

Editorial

Strike gives union political victory

The Oregon Public Employees Union brought the issues of its strike to the foreground when University employees walked out of their jobs Tuesday. The lack of experienced workers threatened to make registration disorganized and difficult.

At a time when the University is facing the largest enrollment in its history, the thought of a rough registration panicked many students.

But the strikers should not be blamed for any inconvenience. The University was a strategic location, and their voices were heard when OPEU and the state settled the strike on Thursday.

These tactics and the use of the rolling strike helped to emphasize the importance of OPEU concerns. And although the settlement agreed to is not economically significant, workers came away from the strike with a political victory and a strong sense of unity.

OPEU settled on a 2 percent wage increase retroactive to July with a 4 percent increase in January 1989 even though it was asking for a 4.5 percent increase before the strike.

The best gains were made in benefits for health coverage, pay equity and layoffs. An advisory committee also will be assigned to examine excessive workloads.

These are important issues and through its new-found strength, the OPEU was able to bring its propositions to the public. The strike and the slight inconveniences it presented only helped to emphasize the necessity of state workers. At the same time, this need for state employees helped to bring the strike to a quick end.

The nine-day strike was the first by state employees since they gained the legal right to strike in 1971.

But the turnout of workers honoring the strike was 80 to 90 percent in most locations, demonstrating the commitment and togetherness of the employees for their cause.

The concept and force of a union was exemplified during the OPEU walk outs. During the nine days of striking, OPEU grew into a powerful force — one to be taken seriously in the future.

"I see OPEU coming of age, becoming a mature union," Irv Fletcher, president of the Oregon AFL-CIO, told the Oregonian on Friday. This is the union's most important gain: the ability and power to express its concerns.

Before the strike, the state did not seriously consider the union's propositions and did not believe it would go on strike. Now OPEU has the political voice to use as a bargaining tool if the need to strike ever arises again.

Gov. Neil Goldschmidt expressed these beliefs to the Oregonian. "We will not wait for a bargaining period to pay attention," he said. "I will discuss with our state managers the need to involve workers in those critical planning decisions that deal with workload and other working conditions."

OPEU has blamed Goldschmidt for ignoring its requests despite his support for unions during his campaign. He has realized the strength of OPEU and will be more willing to listen in the future.



Letters

Holiday season

"Tikeyah!" "Tiruah!" "Shivareh!"

A ram's horn echoes its shrill blast through Eugene's streets on this season of Elul, a month of introspection, meditation, and soul-searching preceding 10 days of Awe or High Holy Days and Sukkoth, the biblical fall harvest. The two major Jewish renewal celebrations are Passover, which begins the turning outward of the year in spring and the High Holy Days, beginning with Rosh Hashanah, initiating a turning inward period of the fall-winter.

Rosh Hashanah, the New Year, also called the Day-of-Remembrance commemorates the creation of the world and is symbolized by the scales of balance which we find ourselves upon at this time. Our task is to look at what is not in balance in ourselves and the community and recognize places that need transformation and turning, or Teshuvah.

Yom Kippur, the Day-of-At-One-Ment, is spent in fasting,

prayer and meditation, where we revision our life's path and directions. We look at our connections to the social-political world and affirm our responsibility to bringing the vision of clarity and caring into our earthly realm.

The High Holy Days prepare us for the fall harvest festival, Sukkoth. Having faced our "shadows" and done inner cleansing, we bring our offerings and reside in booths (reminding us of life's impermanence), pray for winter's rain and celebrate in joy, appreciation and thanksgiving. America's Thanksgiving derives largely from the Pilgrim celebration of Sukkoth.

Consult Oregon Daily Emerald's classified ads for schedule of services at the University.

Rabbi Hanan Sills
Eugene

Be individuals

This summer, I assessed the reasons for my letters and their effects. I'm accused of being inflammatory. I'm perceived as rude and inconsiderate toward a large section of the University students.

My editors feel that my satirical form of writing is now more black humor. It's too realistic; people no longer laugh at themselves, and hence miss the point and won't change their offensive behavior.

I'll eradicate in myself what bothers others.

I would like to extend my condolences to all bartenders in Lane County. I was a bartender this summer and I saw college kids o'plenty and they're asses. Just because they spend money, they feel they can treat you like manure.

The Greeks are the worst. Not only are they asses, but they also get a rubber nipple off beer and their swinging pool sticks. They bitch, moan and pound on the bar until helped. (Not all do, though.)

Advice to new students: While looking at the various houses, check into their racist backgrounds. Why they really do charity work.

Ask about other miscellaneous social requirements. These requirements might exclude people on the basis of skin or status, and might one day even force you to act like an ass. Don't expect them to volunteer this information. They don't bend over and show these dirty and smelly habits at first.

Therefore, watch them closely for a term and you will see the cracks in their seams.

To Buffy and Skippy already in the system, you don't have to have the same clothes, haircut and nose job to fit in. Wake up! This is America. Break the mold. Be individuals.

Blake Louis Sliter
Political science/English

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

Letters to the editor must be limited to 250 words, typed, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style. Letters to the editor should be turned into the Emerald office, Suite 300, EMU.

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