

BUILDING COMMUNITY**'Solidarity for Charity' launched to benefit labor agency**

Labor's Community Service Agency announced its first annual spring fundraising campaign to run through May. The "Solidarity for Charity" campaign is asking for donations from the greater labor community to help sustain and grow the charitable organization.

"In the past, Labor's Community Services has held seasonal fund drives for specific programs, like Helping Hands for temporary hardship assistance," said Vickie Burns, executive director. "Resources and opportunities have changed over the years. We must find new ways to generate support so that we can continue to offer great programs and services while growing the agency."

One way, says Burns, is to hold an annual fundraising campaign offering the opportunity to donate at the click of a button. The LCSA's newly launched website, www.lcsaportland.org, provides that opportunity.

The Solidarity for Charity campaign kicked off March 23, and will wrap up at the Northwest Oregon Labor Council's annual "Labor Appreciation Night" banquet on June 6.

To learn more, visit the website or the agency's LCSA-Portland Facebook page. To donate online, go to www.lcsaportland.org/donate, or send donations to Labor's Community Service Agency, 9955 SE Washington, Suite 211, Portland, OR 97216.

SW Washington teachers stage 1-day strike

As this issue went to press, about 2,400 public school teachers in the Camas, Washougal, Hockinson and Evergreen/Clark County school districts in Southwest Washington were preparing for one-day strikes May 13 to protest state budget proposals.

Since April 22, teachers have waged one-day walkouts at 23 other Washington school districts. Another 14 districts were scheduled to strike through May 22, including Seattle on May 19, bringing the total to 40 school

districts.

Washington school budgets are set at the state level, and the state constitution mandates fully funded public education and class size limits. But the Legislature's current budget proposal would short-change teacher pay and benefits and increase class sizes, Washington Education Association (WEA) says. The union is also protesting proposals to mandate that student test scores be used in teacher evaluations.

Public school teachers and support staff have gone six years

without even a cost-of-living adjustment. This year, the state is proposing a cost-of-living raise, but no catch-up.

Teacher pay is higher in 41 other states, WEA says, and only five states have larger class sizes than Washington's.

"This is not an action against our local community," said Evergreen Education Association president Rob Lutz in a press statement. "Our action is against the Washington Legislature, which is failing our students."

New apprenticeship coordinator at Roofers #49

Joel Gonzales has been appointed interim apprenticeship director at the Oregon & SW Washington Roofers & Waterproofers Training Center. He succeeds Clint Mapes, who is leaving for New York to do

charity work for his church.

Gonzales, 40, has worked at the training center for the last 15 years, first as an instructor, and most recently as the full-time curriculum coordinator. He is a graduate of the four-year train-

ing program located in Southeast Portland.

Mapes, 45, was hired as the director in 2005. He went through an expedited training program in Portland in the mid-'90s, after working several years for a nonunion shop. "I heard about the union, so right away I went over to the union hall to sign up," he said. He was placed in the apprenticeship program, which he completed in less than two years under the tutelage of Coordinator Roy Bolt. Mapes helped Bolt build mockups for classes, and eventually was hired as an instructor. He took over the program when Bolt retired. At that time, there were about 65 apprentices. Today, the program has more than 200 apprentices, and 25 classes that are held from October to mid-May.

"I love to teach," Gonzales said. "The industry changes so much. You have to stay aggressive, create new classes, to keep ahead of it in order to turn out good, all-around roofers."



Joel Gonzales (right) is the new interim apprenticeship director for the Roofers. He succeeds Clint Mapes (left) who is leaving to do charity work for his church.

...PERS victory

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SCME Local 189, Arken is president of the Oregon AF-SCME retirees chapter, and one of 13 PERS participants who were named as plaintiffs in the lawsuit.

"The Legislature continues to see public employee retirees as a revenue stream," Arken said. "That's just unconscionable that you give a great big tax break to Intel and Nike and then you come to us to make up the windfall."

Ever since its founding in 1945, PERS has been pre-funded based on employer and worker contributions, which are invested. When the system got into trouble a few years ago, it wasn't because of a sudden surge in benefit levels. The median benefit was \$1,891 a month as of 2013. Rather, the crisis was caused by losses in the financial

market crisis. The PERS system was 98 percent funded in December 2007. A year later, it was 71 percent funded.

The 2013 cuts have so far cost retired public employees over \$200 million, said Greg Hartman, lead attorney for the plaintiffs. That money will now have to be paid back to retirees. [The \$4 billion figure is the present value of benefits that were to be cut over the next 20 years. Most of the cut was to come in the later years, because COLAs, like the inflation they're meant to combat, are compounded.]

The ruling will have no immediate impact on state or local budgets, because PERS contribution rates have already been set for the 2015-17 biennium. But the decision means public employers will have to increase pension contributions after that period.



Everice Moro

CORRECTIONS**Strike that: There were 11 major strikes last year, not 9**

In "The Disappearing Strike"—an article in our Feb. 6 issue—we reported that there were nine major work stoppages in the United States involving more than 1,000 workers in 2014. That figure was generated by totaling monthly reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but the reports missed two work stoppages. BLS later revised two of its monthly reports, and cited 11 major stoppages in its annual report on work stoppages (a term that includes strikes by workers *and* employer lockouts).

The two work stoppages we missed in our tally were one-day strikes:

- At Queen of the Valley Medical Center, Sutter Tracy Community Hospital, and Watsonville Community Hospital, in Central California on Aug. 14 by 1,000 members of California Nurses Association; and
- At St. Joseph Medical Center and St. Clare Hospital in Tacoma and Lakewood, Washington, by 1,100 members of Service Employees Local 1199NW on Nov. 18.

The corrected data doesn't fundamentally change the story—which is about the near total disappearance of the strike. It means that instead of 2014 being the second-lowest strike year since 1947, as we reported earlier, it's tied for second-lowest with 2010.



An article in the May 1 edition—about Machinist Lodge 63 member Sam Beekman's battle against ALS—misstated his years of marriage, and the year he started jogging. Beekman took up jogging in 1991. He and wife Pam have been married for 43 years.

Additionally, a fundraiser for ALS that Beekman is coordinating in September will follow a similar route as the Hood to Coast Relay, but it is not associated with that race.

To donate to Beekman, go online to:

http://webor.alsa.org/goto/Sam_Beekman