

Unity of purpose important to bargaining

Once central contract negotiations get under way, things will happen at different times lightening quick and very slowly. But we cannot count on periods of rest once we get to the table beginning in October.

So members should understand the process we are going through, the technical difficulties and, to some extent, the possibility for confusion.

Most importantly, OSEA members should support their Association. This is not the usual "team spirit" pitch. Nor is it an attempt to stifle discussion, debate or constructive criticism.

Indeed there will be plenty of opportunities for discussion, debate and constructive criticism. And we will only be hurting ourselves if those occasions turn into periods of discord, argument and finger-pointing. There will be plenty of avenues for members to keep up with events at the bargaining table and, thus, to make intelligent decisions about the progress and direction of the negotiations. I will keep you informed through this column. More information will come to you through the Leadership Letter, The OSEA News and other Association publications.

There also will be plenty of opportunities for confusion and misunderstanding. This is why I've asked for your support of the Association -- especially during the negotiations.

Management will lobby you hard. They will cajol, they will come up with fine sounding reasons why you should march to their drummer. They will threaten and play on your fears.

We will not try to match them word for word. That would only lead to a shouting match that will add to the confusion but do nothing to illuminate the problems.

Much of management's propaganda will take the form of complex salary surveys and pay plans. They will have complicated reasons why, if you get this over here, you will be hurting yourself over there.

Ultimately, the question you will have to answer for yourself, is whether OSEA really is run by and

for its members; there, in the chapters and districts and at the Board meetings, are the opportunities for membership involvement and control.

Of course, also over this past year we've found weaknesses in the contract; we've discovered situations unfair to the employee where the contract provides no relief. This is what we will be trying to correct in the coming negotiations. Many of you have been caught in these contractual weaknesses, and no doubt you've written a General Council resolution designed to change it or you've pointed out the problem to your employee representative.

Needless to say, the rising cost of living has eroded the buying power of your pay check. So we must be able to keep up with the cost of living and to get ahead a bit. This will take a lot of hard work, good arguments to give to management's negotiators and solid and unified strength on the part of Association members. Without the support of the membership, we will get nothing in negotiations.

Membership has been increasing at a small but steady clip in recent months. Membership always will be the source of our strength and it must be made representative of every agency and every region in the state.

Central negotiations is what it all comes down to. What we negotiate this fall and winter will be what we will have to live with for the next two years. It is therefore important that every state employee approach this time with a sense of dedication and unity of purpose. And that way, we will negotiate a contract that will enable each of you to come to work with pride and dignity and the knowledge that you have provided well for yourselves and for your families.

Executive Notes

BY MORTON H. SHAPIRO
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for its members. I know it is. During this past year, you've been working under one of the best collective bargaining agreements in the county. Recently, you received an 11 per cent pay increase. Mileage, health and other benefits have improved, in some cases 100 per cent. There has been one General Council, 10 Board meetings, a number of agency contracts negotiated and signed, chapters and district councils have held meetings and countless grievances have been resolved to the satisfaction of the grievant since I've come on board as Executive Secretary. There is proof of the ways OSEA works

Oregon labor college will tell workers' story

Oregon labor's history, problems, successes and methods could get the cap and gown treatment if a proposal now before the state Board of Higher Education is authorized.

Dan Dorritie, OSEA's faculty representative, was a member of the state board's advisory committee which put together a proposal for an Oregon labor college to be named to Oregon Labor Education and Research Center.

The last session of the legislature had a number of

proposals to create a labor college but nothing happened. So earlier this year, Chancellor Roy Lieuallen formed the advisory committee to suggest what additional offerings in labor relations and history could be provided by the state System of Higher Education and to study programs which exist elsewhere. The committee's charge was to generate a proposal for a program of labor studies.

The advisory committee has set out two main responsibilities

for the labor college:

- To provide short courses in such subjects as the enforcement of contract (the role of shop stewards or job representatives in grievances, contract interpretation, arbitration) labor legislation and occupational health and safety rules, and

- Research into salary studies and work force studies, affirmative action, occupational health and safety and to establish a contract library.

The labor college program is designed to serve members, officers and staff members of Oregon labor organizations. It can provide general kinds of training to improve the expertise of labor officials, Dorritie said. It will be an important supplement to the research facilities of Oregon labor organizations, he said. It

will be a focus for labor activity, he said.

Dorritie says that in a few years the college could offer credit-bearing courses and in a few more years, a degree in labor studies.

Presently, 22 states have a labor college of some sort. But, only two are in the West, in Colorado and California.

Public employees object of some hostility throughout the nation

A newspaper clipping file dealing with public sector labor relations around the country makes for depressing reading.

One public employee labor leader said his clippings show, "The courts are dumping on us, and the politicians think we're great whipping posts. You might say we're the object of some hostility."

Faced with rising budget

deficits, Time magazine reported this week, many states and cities are, indeed, getting unusually tough with their employees. What is more, officials are enjoying wide public support as they take stern measures to hold the line on wages, cut back overtime, lay off workers, demand greater productivity and fire public employees who walk off their

jobs despite the existence of no-strike laws.

Productivity and performance standards soon will be imposed of Massachusetts state employees following the three-day walkout by 45,000 employees. The standards, to be established by a governor's task force, are expected to be stern. And that reflects a trend. According to the National Civil Service League, 187 of 338 large governmental units surveyed had made reforms in their civil service systems between 1971 and 1974, designed mostly to increase productivity.

Here are some blows dealt public employees by various governmental jurisdictions:

- Detroit police were notified last week that 972 officers would be laid off for economic reasons. That started a wave of cops calling in "sick" resulting in the mayor saying that those who cannot document their illness would lose pay.

- A San Francisco superior court judge found four leaders of city craft unions guilty of contempt of court for not obeying an injunction not to strike last spring. And the city supervisors voted to confirm the pay cuts which set off the 38-day strike.

- New Orleans placed a hold on overtime pay to its municipal employees. Only under highly extraordinary circumstances will overtime be allowed.

Reclass won

Gay Rockwell, of the Springfield Public Welfare Division office, had the support of her supervisor in her request to be reclassified from administrative assistant 1 to and administrative assistant 2, but the Personnel Division was so slow, it took a further push from OSEA to get the reclassification through.

The reclassification was initiated by Rockwell's supervisor. But when the Personnel Division didn't respond for nearly 10 months, Rockwell came to OSEA.

A memorandum from the Executive Department Personnel Division had said that a classification study was under

way. When OSEA's Personnel and Classification Analyst Eleanor Meyers contacted the Personnel Division there, again, was not no response.

Finally, OSEA Associate General Counsel Charlene Sherwood took over to get a determination from the Employment Relations Board regarding the reclassification. An ERB hearings officer spent a week deciding whether he would hear the case. Since Sherwood had the burden of proof to show that the reclassification was in order, a hearing finally was set. Three days after the hearing date was set, the Personnel Division approved the reclassification effective immediately.

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