

**UO SEIU WORKERS
THREATEN TO STRIKE**

Negotiations have broken down between classified workers and administration in the Oregon University System (OUS) and threats are being aired of a mid- or late-September strike. Students return to campus Sept 29.

Management declared an impasse Aug. 8. "What this means is that the clock is ticking towards our grand finale — whatever that ends up being," says Star Holmburg, a member of the OPEU/SEIU Local 503 bargaining table. "By Friday of next week, Aug. 15, we will have to submit our last, best final offer to management ... So, it is now officially crunch time. And they are dead serious."

Once an impasse is declared, both sides have a week to submit final offers and then a 30-day "cooling-off" period begins.

Classified workers in the system consist of about 1,300 technical, maintenance, clerical and other support staff at UO and about 3,770 employees statewide.

The current contract with OUS classified workers expires Sept. 15 and workers are complaining about a lack of raises, possible cutbacks in health insurance for part-time workers, and "hostile language" in management proposals. OUS is seeking the right to lay off employees for up to three weeks without pay, flexible scheduling (a 40-hour workweek could conceivably cover seven days), and eliminating some seniority and layoff protections in the current contract.

"If we are pushed to strike the first day of classes in September due to hostile OUS proposals, the blame for the shutdown of campuses will rest squarely on Chancellor Jarvis," says UO employee James Jacobson. "I'm thoroughly disgusted with the way university workers are being treated," he says. "This is the worst treatment I've ever seen or heard of in the university system."

"It sounds like people are pretty upset," says Lynn Feekin of the Labor Education and Research Center on campus. "You're in a terrible economic environment and you're trying to negotiate a contract and your members in [the Department of] Administrative Services (DAS) have settled a contract and you're anticipating at least parity."

Dan Williams, UO vice president for ad-

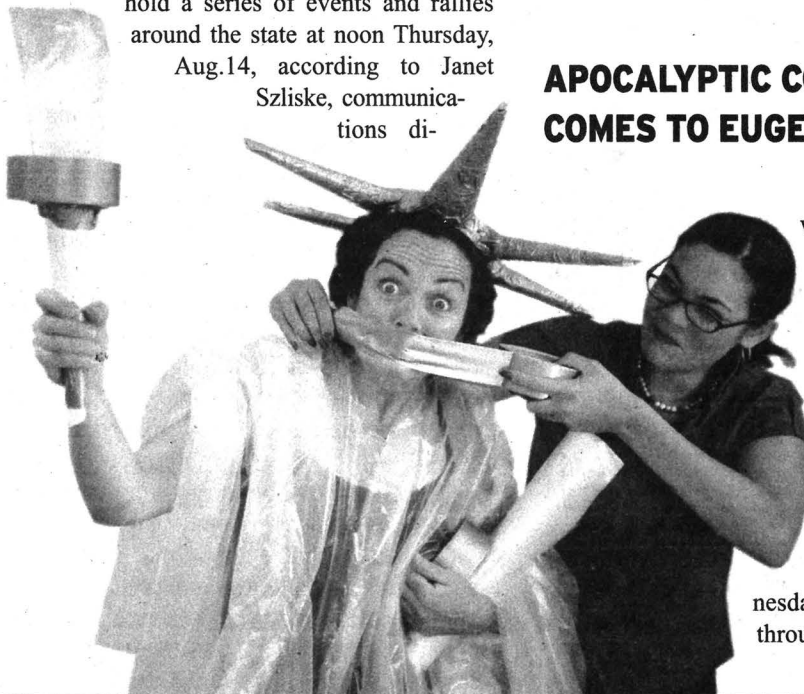
ministration, sent an e-mail to the university community Aug. 5 saying, the UO "has long enjoyed a positive and constructive relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, with our local SEIU," and he expects the "terms and conditions of the final agreement will be mutually beneficial to everyone in this university community."

Williams says the administration's latest proposals include a lump-sum payment of \$350 for all eligible employees to be disbursed in November 2004. DAS workers got a similar payment.

Regarding the controversial "greater level of flexibility" in scheduling, Williams says "OUS is not attempting through this change to be able to switch an employee's schedule in an ad hoc manner, but to have the ability to make reasonable scheduling changes when absolutely necessary to ensure the safe, consistent operations of our universities."

Joe Scicotte, the OUS bargaining team leader, says negotiations are on the same schedule as the DAS negotiations, which wrapped up in July. "DAS declared impasse, and it was another 37 days before negotiations concluded, all of this time the union threatening a strike," says Scicotte "Negotiations could go on for another 30-plus days, we are hopeful that they will conclude at the next negotiation on Aug. 14, 15."

Union members are planning to hold a series of events and rallies around the state at noon Thursday, Aug. 14, according to Janet Szliske, communications di-



THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

AT LAST, THEY CAN BE REVEALED:
**GEORGE BUSH'S
TOP FIVE
SOURCES OF
PRE-WAR
INTELLIGENCE**

1. HIS OUIJA BOARD.
THERE YOU HAVE IT, SIR. THE SPIRITS SAY THAT SADDAM DEFINITELY POSES AN IMMINENT THREAT!
YOU SURE YOU'RE NOT MOVIN' THAT POINTER THING AROUND, PAUL?
HEAVEN FORFEND, SIR.

2. HIS DAILY HOROSCOPE.
CANCER (June 22-July 22): Go on and resolve that unfinished family business—but don't forget your friends in the process!
OKAY, PUT THE TROOPS ON ALERT--AND GET THOSE RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS HANDED OUT!
I'LL CALL HALLIBURTON!

3. FORTUNE COOKIES.
Your talents will be recognized and suitably rewarded.
LOOK AT THIS, PELLAS! SUCCESS IS GUARANTEED!
THAT WOULD CERTAINLY BE MY INTERPRETATION!
UH--YES! MINE TOO!

4. SUPERMARKET TABLOIDS.
HEY, CONDI--WHY DIDN'T THE CIA TELL US ABOUT THIS?
THEY'RE, UM, TOO BUSY POLITICIZING THE INTELLIGENCE, SIR.
NEWS: SADDAM BUYS WMD'S FROM SPACE ALIENS!
HILLARY PROPOSES THE DEAL: BILL HAS SEX WITH ALIENS!

5. AND OF COURSE--HIS MAGIC EIGHT BALL.
WILL WE FIND A PROVABLE LINK BETWEEN AL QAEDA AND IRAQ?
MY SOURCES SAY YES
I KNEW IT!

rector of SEIU Local 503. The Eugene demonstration will be at 12:10 pm Thursday in front of Oregon Hall at 13th and Agate. For more information, visit www.seiu503.org

—Ted Taylor

**APOCALYPTIC COMEDY
COMES TO EUGENE**

Ashland playwright and comedienne Joanie McGowan brings to Eugene *Rude Awakening*, her explosive comedy about waking up to an end-of-the-world alert. *Rude Awakening* runs Wednesday, Aug. 20 through Sunday, Aug.

24 at the Comedy Sportz Arena, 10th and Oak, downtown Eugene. Tickets (\$8 adv., \$10 dos.) are available at Tsunami Books (2585 Willamette) and Star Gate (1374 Willamette). Two dollars from the sale of each ticket goes to Lane County Bill of Rights Defense Committee to support their educational efforts and their campaign for a statewide resolution against the Patriot Act, Homeland Security and post-9/11 federal orders that violate the Bill of Rights.

In the show, McGowan plays herself — a 47-year-old single woman, rudely jostled from a lovely dream by an emergency broadcast from Fox McFearlips of the American Spellcasting Network. McFearlips leads McGowan through a series of apocalyptic preparations, many of which come directly from the Department of Homeland Security's website, www.ready.gov

"I was experiencing a terrible case of writer's block halfway through the play," McGowan said. "I had just heard about the new DOHS website, so I checked it out, and KA-BOOM! I was blasted right through my

SLANT

• We're sad to see Alan Siporin announce that he will be stepping down soon from his "Critical Mass" public affairs call-in show on KLCC-FM public radio. Last fall we profiled the talented Siporin and his book, *Fire's Edge*, which was inspired by some of the remarkable guests on his Sunday program (see www.eugneweekly.com archives for Sept. 26, 2002). We hope Siporin remains active as a journalist and novelist, and of course we hope KLCC's weekly progressive talk show not only continues in some form, but eventually expands to match KRVM's two-hour Jefferson Exchange weekday mornings at 1280 AM.

• Cars in the parking lot at the Em's game Saturday night, Aug. 9, were reportedly leafletted by the Aryan Nations, a neo-Nazi group that occasionally pops up in town. Some neighborhoods were also targeted with racist, anti-Jew propa-

ganda. Who's responding? Back to Back: Allies for Human Dignity, a program of Community Alliance for Lane County (CALC), is doing counter-leafletting and asking people to "please use your eyes and ears to make sure that hate activities don't take hold in our communities." Call local police, or CALC at 485-1755, calc@efn.org to help.

• *The Springfield News* has a new editor, Larry Berteau, most recently the award-winning managing editor of the *Ashland Daily Tidings*, and we hear Berteau is talking about taking the twice-weekly *S'News* to maybe six days a week. Springfield could use a daily rag with wire service news to compete with the *R-G*, and the Springfield paper does have its own printing press. But the big question remains: Will advertisers support another local daily in this economy?

• Speaking of the local daily, the *R-G* finally crafted a decent piece on the impact of corporate tax breaks on the local economy in its Sunday edition, Aug. 10 (search for "Unlucky Breaks" at www.registerguard.com). No big revelations here. We've been beating this subject to death for years, and volumes have been written about it nationwide (try Googling for "corporate candy"). But it's great to see mainstream media going beyond superficial reporting. Hats off to Sherri Buri McDonald and Christian Wihtol. What's next?

• Community supported art? We see a mural project is under way on the south side of the Goodwill store on River Road. River Road activists Martha Johnson and Jan Spencer have teamed up to make happen a large "public interest" mural. The cost of the mural is being shared among residents of the area, and so far

more than 30 people and businesses have invested \$1,000 in the 75 foot long painting. It won't be finished for awhile, but check it out, and contribute.

• Recently the Vatican, following President Bush's awkward pronouncements against gay marriages, issued its own odd statement: "Such unions are not able to contribute in a proper way to the procreation and survival of the human race." What about all the couples who happen to be gay who are also dedicated parents, caregivers, workers, business-people, public servants and otherwise contributing members of society? Is there really a "proper" way to be a human being? The Vatican has not provided us with many good examples lately.

SLANT includes short opinion pieces, observations and rumor-chasing notes compiled by the EW staff. Heard any good rumors lately? Contact Ted Taylor at 484-0519, editor@eugneweekly.com