

No dunces at annual LERC Summer School

By STEFAN OSTRACH
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

EUGENE — For many, summer school used to be a dreaded prospect. Summer school meant we'd failed some class and had to make it up instead of enjoying our vacations. But for 143 union activists on the University of Oregon campus the weekend of Aug. 10-12, the AFL-CIO Summer School offered a great opportunity.

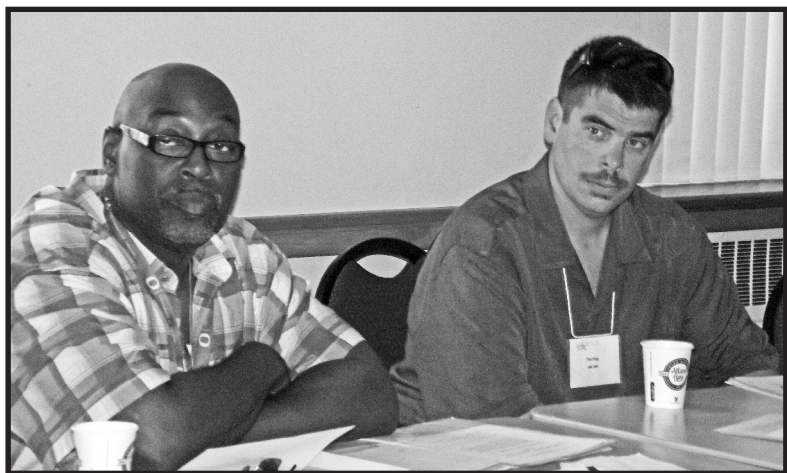
For more than 30 years, UO's Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) has organized the summer school. LERC instructor Lynn Feekin thinks the summer school is "one of the best programs LERC does. It's the only

place unionists from all different unions come together for a weekend. They learn, play volleyball, watch movies, and picnic. It's such an energizer and solidarity builder."

The weekend event brought together active members with a wide range of experience levels — from rank-and-file members, to local union leaders, to executive board members and officers, to staffers — from a wide variety of private and public sector unions that included the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the American Federation of Teachers, the Machinists Union, Laborers Union, the International Broth-



Summer School attendees on New Deal Art and Architecture tour of federally-funded projects on University of Oregon campus led by Nathan Moore, a member of Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation Local 3544, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. (Photos by Stefan Ostrach)



Machinists Lodge 1005 members Clarence Williams (left) and Tim Frey listen intently during "The Real Life of Union Stewards" workshop at LERC Summer School.

erhood of Electrical Workers, the Oregon Nurses Association, the National Association of Letter Carriers, United Food and Commercial Workers, Service Employees International Union, UNITE-HERE, the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, and others.

Scott Petterson was at his fifth summer school.

"I learn something every year," said Petterson, a vice president of AFSCME Council 75. "It's hard to give up a weekend away from family, but I want to be the best union leader I can. There's no better place to learn."

Petterson praised the "good instruc-

tion and real life experience from others." Reflecting back, he related, "The first year I felt a little overwhelmed, not sure if I'd fit in. But other unions have the same problems and issues. It's a tough economy and everybody is suffering."

Lisa Dupell, a staffer at UFCW Local 555 who worked her way up through the ranks, enjoyed the camaraderie.

"It's a really good experience, the

different unions coming together," she said.

Feekin noted that the relationships formed at the summer school carry over into communities across the state. "They go home juiced up about the labor movement, tie in to the bigger picture, excited to put shoulders to the wheel," she said.

(Editor's Note: Stefan Ostrach, a retired Teamsters union representative is a special correspondent in Eugene.)

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