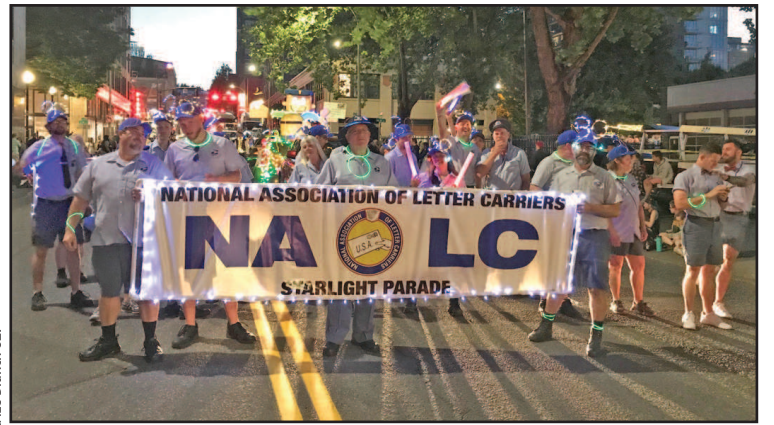




Photos courtesy of IBEW Local 48 and NALC Branch 82.



Union Spirit at the Portland Rose Festival

Rosie the Riveter has a lot of sisters. At the June 8 Portland Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade, IBEW Local 48 entered a drill team consisting of 60 women members dressed as the working woman icon, including Susan Rodway (foreground above) with Shawna Fuller behind her. Local 48 also fielded about three dozen superheroes at the June 1 Starlight Parade, including Super Girl Heather Yeo and Bat Girl Stacey Sawyer, left. They marched carrying lit-up shields together with a band on a lit-up float and several dozen others wearing Local 48 garb, including Taylor Johnson and Joe Ergle, left. This was the third year union superheroes appeared at the

Starlight Parade, and the second year the Rosies marched in the Grand Floral. Parade coordinator Matt Smyth says the entries promote union visibility. The Rosies are also meant to encourage women to think about joining the union building trades.

The grand-daddy of union Rose Festival entrants is National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 82, which has been coming up with brightly lit and entertaining entries in the Starlight Parade since 1989. [Hence the giant "30" on the 10' tall letter carrier in this year's march, above.]

...AFSCME to OHSU: Health workers need sick days

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fore their June 13 union rally, hundreds of members and supporters lined up along Sam Jackson Park Road in a kind of silent protest vigil, with Post-it notes covering their mouths. Why Post-it notes? Because at the June 5 forum, Hemenway refused to take questions. Instead she directed union members to write their questions on Post-it notes, then cherry picked which of those they wanted to answer.

The current contract is set to expire June 30. The two sides have been negotiating a new contract since February, but are still a considerable distance apart. For Local 328, the sticking points have been three items:

- **Paltry raises** OHSU is proposing a three-year contract with annual raises of 1% for many workers [To be more specific, OHSU is proposing increases of

1.5% overall, but then it wants to withhold 0.5% of that to address "pay equity" issues for workers who have been underpaid.] Either way, those raises are less than annual inflation, which has ranged from 1.5 to 2.5% the last few years. Raises of 1 or 1.5% would have OHSU workers would be falling behind.

- **Concessions on paid time off** Workers at OHSU currently have two separate paid leave accounts: vacation and sick time. OHSU is proposing a new Paid Time Off (PTO) system that puts them in the same basket. After employees use five sick days a year, any further sick days would come out of paid time off they could otherwise use for vacation. One problem with that: Most health care workers get sick more than five days a year, so the new policy would make them choose between working while sick and losing vacation time. OHSU is also proposing to create a new paid parental leave benefit — and fund it by cutting down the amount of paid time off workers can accrue. Right now workers are allowed to bank up to 250 hours of unused vacation — and cash

that out when they leave or retire. The OHSU proposal would cut that to 40 hours. Workers who've been saving up vacation time for years as a nest egg would be forced to use it or lose it. Local 328 President Matt Hilton says the proposal is a non-starter: "We don't have a mandate from our members to go to a PTO system, and we don't really have an interest in fixing what isn't broken."

- **Shifting the cost of health insurance to employees** Up to now, OHSU has been one of the rare employers to still provide fully paid health insurance coverage to employees, something that was once common. Now, OHSU is proposing that workers pay 5% of the premium for employee-only coverage. Workers who elect spousal coverage do currently pay 12% of the premium; OHSU wants to increase that to 17%. And there's more: OHSU is proposing that if premiums go up more than 5%, workers would have to pay ALL of the increase above that. In other words, a public employer with \$1.5 billion in reserves wants to shift the financial risk of unpredictable health cost increases off its

balance sheet and onto its workers. And that's not all. OHSU's health insurance benefit covers employees and their spouses, but now OHSU is proposing a new charge of \$100 a month for any employee spouses who enroll after having declined their own employer-sponsored health insurance. The spousal surcharge program would rely on the honor system, but if employees are later found to have violated the requirement, they could be disciplined up to and including discharge under OHSU's proposal.

Labor and management negotiators began meeting with the help of a state mediator May 21, with further mediation sessions scheduled for June 18 and 28 and July 1 and 2. Under Oregon law, if they're unable to reach agreement, either side could declare an impasse, which starts a clock ticking. After 37 days, would legally be allowed to strike. Local 328 hasn't gone on strike at OHSU since 1995.

