

# Laborers Local 483 proclaims 'Zoolidarity' in campaign for a better contract at Metro

## Metro's contract with AFSCME Local 3580 has also expired

Laborers Local 483 is at odds with the Metro regional government over a new contract covering 500 workers at the Oregon Zoo and Metro's regional parks and natural areas. Metro has in mind several concessions, while Local 483 is pushing for a new minimum hourly wage of \$15 an hour — plus new rights for hundreds of low-paid "temps" who come back year after year to work in zoo admissions and food service.

The old contract expired June 30. For the new one, Metro wants to increase the employee share of health insurance premiums to 10 percent (up from the current 6 percent). It also wants to charge some zoo employees \$40 a month for parking, and it wants to freeze wages for some workers.

Local 483 organizer Angela MacWhinnie said the union is okay with Metro's latest overall wage proposal — a 2.5 percent cost-of-living increase this year, followed by annual raises equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index (minimum 1.25 per-

cent and maximum 3.5 percent).

But Metro doesn't want to give the raises to workers it considers overpaid. After a "market study," Metro determined that about 16 zoo workers on the litter patrol are overpaid at \$9.88 an hour. [Oregon minimum wage is \$9.10 an hour.] Metro wants to freeze those workers' wages, and bring in new litter crew members at \$9.41.

Local 483 wants to go the opposite direction: Its proposed \$15-an-hour minimum would mean raises for 330 workers. Most of those are temporary workers in food service and zoo admissions who successfully campaigned to join the union last year.

"We want to focus on bringing the bottom wage up so that these become much better jobs," MacWhinnie told the Labor Press.

Local 483 also proposed that workers get up to 40 hours a year of paid sick days along the lines of the new City of Portland ordinance, and Metro has agreed to that, though at a slower accrual rate than the one in the city ordinance. [The City's sick leave ordinance doesn't apply to public employees.]

Lastly, Local 483 wants Metro to give the "temporary" workers more



Laborers Local 483 organizer Angela MacWhinnie and zoo admissions worker Dana Carstensen greet visitors to the Oregon Zoo June 21 with a free sticker proclaiming "Zoolidarity." Almost everyone entering the zoo took a sticker, and some learned a little about the Zoo's workers and their union. (Photo courtesy of Local 483.)

rights. The zoo staffs up with temps during the warm months. They're laid off after they reach a 1,040 hour limit, but are often rehired the following year. Some have returned every year for over a decade. Local 483 proposes that they

get full grievance rights after two consecutive years, and a seniority preference for recall.

Local 483 has begun taking its message to the public. Members have addressed the Metro Commission at sev-

eral meetings. And on June 21, members and supporters — including Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz — gathered outside the Oregon Zoo to hand out stickers proclaiming "Zoolidarity" with the logo of an animal paw print in place of the traditional symbol of the upraised fist. MacWhinnie said over about three hours, they were able to hand out the stickers to several thousand zoo patrons. Managers told staff to take them off in some areas. MacWhinnie said the union expects to protest that move by filing an unfair labor practice charge with the Oregon Employment Relations Board.

Though Metro labeled its June 23 proposal a "final offer," the two sides scheduled another bargaining session for July 3, after this issue went to print.

Bargaining also continues between Metro and AFSCME Local 3580, which represents 308 workers, including planners, engineers, scientists, security officers, and janitors under a contract which also expired June 30.

Local 3580 President Matt Tracy, a planner in Metro regional government's Sustainability Center, said the two sides are not far apart, but health care is the one challenging topic. Metro wants to increase the employee share of insurance premiums, and that's after having already eroded benefits in the Kaiser Permanente health plan to make employees pay more out-of-pocket costs, says Oregon AFSCME staff representative Jaime Sorenson.

Like Laborers Local 483, AFSCME Local 3580 has also fought Metro's use of temps. Sorenson said union grievances succeeded in converting some temps to permanent positions, and some part-time to full-time. But Metro has resisted AFSCME contract proposals to rein in use of temps, Sorenson said.

The two sides have several bargaining sessions scheduled in July.

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family

## Introducing Liberty Mutual Insurance Company

Let Them Help You With All Your Insurance Needs

Call For Your Free Quote Today at 503-231-4125 ext. 56276  
and a \$10.00 Donation Will Be Made To  
Doernbecher Children's Hospital Thru August 8, 2014

Time to help Yourself and the Kids  
at Doernbecher Childrens Hospital



9955 SE Washington Street \* Portland, OR 97216  
(503) 253-8193 \* (800) 356-6507



(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)  
Established in 1900 at Portland, Oregon  
as a voice of the labor movement.

4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150,  
Portland, Ore. 97213  
Telephone: (503) 288-3311

Editor: Michael Gutwig  
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and SW Washington. Subscriptions \$13.75 per year for union members.

Group rates available to trade union organizations.  
PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID  
AT PORTLAND, OREGON.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS NOTICE: Three weeks are required for a change of address. When ordering a change, please give your old and new addresses and the name and number of your local union.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to  
NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS, P.O. BOX 13150,  
PORTLAND, OR 97213-0150



Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floorcoverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters, Elevators, Plasterers, Family