



Local

OPEIU Journal

www.opeiu8.org

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MARCH 2005

CALENDAR

Wed., Mar. 23

- MEMBERSHIP MEETING, 6:15 p.m., Hall 6. *Agenda:* King County Labor Council Delegate vote and Political Action Policy vote.
- POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE, 5:30 p.m., Hall 6.
- NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION, 5:30 p.m., Rm. 238.

COMING UP IN APRIL:

Fri., April 15

- WOMEN IN TRADES FAIR, Fisher Pavilion, Seattle Center. Free, helpful info, all ages. Call (206) 903-9508 or go to www.wawomenintrades.com



Ellensburg City and Library:

Contracts Ratified; Benefits Protected

The City and Library bargaining units overwhelmingly approved a new three-year contract on January 27, 2005. The membership vote assures protection of medical benefits with no increases to the employee premium contribution rate... a major victory considering the rising costs of health care. Additional contract gains include a 2% wage increase retroactive to January 1, 2005, improvements to work in a higher classification language and preservation of layoff protections.

The Ellensburg bargaining team members, **Brandi Eyerly** and **Ken Paschen**, really deserve a lot of credit for their hard work in winning a great contract.

OPEIU Local 8 Trustee Elected

Congratulations to member **Joan Weiss**, the Labor Liaison at the Worker Center AFL-CIO, who was elected for another 3-year term as Trustee at the February 23rd General Membership Meeting. Joan will join our three other Trustees, **Teresa Fesler**, **Maureen Darrah** and **Bernice Vance** who, along with Vice President **Marie Cook**, meet quarterly to review Local 8's financial transactions.



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Betty Devereaux

Secretary/Receptionist

Nora Galvin

Secretary/Desktop

Publisher

Mary Silver

Billing Clerk

MEMBERS IN ACTION

MAJOR RECLASSIFICATION APPEAL WON AT KING COUNTY When King County did a classification study several years ago, some OPEIU members received upgrades, but Customer Service Specialists (CSS) at the Department of Assessments felt that the study had overlooked them.

Reclassification became one of the major issues during the 2003–2005 contract negotiations, and all parties agreed that the CSSs should submit an appeal to the King County Personnel Board, seeking retroactive pay.

According to member **Annie Bergquist**, “It took almost two years of bureaucratic hoop jumping, which included numerous rejections by King County Human Resources and two full days of hearing before the King County Personnel Board, but we persevered and justice was won!”

The successful appeal has resulted in a four salary range upgrade for our members retroactive to March 2003. It was coordinated by members **Annie Bergquist** and **Tommy McLean**. Union Representative **Shannon Halme** represented the appellants during the King County Personnel Board hearing process.

Tommy McLean was concerned that the drawn out appeal was taking a toll on the members: “The lengthy process and the constant rejection was demoralizing. We felt browbeaten. There were discussions about compromising our position but we stood firm and eventually won everything that we are entitled to.”

Protecting Our Union by Maribel Martinez, Member OPEIU Local 8

It is a matter of decency to leave things better than we found them. Most of us came into an organization where workers before us had fought the wars against unscrupulous employers to leave us a legacy of safety, livable wages, full family healthcare, secured pension and training. A legacy of respect and pride.

Since most of us already found things the way they are (good wages and full benefits, breaks, etc.) we soon become accustomed to them. Sometimes we forget our inheritance and think of our benefits as the result of our individual work rather than our united collective power. *Do not forget* that although it is our skills and work ethic that keep us employed, it is our collective strength what has achieved the wages and benefits we enjoy. And only united can we keep them.

Think about this: Picture the company executives—if the Union wasn't here, would they still give you an employer-paid full family healthcare package?

If the Union wasn't here, would the company continue contributing, at the current rate, to your pension account? And if the company were to go broke, what would happen to your pension?



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Financial & Retirement

PLANNING WORKSHOPS for Local 8 Members

*Saturday, May 21 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
at the Seattle Labor Temple
(you can choose just one or attend all workshops)*

9:00–10:15 **YOU CAN DO IT: BUILD A HEALTHY FINANCIAL PLAN.** A beginning lesson on investing wisely and safely for our future. Getting the most from our retirement plans at work. A Financial Advisor, Tim Hill, will provide valuable information to help us get started.

10:15–11:30 WORKSHOPS

Choose a workshop for your financial needs:

1. **Local 8 Supplemental Pension Participants.** Review your investment options and plan's benefits.
2. **OPEIU Members at GHC—Protecting Your Retirement Plan.** Learn about the value of your pension at GHC with a GHC benefits consultant.
3. **Money Management Made Simple.** Avoid the pitfalls of debt, build good credit and know your consumer rights.

11:30–12:30 **SOCIAL SECURITY: FACT OR FICTION.** Will Parry and Maureen Bo of the Puget Sound Alliance for Retired Americans and John Dortero from the Statewide Poverty Action Network will present information during our lunch.

12:30–1:15 **YOU'RE NOT TOO YOUNG FOR RETIREMENT PLANNING.** Steps and considerations when planning for life after work. Get help calculating your Social Security benefits. Call the Social Security Administration at 1-800-772-1213 or www.ssa.gov to get a copy of your own Social Security worksheet and bring with you to this training! Session conducted by Retirement Plan Manager, Jim Wilhite.

1:15–2:00
WHO WILL CARE FOR US WHEN WE'RE OLD? Long Term Care Insurance could make the difference between living in comfort and being impoverished as we age. A benefits expert will guide us through LTC insurance options. We'll also talk about ways we can encourage our employers to offer this benefit.



These workshops are free and open to all Local 8 members. Lunch will be provided. Call Cindy at 1-800-600-2433 ext. 102 to sign up.

Nominations and Election of KCLC Delegates

In accordance with Local 8's Bylaws, this is notification that nominations and election for 8 King County Labor Council Delegates and 1 alternate will take place at the next General Membership Meeting on March 23. King County Labor Council delegates attend monthly evening meetings at the Seattle Labor Temple and represent and support Local 8. Delegates report back to the membership at Local 8 monthly Membership Meetings. If you'd like a copy of the Bylaws, please feel free to call the Local 8 office at 1-800-600-2433.

Protecting Our Union

(continued from page 2)

If you didn't have a Union contract and a body to enforce it, would you still get paid overtime?

We are in the Union because it offers us what we can't find anywhere else. We are the Union, our loyalty is to one another. Whenever one asks, you feel proud to say you are a Union member because regardless of all the criticisms and alleged flaws, Unions have done more good for the working man/woman than any other organized group in history.

Let's protect our Union, participate, regardless of how long we are members. When we leave this Union it should be better off than when we joined, for our own sake, for those before us and for the ones after.

Reminder: Scholarship applications must be mailed before the end of March and require Local 8 approval first. Call (206) 441-8880 or (800) 600-2433.



Local 8 OPEIU Journal

OPEIU Local 8, 2800 First Ave., Rm. 304, Seattle, WA 98121-1114

Address Service Requested

Office & Professional Employees
International Union Local 8's
Meetings are held at the Seattle Labor Temple at 2800 First Ave. (between Clay & Broad Sts.) Free parking under the Ellington Condos for Membership Meeting only. On the monitor by the garage door, punch in: *011213#.

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