

Proposed contract puts union in bind

One has to appreciate the bind that the Oregon Public Employees Union is in. Nobody, union members or state negotiators, wants a strike. After hard work, both sides came upon what they felt was a fair compromise.

Unfortunately, the part-time minority of OPEU has valid complaints (especially in surrendering medical coverage) about the agreement, and therein lies the union's bind. The union should fairly represent all its workers. But at the same time, the union is a democratic enterprise. In democracies, the minority is often victimized by the majority.

It isn't clear as to whether that will happen here. Some observers doubt that union members would strike for the part-timers; others fear that the part-time employees' cause is mobilizing too late. Union members have until 1 p.m. Friday to vote for or against the contract.

From recent rallies, these things are clear: Many OPEU workers agree it isn't just single-parent families and one-person households being supported by part-time work. Also, while the country is moving toward national health care (and while other industrialized countries are increasing benefits and bonuses for part-time workers), many resent the low priority part-time workers are receiving. Finally, many of the workers at the University are part-time, but what they provide is more than what's usually considered in the average part-time job.

Martha Sherwood-Pike is a good example of one of these employees. Her position in the Russian Department is considered a 20 hour-a-week job but usually requires far more time than that. She provides all the administrative support for the department, juggling the schedules of four busy professors (one of whom speaks no English), keeping track of the many graduate teaching fellows and serving the needs of hundreds of other students who come into the office for help.

At Wednesday's demonstration, Sherwood-Pike spoke of her stressful position and said that its one saving grace was, "At least I have benefits." She supports her spouse and young son on her part-time wage, and her benefits are the only ones her family has. Her monthly budget of \$575 "doesn't have room in it for another \$100 a month."

If the contract proposal is approved, Sherwood-Pike will have three choices — find the room in her budget, let her family go without coverage, or quit her job. Her choice is obvious, as is the choice of others in her situation. She and others will choose to leave their jobs.

"If you start eroding the incentive for these jobs ... you erode the support services for this University. You're going to have no qualified workers in the applicant pool," she said.

Without benefits, the only people applying for these administrative support positions will be less dependable, less well-trained workers. The quality of support — one of the most crucial elements of a smooth-running university — will be lost. In the end, neither the union nor the employers will be well served by this contract proposal.



Letters

Boycott

We, the members of Students Against Apartheid, wish to call the community's attention to a highly objectionable film currently showing at the Bijou Theater. The movie is called *Red Scorpion*.

We urge all community members to boycott this film because it was significantly financed by the South African government. In addition, the South African armed forces participated in the film's production.

Students Against Apartheid is vehemently opposed to the South African regime's policies of institutionalized racism, forced dislocation of indigenous peoples, violent repression of government opposition, and, especially, the army's role in maintaining such policies.

Seeing this film is, in effect, a show of support for the South African government and the repulsive means by which it maintains itself. We therefore appeal to the conscience of community members to boycott this film and convince others to do so also, without drawing more attention to the film than it deserves. Boycott this film — refuse to support apartheid!

Sarah Scott
Students Against Apartheid

Circuses

The *Emerald's* editorial (ODE, June 29) for the Oregon state lottery to fund collegiate sports is dead wrong! In a detailed analysis of state lotteries,

the *New York Times* (May 31) shows that state lotteries are not an efficient way to raise revenues. The states collect only 50 cents of every lottery dollar taken in. The rest goes for prizes, vendors' commissions and operations.

The least affluent are primary lottery customers, and the *Times* points out that state lotteries are regressive for those least able to afford it. Did the Oregon Legislature and Rep. David Dix (D-Eugene) consider this when they voted to raise \$8 million for Oregon collegiate sports by expanding the state lottery?

Also, those with the lowest income are impacted most by the inflation in the cost of living. What about \$1.29 for a loaf of ordinary bread, 49 cents a pound for potatoes and \$1.69 a spool for ordinary cotton sewing thread? In addition, the Oregon legislature just voted to raise \$67 million with increased taxes on transportation, etc.

What about the outrageous outlays for new or expanded sports facilities? What about using some of this money to fund operations of collegiate sports?

After all, the Oregon universities never were meant to serve primarily as Roman circuses for sports!

Helene Johnston
Eugene

Cell culture

Tissue and cell culture can reduce the number of animals killed and hurt in routine toxin tests, so the readership ought to know more about it.

Deidre Brink
Department of biology

Reminder

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* is polling its readers to see what comic strip they would like to see in our paper after Berke Breathed's *Bloom County* ends publication Aug. 19.

Please send a postcard with your choice to: Comic Survey, *Oregon Daily Emerald*, P.O. Box 3159, Eugene, OR 97403. The deadline for votes is July 21.

Letters Policy

The *Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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