

Stronger Together!

Classified Staff of Oregon State University SEIU Local 503, OPEU Local 083 at OSU Jan/Feb 2008

It's That Time Again! Local Elections Are Here!

Yes, every two years our Local Offices come up for election: President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary, along with Bargaining Delegate and General Council Delegate positions are opening up.

Serving as an officer is exciting, interesting, not too time-consuming, and truly rewarding. Bargaining Delegates help to shape the contract during negotiations, fighting for better language to defend worker's rights, for better salaries and benefits. General Council Delegates represent us at the Union's bi-annual General Council, the governing body of the Union, a very important responsibility.

Enclosed in this newsletter you will find the nominations form. Please consider who you would like to nominate for these positions, including yourself. Approach the potential candidate and encourage them to accept the nomination by filling out and signing the candidate information and nomination acceptance form enclosed. Use a separate sheet for each nominee.

Only union members may nominate people and only union members may run for office and hold a position. The nominations form must be correctly and completely filled out in order for it to be valid.

Please return the nominations form in the enclosed return envelope, to SEIU Local 503, OPEU, by Monday, March 6, 2008. We hope to mail ballots by March 17, with a return due date of March 31, 2008 at 5:00 pm. At any point in the process eligible names may be written in. Replacement ballots may be obtained after March 17 by calling 1-800-452-2146.

Victories at OSU

We have won the following major victories since our last union newsletter appeared:

- Backpay and changing time for public safety officers.
- Several employees were moved from problem areas to better jobs when the union assisted.
- When a worker was suspended for alleged misuse of sick leave and could not gain a needed job transfer, the union filed a grievance and the suspension was lifted and her transfer rights were restored. The union then filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) when this worker was denied transfer opportunities. The worker had open-heart surgery while the ULP was in play and the union negotiated a cash settlement and a neutral job reference on her behalf.
- Prevented a worker in Extension from receiving unwarranted

discipline and won training opportunities for her.

We have several additional grievances pending which we believe that we will win.

Who Is This “Bob Rossi” Anyway?

Many of you get calls or worksite visits from Bob Rossi, most often referred to as “that union guy with the funny hat.” We hope that everyone at OSU will eventually get to meet Bob, the union staffperson assigned to work with our union at OSU.

Bob works full-time with SEIU Local 503. His main responsibilities are to identify possible new union leaders and activists at OSU, do trainings, assist us with grievances and communications and serve as one link between OSU employees and our larger union.

Bob has worked previously at OSU as our union staffperson. Before he came to Oregon 11 years ago, Bob worked with a higher ed. local union at West Virginia University. He has also worked in the fur and garment industries, around coal mines and in construction. He has been involved in unions for most of the past 34 years. He is also involved in a number of community and religious events. He travels to the Balkans every year.

Bob would welcome a call from you, if only to say hello. He wants to meet every OSU employee and be a part of our local union life at OSU. He tries to return all calls within 24 hours. He can be reached at 1-800-452-2146, x. 141 or 541-752-0183 or 503-581-1505. He can also be reached at rossib@opeuseiu.org.

[Bob actually wrote this himself. We have the greatest respect for Bob and his hard

work and dedication. He is a real asset to our Local. Give him a call and get to know him!--Editor]

Thank You From a Grateful Member

Dear Bob and Jennie, I want to thank you both for meeting with Management on my behalf. Your meeting with my managers was the catalyst that resulted in prompt action. This was the correct course for us to take for my sensitive issues. I applaud you both for your excellent negotiating skills. I am secure in knowing my union will assist us in solving difficult problems. Sincerely, A Food Service Worker 2 at OSU

4th Annual SEIU Charitable Donations Drive A Success!

Almost \$300 in cash, and non-perishable food, clothing, toys and games, personal care products, jewelry, handknit scarves, kitchen and bath and house items, beanie babies, stuffed animals, books and much more was donated by staff, faculty, and students during our Local's 4th Annual Charitable Donations Drive in December.

Donations were delivered to Community Services Consortium to be distributed to the many people in need throughout the area. To see a detailed list of the donations and their destinations, check our website at <http://www.seiu503.org/local083>.

It is so wonderful that so many generous people gave from their hearts and their pocketbooks. Thank you so much!

Even More Words of Thanks!

Mark [our Chief Steward Mark Uhden], Thank you for your help today in my meeting with Management. I'm still upset

but not near as stressed out as I was. Again, Thanks.....very much appreciated!--A Facilities Services Employee

CAPE--Citizen Action for Political Education

Our CAPE membership drive continues. Many of you have received phone calls, emails, or worksite visits from us in the past months, reminding you of the importance of CAPE in the life of public employees and asking you to become a member or, if you are already a member, to increase your contribution. If you haven't already joined or if you would like to increase your contribution, please fill out the enclosed CAPE membership application and return it in the enclosed return envelope. Thanks!

As public employees, our lives are governed by what happens in politics, like it or not.. There's the PERS saga--a ballot measure was passed requiring us to pay for our own PERS pickup, which SEIU successfully fought in the courts, only for PERS to be attacked yet again resulting in the less than favorable IAP accounts and other strange stuff. There are 5 or 6 cases still pending on the PERS issue, brought by SEIU in concert with other unions, fighting for our rights and our retirement.

Fighting bad ballot measures is only part of it. Electing worker- and family-friendly politicians is also important for workers. Holding elected politicians accountable is another component: once they are in office, we need to remind these politicians of their promises and keep them honest. And remember that politicians and their decisions have an impact on our contract negotiations--this means our salaries and benefits. We can't afford not to be involved in politics!

As you can imagine, all this costs money. That's where your CAPE contribution comes in. If you aren't a CAPE member, please fill out the application and send it in. We thank you, your co-workers thank you, and you will thank you when good things happen!

Two More Important Union Concepts--Progressive Discipline and Just Cause

Last month we told you about your most important right--Weingarten Rights. Remember, you have a right to union representation if you are called into a meeting with management that you have reason to believe might result in discipline. Call your steward!

This month we need to tell you about Progressive Discipline and Just Cause. Many people worry that they can get fired or disciplined by their manager on the spot for any reason. No. Except for insubordination, which is the refusal to follow a direct lawful order, or other conduct that is so serious that the employee is expected to know it will be punishable, such as stealing, you can't get fired or disciplined without just cause, and progressive discipline shall be used.

Our contract language is very clear: "Article 17 - Discipline and Discharge, Section 1. The principles of progressive discipline shall be used when appropriate. Discipline shall include, but not be limited to: written reprimands; denial of an annual performance pay increase; reduction in pay; demotion; suspension and dismissal. Discipline shall be imposed only for just cause."

What is Just Cause? There are seven tests for determining whether an employer had just cause for disciplining an employee:

1. Was the employee adequately warned of the consequences of his conduct?
2. Was the employer's rule or order reasonably related to efficient and safe operations?
3. Did management investigate before administering the discipline?
4. Was the investigation fair and objective?
5. Did the investigation produce substantial evidence or proof of guilt?
6. Were the rules, orders, and penalties applied evenhandedly and without discrimination?
7. Was the penalty reasonably related to the seriousness of the offense and the employee's past record?

If the case fails to meet these standards, the discipline or dismissal was not warranted. Call your union steward!

Union Contact Information:

Maggie Neel, President and Steward, 541-737-1981
 Derrick Padar, Vice President, 541-737-6782
 Jennie Rowland, Treasurer and Steward, 541-737-1004
 Deborah Dombrowski, Secretary and Steward, 541-737-7327
 Mark Uhden, Chief Steward, 541-737-4071
 Larry Bulling, Steward, 541-737-9889
 Organizer Bob Rossi, 541-752-0813 or 1-800-452-2146, ext. 141

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 541-752-0183

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 1-800-452-2146

About Us

Local 083 at OSU represents all classified OSU employees. We are part of a higher education Union bargaining coalition which includes classified employees working at all other higher education campuses in Oregon. We are also part of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), Oregon Public Employees Union (OPEU).

SEIU Local 503, OPEU represents workers in most State agencies, public higher education, a number of county and city governments, private non-profits, and homecare workers.

Special Union trainings, political activities, membership and leadership meetings and social activities are regularly scheduled. All meetings are open to all members. Please check our website for the calendar.

And if you haven't become a member by filling out the member application yet, please call one of us and we will get a member application to you. Please do! There is strength in numbers. And welcome!