

Local Government/Nonprofit

Parkrose files for OPEU representation; Hood River is close

OPEU organizers delivered authorization cards to the state Employment Relations Board from workers at the **Parkrose School District** just as THE OREGON PUBLIC EMPLOYEE was going to press.

Organizing efforts in the **Hood River School District** were not very far behind.

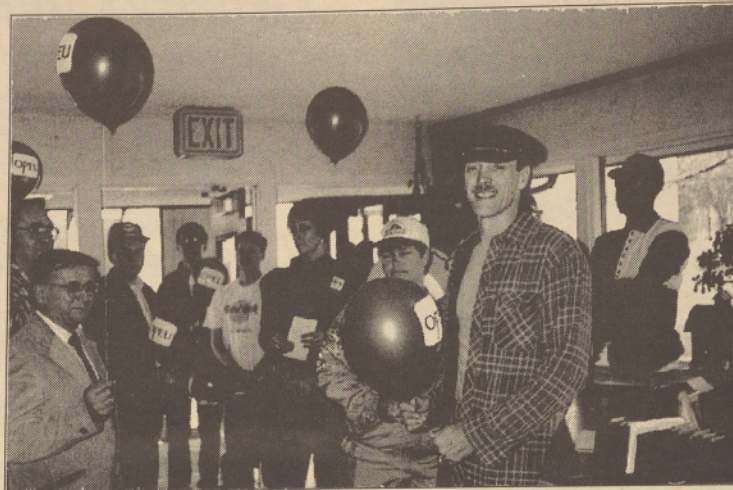
Job security and a voice in the workplace were among the common issues with workers at both public school districts.

In the Hood River School District, **Flo Fleming** of the Pine Grove Schools says her "main concern is the lack of on-site staff representation. OPEU staff regularly visit worksites and are committed to knowing our specific issues. I'm supporting a union that will be there for us: OPEU."

"Our current contract allows the school district to take certain actions for cause," said **Jackie Heck**, of the Mid Valley School. "There is a big difference between 'just cause' and 'just because.' I'm voting for OPEU!"

"OPEU creates and maintains a communications link not only between officers and members," said **Gayle Goin** of Transportation, "but between the union and the school administration. In these hard times of Measure 5 cuts, we need that communication to deal with the prob-

Farm Home workers demand recognition



Children's Farm Home workers take authorization cards signed by an "overwhelming" number of workers into the boss' office.

lems that we are facing."

In the Parkrose School District, "contracting out is a real threat," said organizing committee member **Mary Langley**, who works in the district's transportation department. "I support OPEU because language in their contracts requires feasibility studies, 30-day advance notice, and guaranteed hiring of current employees without loss of wages, benefits, working conditions.

"That's the kind of job security we need in Parkrose," she said.

Other organizing issues include:

- Better lines of communication among workers about our union representation.

- Training of all interested union members on stewardship/

Building Reps, union and contract rights, grievance procedures, the bargaining process, and how to affect the political climate we live and work under.

- Real democracy, where we have an opportunity to choose our leaders, vote on dues increases, contracts, officers, and other major concerns.

Other issues Parkrose workers mentioned in support of representation by OPEU include:

- "As classified school workers, we need to be involved politically with our school board and the Legislature," said **Sharon Kruger**. "I attended OPEU's workshop on the 'takeback' of our PERS pickup. With OPEU, we will be prepared to fight for our rights and benefits."

- "We are in a time of uncertainty in the district," said **Joan Rossos**, who works in special education. "I am concerned that fairness and clarity determine layoff and bumping rights. I support OPEU because they will work with us to get a good contract and help us enforce it. We won't have to worry about favoritism or special treatment."

- "We have special skills and knowledge about children," said **Karen Nulph**, of Prescott Elementary School. "I love the kids and the job, but I am concerned that further cuts in hours and benefits will force good workers to leave. With a better organization, we can show the importance of classified workers to the community."

Before submitting authorization cards to the National Labor Relations Board, workers at the **Children's Farm Home** near Corvallis took a large delegation to the boss seeking voluntary recognition of the Union.

Predictably, he said "No," even though the workers assured him an overwhelming majority of the 105 workers in the unit had signed cards and that they were willing to show the cards to a mutually-agreed-to third party for verification. They left saying he was welcome to change his mind and grant voluntary recognition up to the time of the election, expected in mid to late May.

Job security and a voice in the workplace were among the common issues with workers at the private, non-profit farm home.

More specifically, the organizing issues among the workers at the farm home are:

- A critical health and safety issue: There are no automatic sprinklers in cottages which house known or convicted fire starters.

- Training of all kinds.

- Arbitrary firing; just cause.

- Favoritism; no seniority.

- A lack of worker empowerment: No say-so in treatment teams as used to be the case.

"We have a strong, powerful organizing committee," said member organizer (MOC) **Andrew McGuire**. "It is dedicated to getting the job done. Momentum is on our side."

Waverly activism strong in face of slow bargaining

A strong and continuing workplace and community activism is having some effect, but problems still remain at the bargaining table at Waverly Children's Home.

Management said "No" to critical issues of worthy wages, even though OPEU found the money for a raise within the Waverly budget, and to a fair grievance procedure.

The Waverly workers know

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

Wasco County sheriffs arbitration grants deputies pay boost, health cost reduction

A long-awaited interest arbitration award provides wage increases totaling 6% over two years and goes most of the way to restoring fully paid health coverage for workers in the Wasco County Sheriff's Department.

The contract expired December 1992, but due to management delays including unfair labor practices, we did not get to interest arbitration until early November 1993.

Under the terms of the award, employee payments for health care will fall dramatically with the implementation of a new health plan and a 15% to 16% increase in employer payments, dropping from \$26.99 on employee-only coverage and \$81.20 on family coverage to \$6.53 on employee-only coverage and \$19.33 on family coverage.

The award also provides for the contract to expire December 1994, which means that the Union will be going back into a new round of bargaining almost immediately.