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GTFF heads urge contract ratification

By MIKE HOPKINS
Of the Emerald

Members of the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation could decide this week to throw out the old and bring in the new.

GTFF leaders predict union members will do just that and approve a new pact when they meet Thursday night to consider a proposed contract that was given final form at a bargaining session Friday.

The Thursday contract ratification meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. in EMU 167, according to GTFF President Charlie Aker.

Negotiators for the GTFF and the University took just two hours Friday to agree on final contract language for a package of issues debated at negotiation meetings over the last six weeks.

Negotiators had reached tentative agreement last Tuesday on salaries and strike-clause language, the only issues in the package then still in dispute.

Following the example of the GTFF negotiating team, the union's executive council unanimously approved the contract Thursday and recommended that the union's 373 members ratify it. The council consists of the union's five officers and one representative from each University department and agency where GTFs are employed.

A vote next Thursday to ratify the contract would conclude a labor dispute that has kept the GTFF and the University at the bargaining table since October 1977.

"The University is prepared to sign the contract when it has been ratified," University chief negotiator Bill Lemman said.

The contract proposal grants GTFs pay hikes totaling almost 14 percent over the two-year life of the agreement. If the contract wins approval, GTFs will receive three retroactive raises and the University's extra-contractual promise to raise \$25,000 from private sources to help GTFs offset the cost of health care.

The retroactive pay provisions include a 4.25 percent hike beginning Sept. 15, 1977, a 4 percent hike as of April 1, 1978 and a 5 percent hike starting last Sept. 15.

Negotiators haven't decided on the exact make-up of the commission that will determine how the \$25,000 fund will be distributed among approximately 750 GTFs in the bargaining unit.

However, the parties did agree to give the GTFF a one-person majority on the commission, which will consist of an undetermined number of GTFs and "community persons," who will be chosen by University officials.

Negotiators resolved the dispute over strike

clause language by simply deleting the article from the contract.

Representatives from the two sides had disagreed previously over whether to include in the strike clause a sentence granting GTFs the right to honor another union's primary picket line.

Management commonly demands the inclusion of a strike clause—by which the union agrees not to strike during the life of the agreement—in private sector employment contracts. However, Oregon law defines all forms of slowdowns and work stoppages by public employees, including honoring other unions' picket lines, as illegal strike activity.

Finalization of the contract language came just one week after a motion to strike fell eight votes short of passage at an Oct. 26 union meeting. Another strike question considered at an Oct. 19 gathering had missed ratification by fourteen tallies.

Unlike rules governing motions to strike, which require approval of at least two-thirds of total membership for passage, a union bylaw covering contract elections calls for the consent of a simple majority of union members for ratification.

Therefore, a situation could arise Thursday in which a pro-strike majority could reject a contract even though sufficient support for a walkout doesn't exist.

However, GTFF leaders don't consider this possibility a threat.

The only alternative to contract ratification at this stage, Aker notes, is a strike.

"I don't think it's realistic to get a successful strike vote now," Aker says.

Union members are "tired" and don't want another strike vote, GTFF secretary Jeff Edmundson says. Even members of the union's executive council, who had favored a strike strongly, joined the rest of the council in unanimously recommending approval of the contract, Edmundson points out.

Although union representatives were unable to negotiate what they feel is a satisfactory salary increase, the proposed contract contains a number of important gains for GTFs, according to Edmundson. These include a provision calling on University departments to establish written criteria governing the rehiring of GTFs, a discipline and discharge clause based on "just cause," and agreement on workload standards and an article giving GTFs access to their personnel files.

The contract also contains a grievance procedure with binding arbitration to enable GTFs

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Graphic by David Peters

Vote no on 6, 11, OSL recommends

By RICH SEVEN
Of the Emerald

Editor's note: In addition to measuring the impact of Ballot Measures 6 and 11, the Emerald has set aside a special section in today's Emerald to explain each of the individual ballot measures and contrast candidates in Tuesday's election.

As election day nears and the pros and cons of property tax Measures 6 and 11 are discussed from every dimension the Oregon Student Lobby is advocating a third alternative. Vote no on both 6 and 11.

"Students, the elderly and other low income groups are best served by HARRP (Homeowners and Renters Relief Program)," says Dan Garner, OSL coordinator. "Many could fare worse under 6 and 11."

In recent years the state has refunded part or all of that property tax paid by low-income renters and homeowners through HARRP.

Under HARRP, renters making less than \$16,000 a year can receive

up to \$328 in refunds while a homeowner with income less than \$16,000 may receive up to \$644.

Garner argues that expansion of HARRP is the most "realistic and efficient way" to relieve the needy because the program is based on personal income.

Supporters of both measures claim HARRP will continue to function and serve homeowners and renters, but state legislative budget experts say HARRP could be altered by the legislature if either measure passes.

"While neither measure will have any automatic effect on HARRP the legislature will probably want to do something with it while the massive property tax relief programs go into effect," says Robert Smith, state budget director.

Smith adds it is conceivable that HARRP could be reduced or be dropped because of the sizable costs to local and state governments as a result of the two measures.

Measure 6, closely modeled after California's Proposition 13 "tax-

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today

A new Eugene drag strip is featured in a proposal for the Short Mountain Special Events Park. Also included in the park are a rifle range, camping facilities and a go-cart track. Story on Page 10A.

Northwest pigeon lovers gathered at the Lane County Fairgrounds to show off their skills at mutating their feathered friends. Emerald bird watcher Jock Hatfield reports on the winners on Page 7A.

Power forward Maurice Lucas, playing his first game of the season, scored 30 points to lead the Portland Trail Blazers to their fifth straight win over New York, 111-96. This and other sports on Pages 16A and 17A.