

# UNION LABEL: The ultimate hard-to-find gift

Remember Charles Dickens and the ghost of Christmas future? One hundred seventy years after A Christmas Carol was published, today's Tiny Tims will have a grim future indeed if they wait for a change of heart from today's Ebenezer Scrooges. We need the Bob Cratchets of the world to unionize and win back health care, paid time off and a living wage. In that spirit, we propose the following early New Year's Resolution — Buy nothing from sweatshops, and look for the union label. Of course the union label can be hard to find these days. So we've done the looking and come up with 10 gift ideas for goods and services brought to you by union members.

**1) BLANKETS.** The gift of warmth starts with wool. Beautiful Pendleton Woolen Mills blankets, like the queen-size mineral-umber Yakima camp blanket, \$139, are quality-made by members of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) at mills in Pendleton, Oregon, and Washougal, Washington. And they last a lifetime. Buy them at Pendleton outlet stores, retailers like Made In Oregon, and online at [pendleton-usa.com](http://pendleton-usa.com).



**2) BOOTS.** Danner hiking and hunting boots — made in Portland by members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 555 — are serious business. We won't say they're indestructible, but let's just say you could go through three \$100 pairs of sweatshop-made boots at other manufacturers or you could buy one \$300 pair of

built-to-last Danner boots and support a fellow union member. Get them at Danner's Portland outlet store, 12021 NE Airport Way, or at Al's Shoe's and Boots — a long-time supporter of the NW Labor Press — at 5811 NE 82nd Ave. [Danner does import some boots, so check the label: If it's U.S.-made, it's union-made.]

**3) BOOKS.** Forget Amazon.com, notorious for its nonunion sweatshop warehouses. At Powell's Books, the nation's largest independent book store, workers are represented by International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 5. Books, gifts, and gift cards are available at six Portland-area locations and online at [powells.com](http://powells.com).

**4) WINE.** Year after year, Chateau St. Michelle produces top-ranked wines as judged by Wine Spectator and Wine & Spirits magazine. And they're made by members of United Farm Workers and Teamsters Local 117 in Washington's Columbia Valley wine region. [Tip: It tastes best and costs least when purchased at unionized retailers like Fred Meyer or Safeway.]

**5) CHOCOLATE.** See's Candies gift boxes are available in all price ranges, and are made in California by members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers. A 29-piece Christmas Gold Wreath box runs \$32.75.

**6) DINNERWARE.** Fiesta dinnerware is colorful, timeless, and proudly U.S.-made in Newell,

West Virginia, by members of Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastic and Allied Workers (GMP) Local 419.

**7) COOKWARE.** There's quality American steel in All-Clad pots and pans, union-made by members of the United Steelworkers (USW) Local 3403 in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania.

**8) MUSIC.** Visualize a union member. Do you see the trombone? At most major symphony orchestras, American Federation of Musicians helps ensure a living wage for musicians. For \$15 to \$42, you can see AFM Local 99 members in the Oregon Symphony perform Comfort and Joy, a Dec. 22 matinee of classical Christmas favorites.

**9) BLADES.** For the family hunter or fisher, knives made by Gerber Legendary Blades make a sharp-looking gift, and they're made in Southwest Portland by members of Machinists District Lodge W24. [Some Gerber knives are imported, but if it says Made in Portland on the blade, it's union-made.]

**10) AUTOMOTIVE.** At In and Out Auto Care in Gladstone, Oregon, automotive service is provided by members of Machinists District Lodge W24. All-purpose gift certificates for any amount fit neatly in a stocking, and can be used for tune-ups, maintenance, or repairs. Visit [inandoutauto-care.com](http://inandoutauto-care.com) or call 503-786-0700.

Last but not least ...

**HOLIDAY CARDS:** Who knew? Homestead Cards, a division of Portland-based Morel Ink (877-515-5010), and American Greetings holiday cards are U.S.-made by union Teamsters.



You can buy American Greetings cards from a UFCW member for \$2.99 at Fred Meyer, and have them delivered anywhere in the United States for 46 cents by a member of the National Association of Letter Carriers. Drop by the post office or online at [usps.com](http://usps.com) for holiday-themed forever stamps.

**STOCKING SWEETS:** Fill up your stockings with Seattle-made Almond Roca or San Francisco-made Ghirardelli chocolates, both produced by members of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers.

**GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP:** When you run out of room for out-of-town relatives, the Portland metro area's four unionized hotels are surprisingly affordable, and they support family wages and benefits for members of UNITE HERE Local 9: Downtown Hilton Hotel and Executive Tower, The Benson Hotel, Paramount, and the Vancouver Hilton & Convention Center.

## UO graduate fellows begin contract talks

By STEFAN OSTRACH  
Special Correspondent

EUGENE — Surrounded by more than 100 union members and supporters, the University of Oregon's management negotiating team on Nov. 22 received a comprehensive proposal from the Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) Local 3544. The GTFF, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, represents more than 1,500 graduate student teachers

and researchers at UO. Members teach a third of the classes at the college. Bargaining is being held in open session, though management and union caucuses are closed.

GTFF organizer Amber Cooper presented the union's proposals for improvements in working conditions, health care, and economics. The union wants basic kitchen appliances and wireless internet available in all work areas, paid parental leave, expanded

protection against discrimination, job security, getting paid on payday, major dental and improved vision coverage, compensation for student fees, and wage increases.

Cooper stressed that good family health insurance, which is provided through a union trust, is a big draw for graduate students considering coming to UO, but lack of coverage for major dental work like crowns and fillings is a serious gap in that coverage.

Explaining the GTFF's opening proposal for a 6.1 percent wage increase, Cooper cited an estimate by the university's own financial aid office that \$1,620 a month was needed, Cooper said, "We are only asking for salaries to cover at least basic costs of living as a graduate student in Eugene."

Pay for a typical teaching fellow, she said, is \$960 per month.

UO said it will respond with a proposal of its own at the next session scheduled for Dec. 13.

GTFF was first organized in 1976, making it one of the earliest unions of graduate student employees in the U.S.

Other unions at the University of Oregon have all settled their contracts. They include faculty (United Academics, American Federation of Teachers, and American Association of University Professors); classified workers (Service Employees Local 503); and printers (Teamsters).

## PSU professors protest bottom-tier pay and no job security

"I don't have any job security," said Portland State University philosophy professor Brian Elliott at a Nov. 19 union rally. "That's why I'm here."

Full-time PSU faculty are represented by American Association of University Professors (AAUP), but this year's union contract talks have not produced an agreement, and the two sides began mediation this month.

Elliott, who wore a cap and gown to the rally, was a tenured professor in University College Dublin, but followed his wife to Portland in 2008. "There I made \$100,000 and had a job for life," Elliott. "Here I make \$40,000 and have no job security whatsoever."

AAUP is pushing a number of pro-

posals to improve job security for non-tenured faculty. For example, they would be on year-to-year contracts instead of term-to-term as now, and two- or three-year contracts after they've worked there four years. PSU administration said 'no' to that.

PSU is proposing a 1 percent across-the-board pay raise — at a school whose faculty are among the least-paid in the United States. AAUP is proposing a series of raises, including a 2.5 percent COLA, a 1 percent across-the-board raise, and bigger raises when faculty are promoted.

The sides will meet with a mediator Dec. 18 and 19.



### Historical Society recognizes Ken Fry

Ken Fry, a member of IBEW Local 48 and a retired executive director of NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center, was presented with the "2013 Volunteer of the Year" award Nov. 21 by the Clark County Historical Society in Vancouver, Washington. Making the presentation above is museum director Susan Tissot. Fry was recognized for his involvement in the museum's summer neighborhood walking tours, as well as his contribution to the "Labor: A Working History" exhibit currently underway at the museum. Fry did extensive research on both projects. He also designed and constructed an electrical tool identification game for children (and adults). Fry estimates he donated more than 500 hours to the museum in 2013. The Clark County Historical Society also gave Special recognition to Roben White, president of Painters Local 10, for his work on the labor exhibit, which highlights Clark County's union workers through words, images and artifacts, plus interactive displays. The exhibit runs through Dec. 31, 2014.