

# ***Stronger Together!***

## **Classified Staff of Oregon State University**

### **SEIU Local 503, OPEU, Local 083 at OSU August 2008**

---

#### **Bargaining Kickoff! Bargaining Surveys Are Here!!**

It's time to start thinking about bargaining our next contract. Our current contract expires July 2009. Sounds like a long way off, but not when you realize all the work that goes into the proposal before actual bargaining begins in February.

I know all of you want to see a good strong contract with the best language and benefits possible for all of our members. Bargaining involves each and every one of us and the more members involved, the better we do at the table. I know you're all wondering "How can I help?" No problem! We have jobs for everyone no matter how small the donation of your time.

The first step to help is filling in your bargaining survey. Please take this step seriously. Bargaining surveys are starting to appear on campus now. I have bargained three contracts and can assure you that the bargaining team reads each and every survey to use your opinions and ideas to construct our proposals that we submit at the bargaining table.

This campus is huge and like a mini-city. There is no way we can possibly know what all of your jobs include and how we can strive to improve your working conditions, unless you fill in the survey and talk to us.

We need help distributing the surveys and collecting them, and will welcome any offers to do these two jobs. If you'd like to help distribute and collect surveys, please call 752-0183 and we'll get you all set up. Please take the time to fill your survey in and return to the person who gave you your survey, your local leadership, or organizers. We

will be planning more drop-off points and events around bargaining soon.

Remember this is only the first step to a good contract. We will let you know the next steps and how you can stay involved as we progress through the next exciting bargaining year.

Stronger together.

—*Maggie Neel, Local 083 President  
and Alternate Table Rep*

#### **Bargaining Conference**

On July 26th we held our bargaining conference for higher ed and state workers. Workers attended from all seven campuses and from most state agencies. Attending from OSU were Debbie Bannon, Deborah Dombrowski, Deborra Low, Maggie Neel, and Jennie Rowland.

The conference reviewed the political situation nationally and in Oregon because this will have a direct and immediate impact on what we are able to achieve as we work for better wages, better working conditions and maintaining healthcare benefits. We are facing a number of political attacks on our Union, on state services and on higher education. Before you cast your ballot this fall, please check in with our Union to make sure that you're voting for the candidates and issues which best reflect our shared goals.

We also heard reports on higher ed and state funding. This is largely a political issue, but the money dedicated to our salaries, benefits and services can be affected by decisions made on each campus and at the State Board of Higher Education level. The state has less money than what is

needed to fund services because of the general economic crisis in motion around the world, but the raises and benefits we have in our Union contract are locked in until our contract expires next year. We need to move forward, not backward. In the meantime, we have to find ways to fund our salaries and benefits without raising tuition. We need to stop contracting out and make sure that every promised program and service OSU provides is paid for without nailing working families and students. It's possible to do this, but it means creative thinking on all our parts.

Our Union bargaining survey is now out and everyone should be thinking through what we want and what we're willing to do to win a better union contract. Will you join the Union? Can you help with politics? Will you help hand out and collect bargaining surveys? Are there issues that are more important to you than others? Will you come to a Union meeting and talk about your issues and urge others to do the same? These are the questions before all of us right now. How we respond is critical to our shared futures.

If you do not have a bargaining survey, call the Union office at 752-0183 or Salem headquarters at 1-800-452-2146 and request one. Or go to <http://www.SEIU503.org> and fill one out online. Everyone counts!

## **New Face Working With Local 083**

SEIU staff person Timothy Welp recently joined the Local 083 elected officers to support the many different activities that go on within the local: contract enforcement, communication development, and local leadership recruitment and development. Timothy brings a wealth of experience to the Oregon State University classified local. He has been on staff at SEIU for eight years and has worked with a number of different locals before coming to Corvallis.

Along with his staff experience, Timothy also brings an SEIU-represented perspective. He served on the SEIU Local 503's Board of Directors for a number of years and served as Vice-President and

President of Local 987, the Parry Center for Children, one of our Union's first Private Non-Profit Locals.

The primary job that Timothy will be focusing on will be trying to broaden the conversations between OSU classified staff on campus in preparation for next year's contract campaign. Please feel free to call up and ask Timothy to schedule a time to come and find out how your worksite is functioning, 752-0183 or 1-800-452-2146.

He can also be reached at [welpt@opeuseiu.org](mailto:welpt@opeuseiu.org).

## **Member Interviews Continue**

### **Chris Crabtree, Registrar's Office**

*Thanks for being willing to be interviewed, Chris. Just a few questions, to give people a chance to get to know members they might not be able to meet in person, and to show how our members' work makes a difference at OSU. So, tell us a little about yourself—how long have you worked at OSU?*

I just hit my 23 year mark!

*Where do you work and what do you do?*

I am the Office Coordinator (OS) in the Registrar's Office

*How does your job serve the students and OSU?*

I work a lot with students with special problems, mainly academic issues, and advise them based on their various situations. I also work with many all over campus with Banner instruction and explanation of procedures and regulations.

*I know you're a Union member and have been active. How do you feel about the Union or unions in general?*

I feel safer being a Union member knowing that the Union is there to help us in times of need, to represent us and work for a fair contract each biennium, and to help bring resolution to the many problems and issues that we face in our work places.

*What would you say to people who are uncertain about becoming Union members?*

Being a member is a great value. The Union works for us, so why not belong?

## **The Cost is the Same!**

Hi, all! I'm just returning from a monthly New Employee Orientation and welcome aboard to all you new employees! As I explain in NEO, as you begin working for OSU, you will be paying 1.7% of your wages to a union as a "Fairshare" worker. "What?!" you say? O.K., I'll explain.

As a classified worker you are covered by a union contract or labor agreement, negotiated between Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 503 and the Oregon University System (management). The contract defines our wages, hours, and working conditions and many of our benefits. The contract is renegotiated every two years. In July of this year we started our second year of the contract we are in now.

As a classified employee, you're covered by the contract negotiated by the Union, which is maintained by a 1.7% monthly deduction from your wages. However, unless you have filled out and signed a union membership application, you are considered a "Fairshare" payer and not a Union member. The cost is the same for fairshares and members; there are no other costs. The difference is that Union members get to vote, have a say, and be involved, among other benefits. Go to SEIU Local 503's website and check out member benefits at <http://www.seiu503.org/local503/benefits/Default.aspx>.

As I speak to employees new and old, or should I say, people who have been on campus several years, they can't believe that it's the same deduction percent for fairshares and members. The most frequent expression is, "I just figured it was coming out of my check so I assumed I was a member." Check your pay stub, if it says Fairshare, you are *not* a member; if it says SEIU Dues, then you *are* a member.

If your pay stub says Fairshare, please rethink your position, get on board and sign a membership form. Give yourself the chance to belong, get involved, have the right to vote, and have your say.

Fill out a membership form—put "SEIU Dues" in front of that contribution!

My goal is to change as many "Fairshares" as I can to "Members." Let's do it before the next contract and BLOW the Oregon University System out of their chairs! If it's the only thing you ever do for me, do this and DO IT NOW! Give me, a Union officer, or one of our organizers, a call. Get a membership form and become an SEIU Local 503, OPEU Local 083 member today.

Thanks!

—Judy Cochran, New Employee Orientation Representative, 737-2381

## **"Thank You!" From A Grateful Member**

Thank you so much for your encouragement and support through our rough times. Years ago you helped me with a difficult supervisor. A few years later you helped me, a victim of downsizing, through the lay-off process.

More recently when my husband was dealing with a disability at OSU, you were there with the knowledge of who to speak with about multiple problems and to make sure deadlines were met. I know it was your prompting Human Resources that ensured the transition of insurance from my husband to me, as my requests were being ignored.

It's always a pleasure to run into and speak with you. You truly care about people and help to ensure that they are being treated fairly. I've said it before and I'll say it again, 'You are an angel and I wish you could be cloned!' Thanks.

—Office Specialist 1, OSU

## **An Exchange of Letters**

An adjunct professor at OSU wrote a letter to the editor and was answered by one of our members.

### **Gazette-Times June 2, 2008:**

#### **Some OSU workers don't get living wage**

While I fully support the grad students' efforts to acquire a better deal from OSU and applaud the increases that the faculty and staff will

be receiving, I should like to point out that there is a segment of university employees who are living on the margins and are neither receiving increases in wages nor any benefits whatsoever, now or prospectively.

They do not even receive a living wage.

They are the adjunct professors.

These highly qualified and fully-credentialed men and women, the majority holding PhDs, labor on a piece-work basis. That is, they are paid by the course taught, although at less than half the rate regular professors receive for the same work.

They are expected to hold office hours without an office and to have course materials online and e-mail access for students without having a computer available to them when on campus.

They have no medical, sick leave, vacation, dependent or retirement benefits. They live from intermittent, variable, and unreliable paycheck to paycheck.

The university also expects these professors to develop Ecampus courses, of which the university then usurps ownership. A pretty sweet deal for the school.

It is shameful that academia has bought into this outsourcing/contractor model of business.

These employees are invisible and vulnerable. They could not speak out as I have without fear of losing even this minimal employment.

They are, however, indispensable to the operation of the university. These dedicated educators deserve better.

—Martin R. Mulford, *Corvallis (Adjunct history professor. <http://www.frontiernet.net/~mmulford/>)*

## **Gazette-Times June 4, 2008:**

### **Union could help adjunct faculty**

Regarding Martin R. Mulford's letter "Some OSU workers don't get living wage" (June 3):

Mr. Mulford's justified complaint about OSU adjunct faculty not receiving fair pay, medical insurance, sick leave, vacation, dependent or retirement benefits, deserves a response.

He likely will not get one from OSU, but I have a suggestion for him.

He says, "These employees are invisible and vulnerable."

Well, it's time for adjunct faculty to consider forming or joining a union to make themselves less powerless.

He can contact Service Employees International Union (SEIU Local 503), which already represents about 1,200 classified employees at OSU.

Here's the Web site: <http://www.seiu503.org/> to get started.

—Larry Bulling, *SEIU Local 083 Steward*

## **Local 49's Corner—**

I often hear people at the workplace speak disparagingly of our numerous and comparatively new neighbors, the Hispanic community. Oregon, in the last 15 years, has seen a rapid growth in the Hispanic population. And many people seem to feel that the Hispanics are responsible for the current poor state of the job market. But is this really the case? A closer look may shed some light on our predicament and who the culprit is.

In my research, I have found it impossible to pin responsibility on any one presidential administration for the mess immigration has been in for over forty years. The Immigration Act of 1965, passed under the Johnson administration, opened the borders wider than they had ever been. It was an act of compassion but it quickly got out of control. The Carter administration tried and failed at immigration reform as did the Reagan administration. It wasn't a priority at all in the first Bush administration. Ditto the Clinton administration. To date, immigration is still in need of reform. Now they speak of erecting walls along the border and deporting all "illegals." It is sad it had to come to that.

There is talk of collusion between big business lobbyists and government, or rather pressure on government by big business lobbyists, whenever attempts were made by government to curb and regulate the flood of undocumented workers being

hired by businesses for cheap labor, as stated in a December 14, 2005, article in the *Washington Post*:

“In a rare schism, employer groups led by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce are pressing to kill a Republican-sponsored measure that would require businesses to verify that all of their workers are in the United States legally and would increase penalties for hiring illegal employees.”

To a newly arrived Mexican peasant, a U.S. minimum wage looks like a king’s ransom. Who can blame a people who can’t feed their families in their own country, for responding to a virtual invitation from U.S big business to come to the U.S. and earn a “living wage”? It’s what we all want, isn’t it?

Some workers plan on staying only for a few years, but a large segment are here to stay, and we both want the same thing...a good life and a living wage. We should strive to work side by side as Americans for our common goals. And remember, anyone who is an SEIU member, is your brother-at-arms.

—Kevin, a custodian in our Sister Local, SEIU Local 49

## **Another Thank You**

The Union representatives have been very helpful and supportive of me during difficult times. They were always available to meet with me when I wanted to talk things over and had good suggestions and advice. They offered me invaluable support!

I would advise anyone that is experiencing difficulties or stressful situations to contact and seek help from our Union representatives!

—An Office Specialist 2 at OSU

## **Get To Know Some of the People In The Field**

Hi, My name is **Judy Cochran**, I’ve been doing the New Employee orientation the last three to four years. I’ve been with OSU and a member of the Union for 30 years. I was vice president for one term and I have been very active in the fund raising part of our Local 083 here on campus.

I’m now going back over my list of new employees who have heard me speak of the Union and checking with them to see if they would like to become a member instead of a Fairshare. It’s amazing that three out of five think they are members simply because money comes out of their check. **THIS IS NOT TRUE! YOU** need to sign up to become a member to have all the voting rights.

Everyone pays the 1.7% of their wages because the contract covers *all* classified employees. Check your pay stub to see if you have “Fairshare” by your deduction. If so you’re paying Fairshare, not dues, and you have no voting rights. If this is the case, be sure to call the Union office at 752-0183 and leave a message and one of us will get back to you. Everyone should have the right to vote.

**Larry Bulling** has worked at OSU since 2002 as a catalog editor and coordinator in the Registrars Office. He was a Local 083 secretary for two years and continues to serve as a steward and webmaster.

**Deborra Low**—As a newly elected member of the SEIU Local 503 Board of Directors, I look forward to working with other Union leaders to enhance outreach, develop channels for communication, and actively encourage more participation from Union members in the East Central Valley (Region 16). This region includes the cities of Corvallis, Albany, Lebanon, Sweet Home, Springfield, Cottage Grove and Sutherlin, where we all share the common goal of providing and financing quality public services.

I will be joining other member leaders in this geographical area to further the goal of building solidarity amongst all the employer groups and workers in the region, preserving worker’s rights, gaining fair compensation, improving working conditions, and working hard to achieve the difficult goal of affordable universal healthcare for all.

We will also be encouraging member participation in SEIU’s new Community Action Centers (CACs) to be setup in several locations throughout the state. These new CACs will provide a venue for the discussion of and support for local political issues and the participation in various community events important to us in our different regions.

As a member of the Board, my strong commitment to SEIU 503's Constitution and Bylaws means I will be fervently safeguarding our members' dues while actively building the strength and solidarity of our Union. I will also be engaging all workers and work site leaders in the East Central Valley Region and asking them to join me in standing up for what's right.

**Jennie Rowland**—I have worked for OSU in University Housing and Dining for 30 years. When I started it was a fun, family-oriented place to work. I joined the Union as soon as I could. As time has gone on and management got stricter and more top heavy, I decided to become a steward and try to help the worker who is not appreciated for the work they do. I have been a steward for about six years. I have been a delegate for general council now three times and find it very exciting to attend. Union work is very gratifying and I recommend to everyone.

**Julie Stratton**—I am a Travel Program Specialist. My work location is Kerr Admin Business Affairs Travel office. I have been on campus since 1984...24 years. For the first eight years I was a Printing Press operator until the building burned down. I've been in Business Affairs ever since.

Right now I am Treasurer of Local 083, Bargaining Delegate, General Council Delegate, and a newbie steward.

## About Us

Local 083 at OSU represents all classified OSU employees. We are part of a higher education Union bargaining coalition that 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!

### Union Contact Information:

Maggie Neel, President and Steward,  
541-737-1981

Deborah Dombrowski, Vice President and Steward,  
541-737-7327

Julie Stratton, Treasurer and Steward,  
541-737-1004

Mark Uhden, Secretary and Chief Steward,  
541-737-4071

Organizer Bob Rossi, 541-752-0183  
or 1-800-452-2146, ext. 141

Organizer Timothy Welp, 541-752-0183  
or 1-800-452-2146

### Corvallis SEIU Local 503, OPEU Office

606 S.W. 15th Street  
Adams Hall Room 109  
Corvallis, OR 97331  
<http://www.seiu503.org/local083/>  
541-752-018

### SEIU Local 503, OPEU Headquarters

1730 Commercial St. S.E.  
P.O. Box 12159  
Salem, Oregon 97309  
Website: <http://www.seiu503.org>  
1-800-452-2176

