

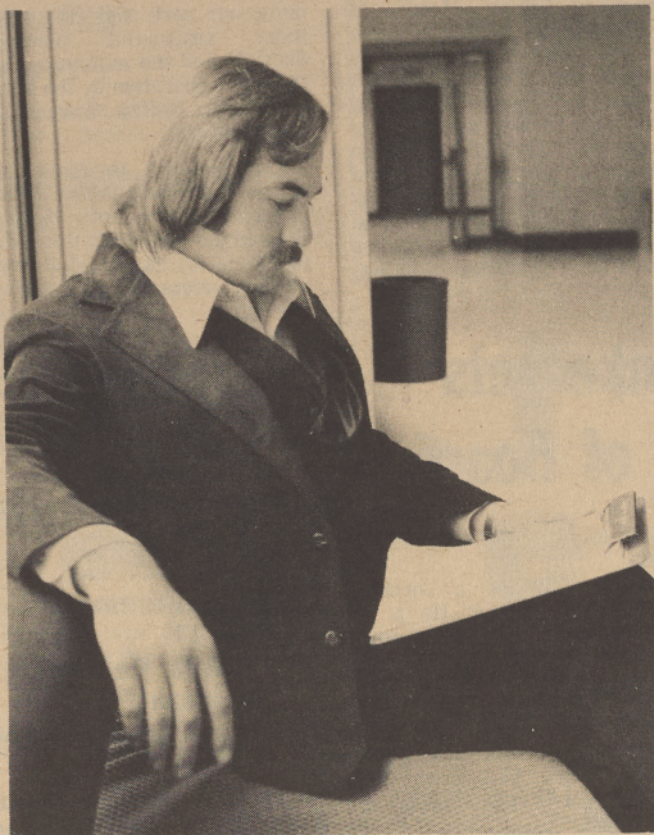
Workers take case to source

SALEM -- Several OSEA members, "going right to the source," are in the words of a psychiatric security from the State Hospital, asking for better working conditions which also means better treatment and protection for patients. In hearings before the Joint Interim Task Force on Mental Health, chaired by Rep. Peg Dereli, that position is being supported by management.

Psychiatric security aide Eldon Boaz outlined several specific concerns he and his colleagues at Oregon State Hospital have when he spoke to the task force subcommittee on May 1. Among those, turnover and security are two; problems relating to specific kinds of patients such as sex offenders or alcohol and drug abuse patients, new laws requiring psych aides to do additional work when not accompanied by necessary training also can be a problem -- pharmacology is a concern in his unit, said Boaz.

Boaz is concerned specifically about the overcrowding in the security unit. He's concerned about the lack of funds for activity treatment and the need for off-the-ward trips. And believe it or not, he complained to the legislators about too much government paperwork.

That same day the task force subcommittee on security heard several witnesses, both from management and staff of the mental health institutions, citing the need for such facilities as Ward 34C at the State Hospital, the locked intensive care ward there. Emil Rexson, the psychiatric aide 3 who was in charge of the ward



Boaz checks his notes

when it was in operation, was joined by OSH superintendent Dean Brooks in telling the lawmakers the need for this kind of facility.

Four psychiatric aides from Gaines Cottage at Fairview, Kevin Hayden, Glenn O'Malley, John Carter and Kelly Hudgens, spoke of the inadequacy of that facility for the job that it is expected to do. The task force's

administrator, Karen Hendricks, learned that Gaines was not built to be a security unit.

Jack Bowsky, a psychiatric aide at Dammasch Hospital in Wilsonville, talked about "44s". A 44, in Dammasch parlance, is when somebody in the community or at the hospital believes a patient is out. However, Wilsonville does not have a police force, so often psychiatric aides are called out on a 44 anytime a stranger is seen to be acting suspiciously in a tavern or on the streets. Any suspiciously acting person is regarded in Wilsonville as a Dammasch patient, Bowsky said.

Since its April 1 starting date, the task force has met six times. Two days were spent touring such Mental Health facilities as Dammasch, OSH, Fairview and some group homes and community treatment centers. The security subcommittee met twice and the full committee spent a day listening to the superintendents.

"The subcommittee and the whole committee members have done their homework and they are asking some tough questions," said OSEA Employee Representative Ken Allen. "They're making the administrators accountable." Yet to come are two hearings

on May 25 and 26 when the task force will hear from the community care providers. What has been heard from this group already, according to Hendricks, is that they are receiving inadequate money to have effective, adequate community care. On June 6 (10 a.m., Capitol hearing room F),

the task force members will learn how the hospitals set and meet their priorities and minimum standards. On June 7 it will look at the legislative directives in the Mental Health budget.

June 13 (10 a.m., Capitol hearing room A) has been set aside for public input; there will be no formal agenda. In a May 10 letter to Mental Health job representatives and chapter officers regarding that day, Allen said that this hearing "will provide any employees that wish to testify a chance to let the legislature know about your work. . . . Other topics that employees may wish to speak about might include lack of



REP. PEG DERELI

staffing and training, and the new Board of Nursing Medications Test."

June 29 and 30 (10 a.m., Capitol hearing room A) will be for reviewing findings and drafting and adopting policy recommendations.

Major reclass won at Revenue

SALEM -- Thirty-three employees of the Oregon Revenue Department will earn an additional \$73,000 during the rest of the biennium as the result of a major reclassification effort by David George, an agency job rep, working with staff personnel analyst Eleanor Meyers.

Several months of work went into documenting the duties required in the work assignments. Twenty-three workers were reclassified from clerical specialist to Revenue Agent I positions, while 10 Administrative Assistant I's also received the Revenue Agent I classification.

The case for reclassification was based primarily on the collection duties of revenue agents that had been assigned to clerical specialists in the State Office Building in Salem. That assignment allowed revenue agents to spend more time in the field but, as George and Meyers argued, it also meant that the clerical specialists were actually doing revenue agent work. The Personnel Division eventually agreed.

"David did a fine job in getting this case together," Meyers said. "Reclasses are extremely difficult to win and it takes this kind of cooperative effort between the job rep and staff to get the job done."

Still pending is a request that the 10 former Administrative Assistant I's be changed to Administrative Assistant II's, because they are currently assigned as leadworkers and are responsible for the work of the other 23 employees involved in the complex case.

That request was denied by been appealed to the Employment Relations Board. Employment Relations Board. According to Meyers, "This is an exceptional issue, one that will also affect people in other classifications. Because of its importance we feel that ERB should rule on the merit of our request."

Worker included in decree

SALEM -- Cheryl Bickle would have been excluded from the settlement of the domestic worker-custodial worker case had not OSEA Associate General Counsel Charlene Sherwood stepped in.

The System of Higher Education and the Attorney General said that Bickle's inclusion on the consent decree was a mistake. Sherwood worked out a settlement with these two agencies so that Bickle was able to receive \$446.14 from the consent decree plus \$77.06 interest.

The consent decree resulted from a case of sex discrimination when a number of the then so-called "domestic workers" at the state's colleges and universities said that they were doing the same work as male custodians.

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