

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Stamping out hunger

May 13 was the annual “Stamp Out Hunger” food drive sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC). The food drive takes place in communities across the nation and is the largest one-day food drive in America. “We see a lot of people who do without, people

struggling. It’s an honor to spend the day collecting food to help people,” said Billy Brink, a member of NALC Branch 82 in Portland. Food collected in Oregon and Southwest Washington will be distributed by the Oregon Food Bank. Last year letter carriers brought in over 1 million pounds of food locally — and 80 million pounds nationwide. This year marked the 25th year of the food drive.



In the photo above, letter carrier Michael Bixel loads bags from his mail truck into a bin at the Rose City Branch Post Office. More than a dozen women from the neighborhood volunteered to help sort the food and send it off to the Oregon Food Bank. Left, letter carrier Kathy Cassidy drops off bags of food to the Rose City Branch Post Office, with help from her husband, daughters, and granddaughter (who was in the car). The letter carriers are members of the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82.

... ‘Right to work’ coming to the public sector

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They could look to Jim Falvey for tips. Falvey is president of National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, which represents Portland-area postal service letter carriers. U.S. Postal Service unions already operate in a “right-to-work” voluntary-dues environment. So do all other federal employee unions. Yet Branch 82 manages to get over 96 percent of union-represented workers to pay dues voluntarily. How? First, by insisting in contract negotiations that the employer give the union a chance to meet with new hires. During new employee orientation, Falvey gets time to deliver an energetic pitch about how important the union is to letter carriers. The few he fails convince are later set upon by their coworkers — who don’t want to see their union weakened by freeloaders. The union publishes the names of non-members so all members can see who’s not paying their share. Branch 82 even offers a bounty to a member who signs up a non-member.



UNION MEANS ‘EVERYBODY IN, NOBODY OUT’ Jim Falvey, president of National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, says his union takes great pride in maintaining high voluntary membership rates.

“I don’t believe [right-to-work] is the death knell that everybody says it is,” Falvey says.

For the union movement, it

matters a great deal how successful public sector unions are in maintaining support once fair share goes away. Today approximately 4.1 million local government workers and 2.1 million state government workers are union members, and they make up about 42 percent of all union members. If even one in five drop their membership, that would weaken the union movement by over a million members — at a time when unions and the public sector are already under attack.

PEOPLE

Karly Edwards stepped down May 12 as state director of the **Oregon Working Families Party**, a union-backed minor party. Edwards formerly worked for the Service Employees International Union,

UNITE HERE, and **Portland Jobs with Justice**. In June she’ll begin a new job as labor representative at **Oregon Nurses Association**. Hers is the third director-level departure for the Oregon Working Families Party this year. Deputy director **Sami Alloy**

left in January to work as an Oregon campaign manager for the nonprofit advocacy group **Forward Together**. Field director **David Neel** also left in January. Two staff remain at the organization: operations manager **Hannah Taub** and organizer **Ian Johnson**.

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6mo	.40%	.02%	.01%	.01%	.05%
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