

Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



Val Jack enters Hall

VAL JACK, a retired member of the Portland Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees AFT Local 111, is the latest honoree welcomed into the Labor Hall of Fame by the sponsoring Northwest Oregon Labor Retirees Council.

The Retirees Council is affiliated with the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, AFL-CIO, and holds its meetings in the NOLC boardroom in Suite 100-G on the first floor of the Scandia Building at 1125 SE Madison St. in Portland.



VAL JACK

MRS. JACK, now 63, retired after a long career as an office secretary in the Portland School District. She spent 20 years at Roosevelt High School starting in 1971; followed by three years in the Roosevelt Cluster Office located at Kenton Elementary and three years in the Lincoln-Roosevelt Region Office at Terwilliger School. Then she served six years as the full-time president of Local 111. Local 111 is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, and the national AFT. She has been a member of the AFT-Oregon Executive Board since 1990. She has served as a vice president-at-large, as the AFT-Oregon E-Board secretary, and

currently is on the board as the representative of the organization's retirees.

After retiring, she organized the AFT-Oregon Retirees Association and is its president. She is a member of the Oregon Chapter of the Alliance for Retired Americans and holds the office of secretary on the Oregon ARA's Executive Board. She produces an every-other-month newsletter for ARA. The ARA represents seniors nationwide under the auspices of the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations — the AFL-CIO.

IN HER WORKING YEARS, Val Jack held vice presidencies in Local 111. She was the communications vice president and later the COPE vice president. In the Committee On Political Education post, she raised funds for the union's contributions to endorsed political candidates and to labor campaigns against anti-union ballot measures.

Mrs. Jack has represented Local 111 as a delegate to meetings of the Northwest Oregon Labor Council and to conventions of the Oregon AFL-CIO. She served as recording secretary at state conventions in the 1990s. She's also attended conventions of AFT-Oregon and national conferences and conventions of AFT. She raised COPE contributions at the past three AFT-Oregon conventions by organizing a silent auction and contributing one of her quilts or crochet projects. At national assemblies, she has been active on a number of committees, which included planning a conference for local union presidents; and drafting a report on organizing part-time and contingent workers. She co-taught a class on how to gear-up local union political action in election campaigns, explaining what Oregon unions did to beat back anti-worker ballot measures.

Jack was appointed by First District Congressman David Wu as an alternate delegate to last year's White House Conference on Aging.

HALL OF FAME member Jack recalled in a NW Labor Press interview that she attended every day of the three-week civil trial in 2002 in which a Multnomah County Circuit Court jury ruled for AFT-Oregon and the Oregon Education Association in the two unions' landmark lawsuit against anti-union

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Transit Local 757 elects officers; Jon Hunt will be new president

Members of Portland-based Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 have chosen new leaders.

In mail-in ballots counted June 6, Jon Hunt was declared the new president and Sam Schwarz the new vice president.

Tom Wallace returned to a second term as financial secretary-treasurer.

The three offices are full-time staff positions. Also elected were the union's Executive Board and unit liaison officers.

Local 757 has 4,100 members — mostly bus operators and mechanics — at 35 locations. TriMet, the Portland-area transit system, is the union's largest and oldest unit.

This year, 20 of the union's 49 elected positions were contested, and campaigning was intense for the top leadership spots. That likely increased turnout, which at more than 56 percent is considered high for union elections.

Hunt, currently the union's vice president, outpolled Art Winslow, Tom Bernards and James Perez to win a three-year term as president.

The current president, Al Zullo, will retire after his term expires June 30.

Schwarz, currently on the Executive Board, also bested three other candidates. Wallace won against two challengers.

At 35, Hunt is one of the youngest members ever elected to the local's



JON HUNT

highest office.

His father, Bill Hunt, is a retired TriMet bus driver and former Local 757 Executive Board officer. His brother Jeff also works at TriMet as a journeyman diesel mechanic and is a shop steward.

"I grew up talking about the union at the kitchen table," Hunt said. "As a kid, I helped out at the union picnics."

Hunt grew up in Vancouver, Washington, and graduated from Hudson's Bay High School. He served four years

in the U.S. Marine Corps, earning the rank of corporal, and then returned home to work at Burlington Northern Railroad as a crane operator and truck driver in maintenance. In 1995, he took a pay cut to work at TriMet, where he began as a bus driver working a split shift in the morning and evening rush hours while attending Portland Community College. Later he became a maintenance helper, washing and fueling buses at TriMet's Merlo Garage. He entered a diesel apprenticeship program, and graduated after three years. Along the way he was elected shop steward and Executive Board member, and vice president in 2003.

He lives in Beaverton with his wife and four children.

Hunt, along with other officers and staff, will be responsible for enforcing 22 union contracts, and renegotiating those that expire in the next three years. [The TriMet contract won't come up for renegotiation until December 2009.] Hunt is also expected to be appointed to a seat on the Oregon AFL-CIO Executive Board, which Zullo now occupies.

Hunt said he hopes to unionize non-union bus companies, and win better contracts for members by applying bargaining tactics learned in classes of the University of Oregon's Labor Education and Research Center.

Newly-elected officers will be sworn in July 3.

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