

# Nude dancers picket Portland clubs

In the group PDXStripperStrike, dancers borrow some union tactics, and get some union wins.

By Noah Wass

“No Justice, No Booty” and “We Won’t Perform w/out Reform” were just a few of the signs seen in a crowd of about a hundred gathered to picket Club 205 and The Venue on SE Stark St. in Portland June 24.

Sometime last week, the sign outside Club 205 briefly read All Lives Matter, as opposed to Black Lives Matter. Even without the sign, Club 205 and The Venue, a nearby strip club have yet to agree to the demands of a growing group of Portland strippers threatening to strike.

PdxStripperstrike is a movement of over 100 Portland strip club dancers demanding an end to racial discrimination in Portland clubs. So far, out of over 30 clubs in Portland, just six have yet to publicly agree to cultural sensitivity training.

An earlier picket scheduled for June 19 at Union Jacks on SE Burnside St., was called off after the owner bowed to public pressure and agreed to their full list of demands.

Back in March, Cat Hollis of the Haymarket Pole Collective,



Strippers and supporters with PDXStripperStrike picket outside two Southeast Portland strip clubs June 24.

began organizing pdxStripperstrike when a friend and fellow Black Portland dancer took his own life. “It was directly related to stress from trying to live as a Black dancer in this world or a Black anybody,” says Hollis, who first began contacting clubs June 1. Hollis says Giselle Marie, who organized NYStripperstrike in 2017, approved of the name’s use in Portland.

A list of demands submitted to Club 205 asks that “all contractors will receive a copy of

their contract at the time of signing.” As independent contractors, all dancers must sign a contract to work at Portland strip clubs. Dancers say they rarely, if ever get copies of their contracts. Nia, who has danced in Portland for four years says she’s never received a copy of a club’s contract.

Striking dancers are demanding that clubs give Black dancers equal opportunity in hiring and scheduling.

“I was the only woman of color at my club and my club

has a lot of dancers, we usually have 60-80 dancers on a Friday night,” says Nia, who is Latina and says her lighter skin makes it easier to get shifts. She says clubs often point to women of color like her with lighter skin to show that they hire people of color when really they don’t hire darker-skinned Black dancers. Hollis says that many clubs will only schedule Black dancers on weekdays during the day when business is slowest.

Meanwhile, Hollis says that

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— Cat Hollis

some club owners defend their hiring practices.

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PdxStripperstrike is demanding that clubs consider hiring based on local population statistics.

Another picket June 27 at Golden Dragon saw another hundred or so people march from Southeast Portland to downtown. Many local organizations have expressed their solidarity with Portland dancers. Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 7901 is the latest to express solidarity, with an Instagram post Saturday, expressing support for the action.

## Union sours on Scottie’s Pizza

By Noah Wass

All was optimism at Scottie’s Pizza Parlor last September when all 13 workers at the Southeast Portland pizzeria announced they were joining the Industrial Workers of the World — and owner Scottie Rivera agreed to recognize their union.

But when the COVID-19 crisis hit in mid-March, Rivera closed down the pizzeria and laid off the entire staff. On June 11, Rivera reopened with a slimmed-down operation and just two employees.

On the pizza shop’s Facebook page, laid-off union workers blasted Rivera for not hiring more of them back. Scottie’s Pizza has since taken down its Facebook page.

On June 13, the pizza union published an article on the website Medium calling on the two re-hired employees to quit in

solidarity with the union.

“We call on Scottie to make a public statement explicitly acknowledging that his ‘pro-worker’ ideals did not translate into good personal practice, and are superseded by his class position as a boss and an owner; that he has acted in bad faith rather than seeking inclusive and equitable solutions with worker input; and to strike pro-worker language from the parlor website and any other materials that employ it for advertising purposes.”

Rivera says he wasn’t happy being a boss and even considered selling the business. He says it was the pandemic that forced him to lay off staff. While there was no formal contract with the union, Rivera says he respects the rights of any re-hired employee to unionize. But Rivera has no plans to re-hire any other workers at the moment and says the decision to operate on a smaller scale is permanent.

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IN THE AUGUST 4 WASHINGTON PRIMARY ELECTIONS:

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**Donna SINCLAIR, District 18, Pos.1**

**Brian BLAKE, District 19, Pos.1**

**Clint BRYSON, District 19, Pos.2**

**Monica STONIER, District 49, Pos. 1**

**Sharon WYLIE, District 49, Pos. 2**

### Washington State SENATE

**Daniel SMITH, Dist. 17**

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**Annette CLEVELAND, Dist. 49**

### CLARK COUNTY

**County Council**

**Matt LITTLE, District 4**

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