

IATSE ratifies new film and TV contract

By an extremely narrow margin, members of International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) ratified a pair of nationwide contracts covering 60,000 workers in film and video production. In fact, one of the two agreements, known as the Basic Agreement, would have failed if it weren't for the fact that IATSE uses an electoral college style system to ratify contracts, in which locals are assigned delegates based on their size of memberships. The popular vote on the Basic

Agreement was 49.6% yes to 50.4% no. Turnout was high, with 72% of 63,209 eligible members voting.

Agreement on the three-year contract was announced Oct. 16, two days before a nationwide strike was set to begin. The contract specifies 3% annual raises, and makes progress on concerns about missed breaks, overwork, and lower pay on streaming productions. It escalates penalties for missed or delayed meals, guarantees at least 10 hours between shifts, and requires at least 54 hours off after members work five consecutive days in a week.

Burgerville

From Page 1

cluding one free meal per shift, allowing tip jars at stores, and five paid holidays a year. Normally, when an employer on its own makes improvements for both union and non-union workers—without bargaining with the union over it—it's seen as a union-busting tactic. It's meant to show that the union didn't win the improvement; it was just the employer being generous. Making improvements for both union and non-union also removes an incentive for workers to join the union since they'll get the improvements either way. Medina said he and his fellow union members interpreted Burgerville's unilateral improvements in that way, but they also say it's clear the union was the cause of the changes, which came only after the union proposed them.

Starting wages under the contract are set at 25 cents above minimum wage, which is currently \$14 an hour in the Portland area. But Medina said union workers will also benefit from a system the company agreed to set up that will make it possible for customers to tip when they pay with cards. The contract says the company will implement such a system at all union locations within 30 days. When it tried out the system at the Convention Center location this summer, Medina says it resulted in a pay bump of over \$8 an hour for the workers there. Medina said the company initially opposed the idea of tipping, but its concession on that issue was key to reaching agreement on the contract.

Medina said he does give

some credit to the company. Other employers might have stonewalled and rejected all union proposals, but Burgerville management did seem to want to reach agreement by the end.

Burgerville put out its own statement saying it's excited to announce the agreement on the labor contract: "Burgerville is the first fast food company in the nation to achieve this, a remarkable accomplishment and something we can all be very proud of. Today we begin another chapter in a 60-year history of investing in our employees."

If the contract is ratified as expected by mid-December, the union will end its call for customers to boycott the company and may instead encourage the public to patronize Burgerville.

The contract applies to the five locations that voted to unionize in 2018 and 2019: 3504 S.E. 92nd Ave.; 19119 SE McLoughlin Blvd.; 1122 SE Hawthorne Blvd.; 1135 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.; and 8218 NE Glisan St.

The store at SE 92nd Ave and Powell Boulevard closed in August, and employees were offered jobs at other locations. The company said the closure was temporary and was due to rising problems with crime and vandalism. According to an informal agreement with the union, the store is expected to reopen in December as one of the five union-represented locations.

Burgerville Workers Union is affiliated with the Industrial Workers of the World.

The contract expires May 1, 2023.

CULTURE

Working Class Literature?

A community college offers a class on class—the working class.

By Don McIntosh

What is the working class? That's one of the first questions students face in Working Class Literature, an English class offered once a year at Portland Community College (PCC). They spend the rest of the term answering it, while taking in and discussing a novel, a play, poetry, and a film.

Developed by now-retired PCC English instructor Rachel Stevens, Working Class Literature, ENG 237, has been taught for the last 10 years by instructor Nick Hengen Fox.

Hengen Fox practices what he teaches. While studying for his Ph.D. at University of Minnesota, he was part of an effort to unionize graduate teaching and research faculty. The effort failed, and campus workers remain non-union, but Hengen Fox continues to support the labor movement as an active member of the faculty union American Federation of Teachers Local 2277 and co-chair of the union organizing committee.

Working Class Literature, which starts in January, is meant to explore the experiences of working class people. Students

don't just talk about the readings but about about their experience of class.

Hengen Fox says he tries to embrace the diversity of labor and move away from the stereotype of the working class as a white man doing manual labor. Year after year, he assigns the unfinished novel Yonnondio in the class, which tells the story of an alcoholic coal miner and his family who migrate from their rural home to a city slum near a slaughterhouse. Author Tillie Olson was a radical union organizer from Omaha, Nebraska. She began writing the book in the 1930s at age 19 but didn't publish it until 1974, after she'd written several award-winning short stories.

Students also read Train Choir, a short story by Portland author Jon Raymond that was adapted into the 2008 film Wendy and Lucy. They watch the 2018 Boots Riley movie Sorry to Bother You, which deals with a union organ-

izing campaign and a sinister corporate plot to make workers more obedient. And they read a Pulitzer Prize winning play called Sweat by Lynn Nottage that was first performed at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2015. Sweat takes place at a working class bar in Reading, Pennsylvania, and deals with offshoring, race, and deindustrialization.

Over the years, Hengen Fox says, Working Class Literature has drawn heavily committed union members as well as young people who are just starting to think about the issue of class. Today he finds that young people are increasingly attuned to class issues; The latest Gallup poll shows the strongest union supporters are now people aged 18 to 34.

"Thinking about class has returned to a lot of young people's minds," Hengen Fox told the *Labor Press*. "I rarely have students sitting at the back looking at their phones."

Taught remotely, the class begins Jan. 10. Students can register for it starting now and up until the class begins.

"Thinking about class has returned to a lot of young people's minds. I rarely have students sitting at the back looking at their phones."

— PCC instructor Nicholas Hengen-Fox



GET YOUR FICO® SCORE

Have you ever wondered what your credit score was but had no idea how to get it?



Well, now you're in luck! As an added benefit for our Ironworkers CU members, you are eligible to receive your FICO® Credit Score free of charge through online banking, or the Ironworkers CU mobile app.

The best part is...opting in does not affect your credit score!

Member must be 18 years of age or older. FICO is a registered trademark of Fair Isaac Corporation in the United States and other countries.

Find out more at
IronworkersCU.org/fico-faq



IronworkersCU.org • 877-769-4766

