copyright, patents and trademarks more agreeable to U.S. companies in the film, telecommunications, and pharmaceuticals industries, among others.

Aside from select members of the Obama Administration, the only people with full access to the working docu-

ments on the TPP negotiations are the members of the United States Trade Representative's (USTR) trade advisory system, including the 18-member Industry Trade Advisory Committee on Intellectual Property Rights (ITAC-15). Members of ITAC-15 include representatives from businesses and industry groups like the Recording Industry Association of America, Verizon, and Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America. No public-interest groups, academics, or other non-industry experts serve on the committee.

The industry trade advisory system was created by Congress, and membership is partly based on recommendations made from senators and representatives. The organizations represented on ITAC-15 include several top politi-

cal spenders, who combined have given millions of dollars to members of Congress in recent years.

A MapLight analysis of data provided by the Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org) reveals 18 organizations represented by ITAC-15 gave nearly \$24 million to current members of Congress from Jan. 1, 2003 to Dec. 31, 2012. The contributions are from employees and political action committees (PACs). Excluded are contributions to party committees such as the Republican National Committee or the Democratic National Committee.

MapLight is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that reveals money's influence on politics.

AT&T has given more than \$8 million to current members of Congress,

more than any other organization represented by ITAC-15.

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio), has received \$433,350 from organizations represented by ITAC-15, more than any other member of Congress.

Democrats in Congress have received \$11.4 million from organizations represented by ITAC-15, while Republicans in Congress have received \$12.6 million.

The members of Congress sponsoring fast-track legislation, which would allow President Obama to block Congress from submitting amendments to the TPP, have received a combined \$758,295 from organizations repre-

sented by ITAC-15. They include Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucus (\$140,601), Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (\$178,850), House Ways and Means Committee Chairman David Camp (\$216,250), House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Trade Chairman Devin Nunes (\$86,000), and House Rules Committee Chairman Pete Sessions (\$136,594).

(Editor's Note: This article was submitted to MapLight by reporter Donny Shaw. MapLight is a nonpartisan research organization that reveals money's influence on politics in the U.S. Congress.)

ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY ITAC-15

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CONGRESS SINCE JAN. 1, 2003

AT&T	\$8,056,939
General Electric <i>(excludes contributions from GE Financial Assurance)</i>	\$5,261,753
Verizon	\$5,021,681
Johnson & Johnson	\$1,803,170
Cisco	\$1,413,448
Biotechnology Industry Organization	\$551,792
Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America	\$548,155
Recording Industry Association of America	\$493,986
Mylan Inc.	\$473,050
Gilead Sciences	\$196,150
Entertainment Software Association	\$114,650
Zippo	\$25,250
Accessory Network Group	\$4,100
Infectious Disease Research Institute	\$1,500
Copyright Clearance Center	\$860
U.S.-China Business Council	\$0
MDB Capital Group	\$0
Coalition for Intellectual Property Rights	\$0
TOTAL	\$23,966,484

LERC to hold Portland Metro Leadership School

University of Oregon Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) will hold its Metro Leadership School Saturday, Feb. 22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Sheet Metal Training Center, 2379 NE 178th Ave., Portland.

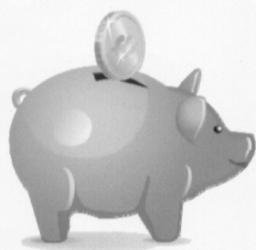
The school is a chance for union officers and activists to develop skills and connect with fellow unionists from around the metro region. Participants take one of two classes:

In Advanced Grievance Handling, instructor David Alexander will focus on effective strategies for investigating, analyzing and presenting grievances in emerging arenas like hostile work environment and bullying, use of electronic technology in the workplace, and disability accommodation. The class will also look at alternative approaches to filing grievances and their impact on worker morale and union solidarity.

In Tools for Effective Union Leadership, instructors Raahi Reddy and Bob Bussel will present different approaches to leadership, and discuss techniques of motivating members to become more active trade unionists.

The class fee is \$65 per person, and the registration deadline is Feb. 14. For more details and registration information visit lerc.uoregon.edu or contact Barbara Byrd at bbyrd@uoregon.edu.

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Union numbers in United States held steady in 2013

Washington again the fourth-most unionized state, while Oregon drops to 12th

Union membership held steady in 2013 at 11.3 percent of the U.S. workforce, according to the latest annual report from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a unit of the U.S. Department of Labor. Slight growth in the workforce meant there were 162,000 more union members in 2013 than in 2012, bringing total U.S. union membership to a little over 14.5 million.

That's still down quite a bit from 1983 — the first year for which comparable data are available — when there were 17.7 million union workers, and union members made up 20.1 percent of the workforce. But it suggests union membership decline may have slowed or stopped for the time being.

Besides union members, another 1.5

million workers were represented by a union but chose not to become members. That brings the total represented by a union to 16 million, 12.4 percent of the workforce.

The union membership figures varied by occupation, industry, and by age, gender, and race:

- Public sector workers had a union membership rate of 35.3 percent, five times the rate of private sector workers, 6.7 percent.

- Unionization was highest in education, library, and protective services occupations, at 35.3 percent. Other heavily unionized sectors included utilities at 25.6 percent, transportation and warehousing at 19.6 percent, telecommunications at 14.4 percent, construction at 14.1 percent, and manufacturing at 10.1 percent. The least unionized industry sectors were agriculture and finance, where only 1.0 percent of workers were union members, and food and beverage services, 1.3 percent. Farming, fishing and forestry were the least unionized occupations, at 2.1 percent.

- Older workers were up to three times as likely to be union members: Over 15 percent of workers 45 to 64 were union members, compared with 11.0 percent for workers 25 to 34 and 4.8 percent for workers under 25.

- Men had slightly higher rates (13.0 percent) than women (11.8 percent.)

- Black workers were most likely to be in a union (15.0 percent) compared to whites (12.2 percent), Asians (10.4 percent) and Hispanics (10.3 percent).

New York had the highest union

membership rate in the nation (24.4 percent), followed by Alaska (23.1 percent) and Hawaii (22.1 percent). North Carolina had the lowest rate (3.0 percent), followed by Arkansas (3.5 percent) and South Carolina and Mississippi (3.7 percent).

Washington ranked fourth most unionized, at 18.9 percent. Oregon ranked Number 12, at 13.9 percent. That was down from ninth place (15.7 percent) in 2012, and seventh place (17.1 percent) in 2011. Among other neighboring states, California had 16.4 percent, Nevada had 14.6 percent, and Idaho had 4.7 percent.

The data on union membership were collected as part of the Current Population Survey (CPS), a monthly sample survey of about 60,000 households covering employment in the civilian non-institutional population. The BLS union membership report is a pretty accurate depiction of trends at the national level, but at the state level, data can be misinterpreted because minor year-to-year fluctuations — particularly in less populous states — may not be statistically significant. Oregon's percentage in the survey has fluctuated in the last 10 years, with a low of 13.8 percent in 2006 and a high of 17.1 percent in 2011.

Given that caveat, Oregon's union membership was estimated at 208,000 in 2013, while Washington had an estimated 546,000 union members.

The report also showed that union members out-earn nonunion workers, on average. Full-time union workers had

median weekly earnings of \$950 compared to \$750 for nonunion workers. The difference was even bigger in some occupations: Median weekly earnings for union construction workers was \$1,096, compared to \$713 for nonunion. Collective bargaining agreements account for some of the earnings difference, but not all: Union workers are more likely to work in high-wage states and at larger employers, and are somewhat more likely to work in higher-wage occupations and industries.

In a statement accompanying this year's report, U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez said the decline in union membership in recent decades has contributed to more working families

struggling to get by. "Workers' ability to form unions and engage in collective bargaining has been a cornerstone of a strong middle class," Perez declared. "When workers have a seat at the table, they are better able to bargain for their fair share of the value they helped create; and that leads to greater economic security and economic mobility for everyone."

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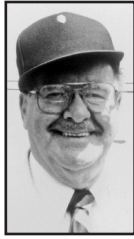
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IN MEMORIAM

LLOYD KNUDSEN, a former political and education director for the Oregon AFL-CIO and a longtime member of IBEW Local 48, died Jan. 31. He was 88.



KNUDSEN

Knudsen joined IBEW Local 48 at age 17 when he took a job at the Oregon Shipyard in St. Johns after graduating from Tigard High School. At the time of his death, he was a 71-year member of the union.

He became a business agent for IBEW Local 48 in 1964. He served as president of the Portland Building and Construction Trades Council, which later became the Columbia Pacific BCTC.

Knudsen was elected political and legislative director of the Oregon AFL-CIO in 1969, and held that office until 1975.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he worked as executive secretary-treasurer of the Portland Metal Trades Council. He also served on the board of the Pacific Coast Shipyard Health and Welfare Trust Fund.

He later returned to the field as an electrician before retiring in 1984. In retirement he operated two used car lots.

Knudsen was involved in politics

throughout his career. He served as the Oregon Democratic Party's labor chairman for many years.

LLOYD BERNARD KNUDSEN was born July 20, 1925 in McIntosh, South Dakota. His family moved to Southwest Portland when he was young, and he grew up in the Garden Home area.

He enlisted in the U.S. Navy and saw action in World War II. After boot camp in northern Idaho, he was sent to the University of Minnesota for electrical engineering training and played football for the Golden Gophers in the Big 10.

Knudsen served six years on the board of directors of the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI). He was a founder of the Oregon Maritime Center and Museum, and he served on the boards of the Rose Festival, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the American Red Cross, and the Cascade Pacific Boy Scout Council.

Knudsen is survived by his son, Larry, who is a member of Painters Local 10. He was preceded in death by his wife Ann, and longtime companion Peg Dereli.

TOM WORLEY, a retired business manager of Portland Iron Workers Local 29, passed away at his home in Ridgefield, Washington, Jan. 13, a few weeks shy of his 79th birthday.



WORLEY

THOMAS J. WORLEY was born Jan. 22, 1935, to Clarence and Mary Worley in Seattle. He was the fifth of eight children.

The family moved to Portland when Tom was in the first grade. He attended Central Catholic High School, then enlisted in the United States Navy in the Korean War. He served from February 1952 to January 1956, and spent 18 months on a ship in wartime waters off the coast of Korea.

Worley began his career in the Iron Workers Union when he entered its apprenticeship program on Sept. 1, 1958. He helped build the Interstate Bridge connecting Vancouver, Washington, and Portland across the Columbia River; and he was the general foreman on the construction of the Fremont Bridge over the Willamette River.

Worley served on the union's Executive Board and Examining Board, was vice president, and was president of the Iron Workers Credit Union.

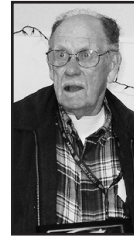
He worked as an assistant business

agent for nine years while his brother LeRoy was the business agent and financial secretary-treasurer. After LeRoy moved up to the post of international representative, Tom later was elected as Local 29's business manager. Tom Worley retired in 1993.

He was named into the Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council's Labor Hall of Fame in July 2002.

Worley is survived by his wife of 60 years, Unette; two daughters, Unette Marie and Mary Ann; two sons, Tom Jr. and Douglas; eight grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. His sons are members of Iron Workers Local 29.

GARNER POOL, a 60-plus year member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, died Jan. 3 at age 90.



POOL

A barber by trade, Pool served on the Executive Board of Local 555, as well as on the executive boards of union locals prior to a major merger in 1986 that created Local 555. He worked as a union barber in Albany, Oregon, until 2012.

Pool was a charter member of the Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. It was founded in 1948.

GARNER POOL was born in Brentwood, Arkansas, on May 30, 1923. His family moved to Oregon in 1934, where he graduated from Shedd High School in 1941.

Pool served in the U.S. Navy from 1942-48. He was active in the American Legion and VFW. He helped create the Linn County Veterans Memorial. He was the VFW veteran of the year in 2001 and 2003, American Legion veteran of the year in 2007, and grand marshal of the Albany Veterans Day Parade in 2009.

Pool was preceded in death by his first wife of 51 years, Myrtle.

He is survived by his second wife, Arlene; four daughters; two sons; 13

grandchildren and 15 great grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions can be made to the Linn County Veterans Memorial or the American Legion Post 10 Building Fund in care of Fisher Funeral Home, 306 SW Washington St. Albany Or. 97321.

JERRY KRAHN, a longtime business agent for the former Oregon State District Council of Carpenters, Pacific Northwest District Council of Carpenters, and Carpenters Local 247, passed away Jan. 13. He was 77.

GERALD 'JERRY' DANIEL KRAHN was born April 27, 1936 in Rochester, Minn. After graduation from Lourdes High School in Rochester, he met and married Hildegard 'Peggy' Benson.

They moved to Portland in 1956. Jerry worked as a carpenter and was a member of Carpenters Local 1020, which later merged into Carpenters 247. When the International Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners merged all Carpenter locals throughout the Pacific Northwest in 2011, Krahn was made an honorary member of Local 156.

Krahn is survived by his wife; two sons, Jay and Jeff; two daughters, Mary and Becky; 15 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Debbe; and son, David.

JAMES 'JIM' ZUFFREA, a longtime union representative of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555 and Meatcutters Local 143A, died Jan. 14. He was 83.

JAMES GREGORY ZUFFREA was born Jan. 2, 1931 in New York.

Affectionately known as "Guido" to his friends, Zuffrea was a union meatcutter in New York before moving to Oregon, where he worked as a meat cutter at Fred Meyer.

A resident of Gladstone, Oregon, Zuffrea was an active member of the Rose City Corvette Club.

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Workers mourn labor troubadour Pete Seeger

NEW YORK (PAI) — Iconic folk singer Pete Seeger, who initially rose to fame as an outspoken pro-worker troubadour died Jan. 28. He was 94.

Seeger never made a secret of his pro-worker stands, even when they got him into political trouble in the McCarthy Era of the 1950s. He was blacklisted by mainstream media, and even kept out of some union halls, after refusing to name names before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

But he never lost his love for social justice, with workers and labor the first and prime among his causes, said Joe Uehlein, formerly of the AFL-CIO Industrial Unions Department, and a folksinger/activist friend of Seeger's.

With Woody Guthrie, Seeger was crusading for workers and inspiring them with his songs long before World War II. After that, he extended his zeal to the civil rights movement. Afterwards came the peace movement, the environmental movement and women's

rights, among other causes.

Seeger introduced "We Shall Overcome" to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in 1957 at an observance in Tennessee. "That song sticks in your head, doesn't it?" the civil rights leader told aides afterwards.

"He spoke about labor, the CIO and the AFL-CIO in glowing terms," Uehlein said.

"Which Side Are You On?" "Talking Union" "There Once Was A Union Maid" "We've Got To Go Down And Join The Union" and "If I Had A Hammer" are just a few of the many pro-worker pro-union songs that Seeger either authored or popularized during his 70-plus year career.

Seeger's involvement with unions extended almost until the day he died. In Buffalo for an anti-war activists' conference late last year, he dropped in at The Newspaper Guild's joint district council meeting, where he sang council members a few songs.

City of Portland workers vote on tentative contract agreement

Some members object to changes on contracting out and comp time

By DON McINTOSH
Associate Editor

After nearly a year of contentious negotiations, about 1,300 City of Portland workers had a chance to vote on a new union contract this week and last. They are members of the seven-union coalition known as the District Council of Trade Unions (DCTU). DCTU represents 1,583 City workers, but a little over 300 of those are “fair share” employees who chose not to join the union and therefore don’t get to vote on the contract.

The tentative four-year deal was reached just as DCTU representatives and city managers prepared to submit their final offers to the state Employment Relations Board.

If ratified, the agreement would cover the period from July 1, 2013

(when the previous contract expired) through June 30, 2017. It provides for wage increases of 0.9 percent retroactive to Aug. 29, followed by annual increases equal to the rise in the Consumer Price Index each July 1 (with a minimum of 1 percent and a maximum of 5 percent).

Retirement and health insurance are unchanged in the tentative agreement. But the agreement completely rewrites a contract article that has limited the City’s ability to contract out members’ work, and it changes rules on “comp time.” Those two items came under fire at a rowdy contract forum Jan. 23 in the Benson High School auditorium. Most of the roughly 80 members who turned out were unhappy with what they characterized as concessions in the proposed contract.

The new contracting out clause is less restrictive to the City. The old language said the City may not contract out work done by bargaining unit members unless it shows that doing so will

save money, and the savings can’t come from lower wages and benefits. The new language says the City *can* contract out for a variety of specified reasons, but that no employee will lose employment because of contracting out.

Comp time, meanwhile, is a feature of the union contract that is highly prized by certain categories of City workers. The current contract gives workers options when they work overtime. For each hour of overtime they work, they can be paid time-and-a-half, or they can get 1.5 hours of compensatory (comp) time — paid time off that they can use later, similar to vacation time. And under the current contract, there’s no limit to the amount of comp time workers can use, except that they can only accrue up to 80 hours of comp time at any given time. Unused comp time can be cashed out at the end of the fiscal year or carried over to the next year.

By contrast, the contract up for ratification would impose a limit of 120 hours of comp time that could be taken in a year, starting calendar year 2015. At the end of the year, employees could retain any comp time they accrued, but would still only be able to use 120 hours in a year. Meanwhile, employees who agree to be on “standby” (off hours that they’re available to work within 30 minutes in the event of an

emergency) would have a separate comp time bank of up to 80 hours at a time for any hours they are called in to work. The City estimated that 84 workers would have been affected if the 120-hour rule had been in place in 2012.

The agreement also contains a provision reacting to a proposed initiative aimed at the 2014 ballot. The proposed initiative would allow union-represented public employees who are not members of the union to refuse to share representation costs. Article 2 in the

proposed DCTU agreement restricts employees from dropping their union membership except for a five-day period in March each year.

Members of the bargaining team recommended ratification, and said it was the best deal likely to be achieved without a strike. AFSCME Local 189 held votes at roughly 50 work sites around the City, while members of Laborers Local 483 voted by mail ballot.

Officials from all seven unions in the DCTU coalition will meet at 5:30 p.m. Feb. 7 to tabulate the results.

...TriMet audit not to ATU’s liking

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safety, service and sustainability.

“There was no followup, and not one of those issues is addressed in the audit report.”

Hansen said the audit report conveys TriMet’s official line on the causes of its problems, and highlights many TriMet initiatives, task forces and committees.

“Highly paid managers are constantly attending meetings,” Hansen said. “Yet the people on the front line seldom see any positive outcomes to justify the time and money being spent on going to meetings.”

TriMet’s McFarlane responded to the audit with a pledge to implement all of its recommendations, prioritizing those that enhance safety. TriMet provided details and a timeline for how it will do that in a 10-page response to the audit.

Two days later, TriMet signaled its intent to move to mediation in contract bargaining with the union, closing down face-to-face bargaining after the 150-day minimum the law requires. The previous contract expired Nov. 30, 2012, and bargaining for a new one got off to a much-delayed start September 7. Calculating from then, 150-day period ended Feb. 4.

Under Oregon law public transit workers cannot strike, so if a settlement cannot be reached via negotiations, an arbitrator selects one of the party’s proposals.

SEIU Local 503 votes not to merge with SEIU Local 49

At a Feb. 1 meeting of the General Council of 47,000-member Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503, delegates voted 118 to 75 not to pursue a merger with 10,000-member SEIU Local 49.

Local 503 represents state workers, home care workers and nursing home workers statewide, while Local 49 represents janitors, security guards and hospital support workers mostly in the Portland area.

Leaders of the two unions had been discussing a merger since 2012, and members of both unions engaged in a process of internal and joint discussions about the benefits and mechanics of merger, or “unification” as it was termed.

Local 503’s Executive Board recommended moving forward with the merger, but did not find majority support for it on the General Council. Local 49 was preparing to take the issue to members, but the General Council vote ends discussion of a merger for now.

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