

# Nabisco retirees condemn pension cuts

By Don McIntosh

It's been more than three years since the contract between Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco and Grain Millers (BCTGM) and Mondelez-Nabisco expired, and the two sides haven't been able to reach a new agreement since then. The union says it can't accept the company's insistence on replacing the pension with a 401(k). In May 2018, the com-

pany declared impasse and withdrew from the pension anyway, over union protest.

The pension fight has impacted members of Portland-based BCTGM Local 364 in a personal way. On Aug. 9, union retirees picketed outside Nabisco's North Portland plant, joined by several active workers.

Mondelez has said it wants out in part because the multi-

employer pension sponsored by BCTGM is projected to become insolvent, but union members are holding onto hope that Congress could pass the Butch-Lewis Act, a bill that would loan money to distressed pensions to enable them to recover. That could change the financial calculus for a company like Mondelez, says Local 364 business representative Cameron Taylor.



Local 364 President Leo Lovato, 55, has been at Nabisco for 33 years. When his company pulled out of the pension, he says he was several months away from being eligible to retire. Lovato had planned on retiring at 60, and was looking forward to spending more time with his family while his health was still good. "That's what they promised me 33 years ago," Lovato says. The company's decision means he'll have to work at least 10 more years, to age 65, Lovato says. "I don't have a choice. That's really what they took away."



After 32 years at Nabisco, Shelly Lascher retired in 2016 at age 54, one of a wave of workers who left that year after seeing that the company was dead-set on pulling out of the pension. Lascher says if she'd stayed, she would have had to work to age 65. "I really liked my job. I loved my job."



Marilyn Akeung and Patsy Booze, best friends, started at the Nabisco plant on the same day July 18, 1977, and retired 38 years later on the same day as well, Sept. 18, 2015.



## 'Our City, Our Home'

At the invitation of Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and City Commissioners, over 200 political, community, business, and labor leaders assembled at Pioneer Courthouse Square Aug. 14 to stand against violence at political demonstrations. In the last two years Portland has been repeatedly targeted by far-right organizations intent on provoking a response from left-wing adversaries, resulting in street brawls that have affected the city's reputation nationally. Labor organizations whose leaders joined the mayor in the appeal included Northwest Oregon Labor Council, Columbia-Pacific Building Trades Council, AF-SCME, AFT Oregon, Fire Fighters Local 43, Laborers Local 483, Oregon Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals, SEIU Local 49, and United Food and Commercial Workers Local 555, which turned out the contingent in yellow behind the mayor, left.