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**NORTHWEST
LABOR
PRESS**

(International Standard Serial Number 0894-444X)
Established in 1900 in Portland, Oregon as a voice of the labor movement. Published on a semi-monthly basis on the first and third Fridays of each month by the Oregon Labor Press Publishing Co. Inc., a non-profit mutual benefit corporation owned by 20 unions and councils including the Oregon AFL-CIO. Serving more than 120 union organizations in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Office location:
4275 NE Halsey St., Portland, Oregon

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<http://nwlaborpress.org>

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Printed on recycled paper, using soy-based inks, by members of Teamsters Local 747-M.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Individual subscriptions are \$15 a year for union members, \$23 a year for all others. Pay by credit card online at nwlaborpress.org/subscribe, or send a check to our mailing address (above) along with your name, address and union affiliation, if any. **Group rates of \$11.52 a year per person** are available for 25 or more subscriptions; call 503-288-3311 for details.

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PERIODICALS POSTAGE PAID
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Nationwide Nabisco strike starts with Portland

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and pay us less.”

Marks is one of 210 strikers at the Portland bakery who are maintaining round-the-clock pickets in four-hour shifts. They get near constant honks of support from passing motorists on busy Columbia Boulevard.

“Our biggest problem is people dancing in the streets right now,” said Taylor, the Local 364 representative. “It’s a safety issue. People are playing music and they’re having a good time out there, but those trucks go by really fast.”

For striker Jake Willits, the strike comes as something of a break. Willits says he and some of his co-workers have been working non-stop for months, sometimes seven days a week and up to 13 hours a day. It’s an exhausting schedule, but at least the union contract makes it lucrative: Saturday work pays time-and-a-half, double time after eight hours, and Sunday work pays double time. Those shift premiums — which are meant to discourage overwork, are among the union rights the company wants to eliminate.

“If we’re sacrificing time with our family, we want to be



“At the end of the day, we spend more time here than with our family,” says striking Nabisco worker Donna Marks. “Why should we be ashamed to make a decent wage?”

compensated,” Willits said.

Members of other unions at the Nabisco plant have been honoring the strike picket line, including Operating Engineers Local 701, Teamsters Local 206, and IBEW Local 48. Members of Machinists Lodge 63 who maintain the equipment also left, taking their tools with them when they left the plant.

At press time, the company hasn’t tried to bring in strike replacements, and production has stopped cold. The employee parking lot is empty except for the cars of managers and hired

security. With production halted, the familiar smell is gone from the neighborhood, and Nabisco products may start disappearing from store shelves. What will be the first to go? Workers say the Portland plant is the only one to make Nabisco’s Chicken in a Biskit crackers, as well as the Oreo mix that’s used to create McDonald’s Oreo “McFlurry” soft serve ice cream.

On Aug. 14, sidewalks filled to overflowing as supporters turned out for a rally spearheaded by retired letter carrier and long-time union activist Jamie Par-

tridge. Organized by the Portland chapter of Democratic Socialists of America, and backed by Portland Jobs with Justice and the Northwest Oregon Labor Council, the rally drew support from multiple unions and several elected officials, including Oregon House Speaker Tina Kotek and labor legislator Dacia Grayber. A staffperson from U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley’s office brought bottled water and a statement of support from the senator.

On week two of the strike, BCTGM strike benefits of \$105 a week began. Local 364 president Jesus Martinez said he’s hopeful that if the strike drags on, the tight labor market may help keep strikers going with temporary jobs.

**UNION SOLIDARITY:
THEIR FIGHT IS OUR FIGHT**

Portland Nabisco strikers welcome visits and appreciate any kind of help. Lots of local union members have been coming by with water or food or just dropping by to offer moral support. You’ll find the picketers there at all hours of the day at 100 NE Columbia Blvd. **The second community rally will take place 10 am to noon Saturday Aug. 21.**

Carpenters, Electricians, Laborers, Glaziers, Sheetmetal Workers, Floor coverers, Bricklayers, Cement Masons, Roofers, Asbestos Workers, Millwrights, Painters,

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