

NORTHWEST LABOR PRESS

IN THIS ISSUE

NO MORE 'AMERICAN IDLE' UAW is calling on Americans to buy America ... and sing about it. | Page 2

IRONWORKERS LOCAL 29 Union ironworkers erect new roller coaster at Oaks Park in record time. | Page 3

Meeting Notices p. 4 Oregon AFL-CIO endorsements p. 6

VOLUME 119, NUMBER 6

PORTLAND, OREGON

MARCH 16, 2018

New Seasons CEO out, and union-busters out

By Don McIntosh

Four months after pro-union workers made a surprise visit to New Seasons Market headquarters, CEO Wendy Collie is out, and so is the union-busting law firm the grocery chain brought in to talk to workers — for now at least.

New Seasons announced Collie's departure Feb. 6 as part of a "strategic shift in business direction" in which the company committed to refocus investment in its existing stores — and abandon its plans to operate in Northern California. That meant walking out on a lease in Hayes Valley district of San Francisco, scrapping plans for stores in Carmel and Emeryville, and even shuttering a brand-new New Seasons store in Sunnyvale that opened



Outside the Multnomah Athletic Club, union protesters set up outside a March 1 business event featuring New Seasons board member Stephen Babson, managing director of the private equity firm Endeavour Capital.

last August.

The reasons for Collie's exit are murky. Collie, a former executive at Starbucks and the Kindercare daycare chain, was

brought into New Seasons as CEO in 2012. In an exclusive interview she gave to Oregon

Turn to Page 5



A UNION BRIDGE TO CITY HALL? SEIU Local 503 member Micki Varney, a union shop steward at the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, went through training at the union-sponsored Oregon Labor Candidates School. Now she's trying to topple an incumbent Salem City Council member.

TIRED OF WAITING FOR POLITICIANS TO DELIVER?

Union members are running for office

Even in today's Gilded Age of moneyed influence in politics, when working people get serious about democracy, boots on the ground can beat the billionaires. That belief is what motivates the Oregon Labor Candidates School, which has a five-year track record of training and assisting union members to run for public office. Twelve of the school's alumni now hold elected office, including seats in the Oregon Legislature, city halls, and school boards. This May, another crop will appear on the primary ballot:

- **Dana Carstensen** is a shop steward with **Laborers Local 483** at the Oregon Zoo, and also works as a hazardous waste technician represented by AFSCME Local 3580. He's running for a non-partisan seat on Metro, which runs the zoo. **Metro District 4** runs north of TV Highway on the metro area's outer West side. (danacarstensen.com)
- **Deb Patterson**, a pastor at Smyrna United Church of Christ in Canby, is also a homecare worker and member of **SEIU Local 503**. She's running in the Democratic primary for a chance to challenge longtime Republican incumbent Jackie Winters in South Salem's **Senate District 10**. (debpatersonor.org)
- **Rachel Prusak**, a nurse practitioner, member of **Oregon Nurses Association**, and vice president of Nurses for Single Payer, is running unopposed in the Democratic primary to challenge incumbent Republican Julie Parrish in West Linn's **House District 37**. (rachelforstaterep.com)
- **Michael Ellison**, an electrician and member of **IBEW Local 280**, is running unopposed for the Democratic nomination to challenge Republican incumbent Denyc Boles in Southeast Salem's Republican-leaning **House District 19**. (mikeellisonfororegon.com)
- **Micki Varney**, a salmon biologist and chief steward for **SEIU Local 503** at the

Turn to Page 6



Photo by Andrew Gorry, courtesy of AFT-Oregon

Volunteer members of the union bargaining team were in high spirits March 2 after 18 months of negotiations produced a tentative deal for graduate teaching and research assistants at PSU. From left: Julia Dancis, Neal Kuperman, Lyndsie Compton, and Ted Cooper.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

PSU grad student faculty ratify their first-ever union contract

Graduate teaching and research assistants at Portland State University (PSU) approved their first-ever union contract March 9. The three-year deal covers about 800 workers and is the culmination of a joint campaign by American Federation of Teachers (AFT)-Oregon and American Association of University Professors. It doubles minimum work hours to 12 a week and provides a \$184 signing bonus and annual inflation-based raises of 1.5 to 3.5 percent.

Currently, the median stipend for a PSU graduate assistant is \$1,150 a month — before mandatory student fees (about \$460 a term) and health insurance (\$875 per term).

Starting next academic year, the agreement commits the uni-

versity to pay a share of the student fees, starting at 45 percent, rising to 80 percent in Fall 2020.

Teaching and research assistants receive at least some tuition remission; the new contract sets a minimum of 9 credits.

"We're excited," said bargaining team member Neal Kuperman, a graduate teaching assistant in physics. "We also understand that this is not a one time deal."

Kuperman said grad assistants can't afford to live in Portland on what they're making, yet the university can't function without them.

"We are a foundational pillar of the university. Without grad assistants it would be nearly impossible to teach all the courses required or do the research needed."

— Don McIntosh

OREGON LEGISLATURE

2018 Session: Small gains, big misses

Democratic majorities in the Oregon House and Senate rolled up their sleeves in the short 2018 session to pass paid family leave, a Green Jobs cap-and-invest bill, and a school funding revenue-raiser that ends Oregon's shameful rank as lowest-in-the-nation for corporate taxes.

Just kidding. They did none of those things. House Democrats, led by Speaker Tina Kotek, did their part. But this year, like almost every year, the most important bills that might have benefited working people died in the majority-Democratic Oregon Senate.

Turn to Page 7