

Workers Fight for Fairness

continued ▲ from Front

replacement in a couple years will learn all the students' names and the tricks for keeping things running smoothly."

Not for herself but for the next generation of students and workers, Kirk attended a rally last week with more than 200 parents, teachers and community supporters in front of the district's central administrative building at 501 N. Dixon.

School Board representatives at the location heard testimony after testimony about the value of the work done by custodians, bus drivers and food-service workers and the integral part they play in the community.

Jefferson High School parent-teacher association President Nancy Smith and Oregon House Speaker Jeff Merkley were among those against the proposed pay cuts and the potential for outsourcing food-service workers' jobs.

"I am 100 percent against a 30 percent cut," Merkley said.

Calling administration actions "a comedy of error," Dave Schleiger, a custodian at Sifton Elementary School in north Portland, spots a painful irony in his union's return to jobs that had been outsourced to disabled workers in 2002 after a failed attempt to save similar amounts of money.

The outsourcing effort ended



PHOTO BY RAYMOND RENDELMAN/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Benson High School custodian Birdie Kirk and Bridger Elementary bus driver Nicky Barron (right), rally for economic justice in a dispute over wages and benefits for workers employed with Portland Public Schools.

up costing the district more than the savings in salary just through the added costs of training and support staff

needed to keep facilities intact. In addition, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled the firings illegal, forcing the district to

reinstate the positions and pay a \$14.5-million-dollar settlement that barely covered the custodians' litigation costs.

With the district now deeper in the red on support-staff payments, Schleiger says, "I hope that the current school board is more open-minded to see what's really going on."

Seeing a stable and dedicated workforce as integral to a safe, secure and healthy learning environment for school children, he adds, "They should look back and see that, if you want quality public service, you have to pay for quality service."

The union representing PPS's support staff has tried to get the administration to agree in writing that outsourcing shouldn't happen again.

"Although they have said they wouldn't contract out, they wouldn't agree to that language," says Casey Filice, a union organizer.

For Nicky Barron, who drives a bus route for K-8 students attending Bridger School at Southeast 80th Avenue, the issue simply rests on having a bit of job security and the means to survive.

"Even if we have a cost-of-living increase instead of a raise, we'd have something to show that they care," she says.

Ask Deanna!



Real People, Real Advice

An advice column known for reality based subjects!

Dear Deanna!

I dated a guy for three years. We spent time together, traveled and he occasionally stayed at my place. As far as I can remember, we spent several major holidays together. I didn't meet his family and never stayed with him. One day he suddenly left town without telling me. I tracked him down by hiring a private investigator and learned he had a wife and kids. I want to know if I should appear on his doorstep and surprise him or leave it alone?
—Anonymous; On-Line Reader

Dear Anonymous:

When a normal relationship ends,

you're entitled to closure. However, in this case, you have a full stop with something called a wife. You were used and taken advantage of. You're no dummy and if you didn't have his home number, never met his family or been to his house, you should've known something was up. But hey, you were in love, sexually sprung and he always played with you when his wife wasn't available. Count this as a loss, and move on because anything otherwise can get you seriously hurt.

Dear Deanna!

My marriage is on a rocky road. We married as partners and now we're on the way to becoming enemies. My husband appears jealous of my success and he finds joy in my failures and tries to compete financially. I thought I was paranoid but he focuses on getting ahead of me and tries to outdo me in everything. My request for him to stop this behav-

ior falls on deaf ears. We spend most days arguing or not speaking and I'm at the end of my rope. Help!
—Pam Tiggs; Durham, N.C.

Dear Pam:

Your husband's no longer the big fish in your small pond. He's always been competitive but you were not in a position of upward mobility, so you didn't notice. His manhood has been insulted and he feels he's no longer the hero. You have to stroke his ego. Give verbal compliments, make him feel needed and constantly drill in his head the idea that you're a team. After a while, he'll feel like the king again and you can smile and keep it moving.

Ask Deanna is written by Deanna M. Write Ask Deanna! Email: askdeanna1@yahoo.com or 264 S. LaCienega Blvd. Suite 1283 Beverly Hills, CA 90211. Visit the website www.askdeanna.com

Ranger Lantern Tours

On Saturday, Dec. 1 and Saturday, Dec. 15, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., with lantern in hand and a skilled ranger leading the way, explore the history of Fort Vancouver, 612 E. Reserve St. in Vancouver. Call 360-816-6243 for more information.

Business after Hours

Roy Jay and the African American Chamber hosts Business after Hours with special guest speaker State Rep. Jackie Dingfelder on Tuesday, Dec. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at 888 S.W. Fifth Ave., Third Floor. RSVP by calling 503-244-5794.

Weatherization Workshops

Thursday, Nov. 29, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Beaumont SUN School, 4043 N.E. Freemont, will host the free educational workshops to self-

Community Calendar

weatherize your home; qualifying participants will receive a free weatherizing kit. Free weatherization is available for seniors. Call 503-284-6827 to register.

Holiday Ale Festival

Beginning Thursday, Nov. 29 through Sunday, Dec. 2, from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m., the 12th annual festival at Pioneer Courthouse Square provides beer lovers the opportunity to sample some or all of the 36 rare beers featured.

'GirlFest'

Saturday, Dec. 1, at the Portland Expo Center, from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., thousands of Girl Scouts will gather to participate in this hands-on learning opportunity; learning about everything from high adventure sports to science and technology to singing and dancing. To learn more, visit girlscoutscrc.org or call 503-977-6800.

Arts and Crafts Fair

Wednesday, Dec. 5 and Thursday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., MHCC-Gresham Campus, College Center Lounge-room 1051, host the 38th annual arts and crafts fair. For more information, call 503-491-7260.

Crafts and Bake Sale

Saturday, Dec. 8, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., the Bread and Roses Center, 819 N. Killingsworth St., host the craft fair and bake sale fundraiser for the Freedom Socialist Party and Radical Women. For more information, call 503-240-4462.

Santa Paws Comes to Town

The Oregon Humane Society's, annual fundraiser event Santa Paws Pet Portrait, takes place throughout the holiday season at eight local Fred Meyer stores. Get keep-

sake photos of your pet with Santa and help animals in need. Visit oregonhumane.org for dates and locations.

Breakfast with Santa

Begin a holiday tradition on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 1 & 2, at 10 a.m. and noon, at Kennedy School, 5736 N.E. 33 Ave., the entire family can share a special breakfast and with Santa. Call 503-249-3983 for more information and reservations.

Ceramic Guild Pottery Sale

Monday, Dec. 3 through Thursday, Dec. 6, Portland Community College's Rock Creek Campus (Atrium Building 3), hosts the largest collection of both creative and functional pottery available to the direct public. Call 503-848-0272 for more information.

Presents for Primates

Thursday, Dec. 13, at 10 a.m., Santa and the Oregon Zookeepers will present the entire primate family with early holiday gifts; bring your cameras and enjoy the fun. For more information, visit oregonzoo.org.

Green Gift That Grows

Friends of Trees is offering the gift that keeps on growing, plant a tree or a grove in honor or memory of someone. For more information, visit friendsoftrees.org.

Learn to Make Recycled Art

Portland Community College is offering the hands-on training to create art from recycled materials; classes will be held at the ReBuilding Center, 3625 N. Mississippi Ave. 503-731-6622 for info.

Literacy Volunteers Needed

The Volunteer Literacy Program at Portland Community College-Cascade needs volunteer tutors to provide free individualized instruction in basic literacy, English language, and math skills. Call 503-244-3898 or visit oregonliteracy.org.



OREGON SYMPHONY
CARLOS KALMAR, MUSIC DIRECTOR






The Sounds of the Season!

Make music part of your holiday season with these festive Oregon Symphony concerts:

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Gospel Christmas

Dec 7 | 7:30 pm Dec 8 | 7:30 pm Dec 9 | 7:30 pm

Charles Floyd, conductor
Northwest Community Gospel Chorus

Lift holiday spirits high with the joyful sounds of Christmas. Dynamic conductor Charles Floyd joins inspirational soloists and the passionate and powerful Northwest Community Gospel Chorus for this heart-stirring celebration of the season.

presented by: The Standard

Yuletide Spectacular

Dec 15 | 3 pm & 7:30 pm Dec 16 | 3 pm Dec 17 | 7:30 pm

John Morris Russell, conductor
Scott Coopwood, featured actor

The magic of the holiday season comes alive with Yuletide Spectacular. The whole family will love this sparkling holiday revue, complete with dazzling costumes, festive sets, traditional holiday music and a retelling of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

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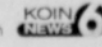

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