

...School employees getting restless

(From Page 1)

"This ends up being a much greater percentage of our paychecks than those higher-paid workers," Shaw added.

SEIU is asking for only a cost-of-living wage adjustment for its custodians, whose pay currently ranges from \$13.24 to \$22.69 an hour. In bargaining Dec. 3, the district moved off its initial demand that custodians take a 30 percent pay cut. "I have not had a chance to crunch all the numbers, but it looks like the pay cut is roughly 20

percent now, which is unacceptable to us for obvious reasons," SEIU rep Casey Filice told the Labor Press.

At the rally, Leslie Frane, executive director of SEIU Local 503 asked participants: "Are any of your bills down 30 percent? Has anyone from the administration taken a 30 percent pay cut?"

Mark Freimark, a 23-year custodian, said it was disheartening that "our welcome-back-to-work gift was a proposal to cut our pay."

Cafeteria workers, who make

\$9.62 to \$13.96 an hour, have an offer from the school district for a 1 percent raise.

Tom Smith, president of PFTCE Local 111, said his group also has received an offer from the district of 1 percent a year for four years, no step increases, the same \$779 health insurance cap, and elimination of the district's one-third portion of workers' compensation insurance benefits.

On Nov. 29, Local 111 presented the district with its economic proposal: They'll take the 1 percent wage hike — but they also want annual cost-of-living adjustments and step increases. "Our members are very concerned over stagnant wages and steps, and look for a fair wage increase and a reformation of the step ladder so that they can move on in their careers as dedicated PPS employees," Smith said.

Local 111 is working with its affiliate, the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon, to formulate a future "plan of action." The union has one more bargaining session scheduled this year, on Dec. 13.

Teachers will start bargaining for a new contract in January 2008. Their current contract expires in June. They are represented by the Portland Association of Teachers, an affiliate of the Oregon Education Association.

Smith new president of PFTCE #111

Several changes have taken place over the past several months at the Portland Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees (PFTCE) Local 111.

Tom Smith was elected president of the 1,300 member unit, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers-Oregon. He also was elected a vice president of the AFT-Oregon Executive Board.

Smith, who served as a field rep for Local 111 for the past four years and on its Executive Board for three terms, said that he looks forward to working with



TOM SMITH

other unions "as we forge a strong foundation of solidarity."

Additionally, Belinda Reagan has been hired as a full-time field representative. She is an Executive Board member of Local 111 and recently was elected as a vice president of AFT-Oregon.

Local 111 represents teachers, classroom paraprofessionals, secretaries, clerks, occupational and physical therapists and assistants, campus monitors, community agents and driver's education instructors employed at Portland Public Schools.

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