

Let me say this about that

—By Gene Klare



The-30-mark

THE TIME has come to put the -30- mark to this column, which I started in 1967 when I was the editor and manager of what was then the Oregon Labor Press. This newspaper's name was changed to Northwest Labor Press two decades ago. It is still published by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Company, a non-profit entity whose shares are owned by labor organizations.

I began writing free-lance articles for the Labor Press in 1960 when Jim Goodsell was the editor and manager. At that time I was one of nearly 900 union members on strike against the Newhouse-owned Oregonian and the then-locally-owned Oregon Journal, which Newhouse bought in 1961. I started working as an employee of the Labor Press in November 1962, and succeeded Goodsell in October 1965 when he was appointed director of the U.S. Department of Commerce office in Portland. He later worked for the Commerce Department and the State Department on assignments that took him all over the world.

IN MY YEARS as a reporter and editor on daily newspapers, I did extensive free-lance work; my articles appeared in newspapers from California to New York and beyond to London. One of the newspapers for which I did considerable free-lancing was Labor's Daily, a nationally-circulated tabloid published Monday through Friday in Bettendorf, Iowa, by the International Typographical Union in the 1950s.

After I retired as editor of the Labor Press in late 1986 and was succeeded by Michael Gutwig, I went back to being a free-lance writer. Now at age 81 it is time to retire again. I enjoyed my many years in the labor movement and with the Labor Press. I was the first West Coast labor editor to wield the gavel as president of the International Labor Press Association, AFL-CIO/CLC. I was also singled out by the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association as a Labor History Person of the Year.

ANOTHER ORGANIZATION I enjoyed being in is the U.S. Marine Corps. I served 11 years on active and reserve duty and during most of that time wore the three stripes of a sergeant. I derived pride and satisfaction from sharing in the camaraderie of the USMC.

Space is too short to re-examine the newspaper strike and the investigative reporting in which I was involved. The two subjects, in which there was some overlap, were explored at length in articles published in the Labor Press in years past.

Before the newspaper strike, which ran from Nov. 1959 to April 1965, I was a reporter for the Oregonian. During the strike I worked for the Portland Reporter, a tabloid published by we strikers and our unions from Feb. 1960 until Sept. 30, 1964. The strike did not stop the Oregonian and Journal from publishing, but it did take a big toll on their circulation, a subject that's been covered here many times. Other newspapers I worked on included being managing editor of Idaho dailies in Pocatello and Boise. I also worked in newsrooms in Texas, Ohio, California and elsewhere. My career started at age eight selling magazines door-to-door in Michigan in the Great Depression. Later, I was a delivery boy for a morning newspaper.

IN ADDITION to having been a reporter and an editor, I have also been a publisher, an advertising salesman, printer, stereotyper, pressman on a hand-fed Miehle and a mailer. All of the above jobs were mine decades ago when my wife and I were running a struggling weekly in a town of 500 through which both a river and railroad ran. Each had the name Wabash.

MY WIFE learned how to coax type from a 1915 Linotype, which the previous owner had patched up with thread spools, paper clips, rubberbands and black tape. We were fortunate to be put in touch with a retired daily newspaper machinist who lived a dozen or so miles away. Over time, he replaced the junk with parts from his toolbox and also worked his magic on our eccentric flatbed press. On each trip, he declined any payment for his services, asking only for five dollars for gasoline for his automobile.

Looking back on my years as editor of the Labor Press, I think that my main contribution was to keep the newspaper going despite increases in

AFSCME donates cash to Oregon Food Bank

Ken Allen (right) executive director of Oregon AFSCME Council 75 presents a check for \$7,875 to the Oregon Food Bank. Accepting the donation are Christine Hames (left) and Barbara Peschiera. The non-profit organization collects and distributes food to 20 regional food banks serving Oregon and Clark County, Wash. Through special buying programs with food distributors, every \$1 the Food Bank receives is turned into five pounds of food. "So AFSCME's donation translates into over 39,000 pounds of food," said Hames, corporate relations manager for the Food Bank. "And the donation is so very timely. We have exceptional need this year, and most of our holiday season donations come in earlier on the month, so to get a



check like this later in the month really, really helps. This will help brighten the holidays for many families." A typical food box provides a three-to-five day supply of groceries. AFSCME union locals and some individual members from

throughout the state donated to the total. "This is good for us because the food bank reaches into all corners of Oregon," Allen said. Last year, Oregon Food Bank collected and distributed 32.7 million pounds of food.

postage, printing and paper in the 1970s and '80s that caused many labor papers to fall by the wayside.

CIVIC SERVICE has included membership on the Oregon State Civil Rights Advisory Commission and the Portland-Multnomah County Metro Human Relations Commission and chairmanship of the Multnomah County Civil Service Commission.

MANY THANKS to the members of the NW Oregon Labor Retirees Council for voting me into their Labor Hall of Fame nearly a decade ago. Three decades ago, I received mentions in two books, "Who's Who in Labor" and "Who's Who in the West."

A personal note: My parents gave me my first name at the request of my maternal grandfather, who had a high regard for Eugene Debs.

-30-

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