

...Portland Rising bus brigade

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ducted from their paychecks; they're one of the rare groups of workers who haven't yet paid premiums directly.

"We're already paying for our health insurance," Local 503 President Heather Conroy told the Labor Press. "We've done it through sub-par wages."

Also, breaking from past practice, the state opted not to allow the expiring contract to be extended. That means union leaders can't use the state e-mail system to communicate with members, and workers can't file grievances. The state also halted collection of "fair share" dues from employees who aren't full members.

Just down the street, workers at Metro regional government had their own contract expiration picket, and the bus brigade marched over to give them moral support and high fives. Metro isn't facing a budget shortfall, yet in negotiations with AFSCME Local 3580, it's proposing two furlough days a year, an increase in the employee share of the health insurance premium, and elimination of its 6 percent of salary contribution to pension.

Next came a visit to the tiny office of Congressman Earl Blumenauer. Demonstrators entered single file and presented their signatures on strips of paper urging him to vote against NAFTA-style trade treaties. Three of these treaties — with Korea, Colombia, and Panama — are up for a vote shortly, and Blumenauer is reportedly in favor of the Korea deal and undecided on the others. Protest coordinators collected



At a flash rally in Multnomah County headquarters, AFSCME Local 88 member action team coordinator Rachel Gumbert holds a megaphone for member Tory Mitchell, dressed up as "AFSCME man."

the strips of paper and stapled them together, presenting them to the congressman as a long chain.

At Multnomah County headquarters on SE Hawthorne Blvd., members of AFSCME Local 88 were taking a "unity break." Demonstrators circled the block a few times and then ducked inside for a short rally in a ground-floor public space. The rally ended with participants pulling out their cell phones and calling County Chair Jeff Cogen (503-988-3308) to say they support a fair contract for county workers, which a flier described as: cost of living increase, health benefits, seniority and "bumping rights." No word on whether anyone got through to Cogen. But po-

lice arrived and told everyone to leave. They were leaving anyway.

A short ride later, protesters stepped off the bus to Dawson Park, across from Legacy Emanuel Hospital. They were given strict instructions: no banners, no walking in circles, and no crossing the street to the hospital, lest the union face federal charges. Apparently a long-standing court ruling says hospital workers have to give 10 days notice for any sort of strike action, and almost any kind of public display may be regarded as a strike and grounds for fines against a union. The park, at least, was "union territory," as one chant declared. There, a group of SEIU Local 49 members on break, led by patient transport worker Carlotta Franklin, explained the situation: Workers' health insurance premiums have risen 26 percent since 2008, and Legacy, despite profitability, isn't stepping up to offer raises that would make up for that lost ground.

Food service worker (and single mom) Lisa Beasley told the Labor Press she makes \$15 an hour after 23 years at Legacy, and must pay \$150 a month to keep herself and kids insured.

"Legacy's got a pot of gold," protesters chanted, "and if they don't give it up soon, we'll be marching 'til next June."

[The following week, the two sides reached a three-year contract settlement with roughly 2 percent raises each year.]

The final stop was the most tense. A group of workers entered Dosh Salon Spa on SE Hawthorne Blvd. and tried to present a petition to a manager. She fled into an office and called police.



As protesters fill the sidewalk outside a store on Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard, esthetician Rachel Voorhies asks her employer, Dosh Salon Spa, to treat its newly unionized employees with respect.

Noisy protesters filled the sidewalk, and when police arrived, marched out into the street, shutting down traffic for about 5 minutes as owner Ray Motameni watched from inside the store.

Workers at Dosh's five Aveda-licensed spa locations earn as little as minimum wage in some cases, while giving \$35 haircuts. They voted March 30 to unionize with Communications Workers of America Local 7901. But Motameni hired former Oregon Republican Party chair Bob Tiernan to handle upcoming contract bargaining, and Tiernan told workers at an April 18 mandatory meeting that Dosh intends to run "as if there's no union here."

On July 1, the company imple-

mented a new and higher-deductible health care plan, without bargaining over it. Weekly negotiation sessions have consisted of union proposals and employer refusals. Bargaining team members report being assigned less desirable schedules and being written up for trivial infractions.

"The message of Portland Rising is that we can't wait for anyone else to save us," Portland Jobs with Justice Executive Director Margaret Butler told demonstrators. "We have to do this, together. We are the heroes we've been waiting for."

With nine police cars lined up along Hawthorne, protesters reboarded buses, chanting, "We'll be back."



Portland Jobs with Justice activist Jackie Ellenz holds up a chain made of petitions asking Congressman Earl Blumenauer to vote against NAFTA-style trade agreements with Korea, Colombia, and Panama.

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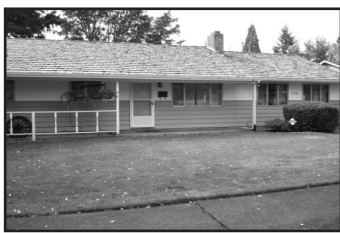
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