



NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

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Ironworker strike now in Month 8



Instafab employees Brandon Nelson (front) and Brian McCafferty walked off the job Sept. 22, joining a strike that began Feb. 27. They were greeted outside by fellow strikers and supporters with Portland Jobs with Justice.

A strike at nonunion Instafab is now in its eighth month, with no resolution in sight.

The strike began Feb. 27

when five workers walked off the job at the Vancouver steel fabrication and erection company to protest wages and

working conditions.

“We want to be treated fair.

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A union for massage therapists?

AFL-CIO's Working America is helping LMTs campaign to raise their industry's standards

Janet Weiser may never have a union. But with the help of Working America, she and fellow licensed massage therapists (LMT) in Oregon are trying out the union principle — organizing and working collectively to improve industry standards.

Working America is the AFL-CIO's outreach organization for those who agree with the labor movement's economic justice agenda but don't have a union in their workplace. Nearly a year ago, its organizers started the campaign with a mailing and survey sent to all Oregon LMTs.

“There are no standards for the industry at all,” says Aneta Molenda, Working America's lead organizer in the campaign.

LMTs work as employees, as independent contractors, or for



Janet Weiser, a member of Working America's Massage Advocacy Project, works at the Hawthorne Street Fair to raise awareness of the campaign.

their own private practices, and do their work in spas, health clinics, chiropractors' offices, or even homes. Most must cobble multiple gigs together to make ends meet, including jobs outside their profession. Weiser, for instance, moonlights as an Uber driver, though she's been an LMT for five years.

LMT earnings vary widely, from as high as \$100 an hour to as low as minimum wage. The self-employed, and those working the health care side of the profession — earn the most. Earning the least are those who provide massages at big corporate franchise operations like

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Furor over Mexican Oreos, but no union boycott, yet



Stop eating Oreo cookies? Not so fast, says the Bakers Union

By Don McIntosh
Associate editor

Donald Trump says he'll never eat another Oreo. Stephen Colbert, spoofing him in his inaugural Late Show, devoured the cookies. And 4,500 people have signed an online pledge to stop eating Oreos.

What's it all about? Oreos, invented by the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) in 1912, have been made by the company in Chicago ever since. But on July 29, Nabisco's corporate owner, Mondelēz International, announced it will spend \$130 million to install four new production lines at its Salinas, Mexico, bakery, and shut nine of its 16 production lines in Chicago, laying off 600 of its 1,200 Chicago workers.

The Chicago workers are members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM) Local 300, Machinists District Lodge 8, and Operating Engineers Local 399. Leaders of BCTGM, the largest of the Nabisco unions, say behind-the-scenes talks over the decision were brutal. Company officials told union reps May 15 they were considering two locations for new capital investment — Chicago and Salinas — but they'd only pick Chicago if the unions opened their contracts to offer concessions amounting to \$46 million a year ... and there'd still be 300

job losses even then.

BCTGM officials say they refused to even consider such a proposal: It would have amounted to a cut of as much as \$29 per hour — for workers whose wage-and-benefit package totals about \$50 an hour.

“Mondelēz is a \$35 billion multinational corporation,” said BCTGM President David Durkee in an Aug. 5 letter to President Obama. “It may be headquartered 30 miles up the road from Chicago, but it has no loyalty to Illinois workers or to the United States of America.”

Mondelēz International may or may not be “creating delicious moments of joy,” as its mission states, but its announcement created a delicious irony: a sizable fraction of the cookies that used to be described as “America's Favorite” will soon be made in Mexico.

So should American workers stop buying Oreos — and Chips Ahoy, Ritz Crackers, Trident Gum, Tang, and dozens of other Mondelēz brands?

“We understand where Trump's coming from,” said Cameron Taylor, business agent at Portland-based BCTGM Local 364. But to be clear, the Bakers Union is not boycotting Oreos, Nabisco or Mondelēz ... yet. For the time being, anyway, Oreos will continue to be made by union workers in Portland, Oregon; Atlanta, Georgia; Fair Lawn, New Jersey; and Richmond, Virginia.

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