

CALENDAR

Check www.opeiu8.org
for latest details

Saturday, April 18

- **Leadership Training:**
9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Everett Labor Labor Temple
2810 Lombard, Everett

Wed., April 22

- **Membership Meeting:** Seattle
Labor Temple, 6:15 p.m. *Agenda:*
*Nomination & Election of One
Local 8 Trustee (3 year term)*

Sat./Sun. May 16 & 17

- **Voice of the Membership
Assembly:** Pack Forest Center,
Eatonville

Wed., May 27

- **Membership Meeting:** Seattle
Labor Temple, 6:15 p.m.
*Agenda: Report on the Voice of the
Membership Assembly*

Think Green!

Sign up to have your
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(see back page)

Voice of the Membership Assembly -- Advancing Our Union Democracy

Local 8's Executive Board gathered on February 28 to start work on a series of exciting recommendations for members to consider. The recommendations center on evolving Local 8 into a truly democratic statewide organization and advancing issues members have raised over the years. The recommendations will be discussed and voted on at the **Voice of the Membership Assembly** to be held in Eatonville on May 16 and 17 and then brought to the entire Local 8 Membership for a review and a vote for final action.

"A few years ago we expanded our Executive Board to include four Regional Board Members; now it's time to take union democracy several steps further" states Business Manager **Suzanne Mode**.



Business Manager Suzanne Mode with Local 8's Executive Board, with staff liaison Shelby Mooney and Student Intern, Thomas Walton.

Recommendations include creating statewide Membership Action Chapters so members can attend general union meetings closer to home; expanding the current Executive Board to allow for more representation; enhancing our website to provide even more transparency of union business; establishing committees to look at Shop Steward policies and reimbursement, member education and member diversity; and creating a hardship support fund for union members. "These new recommendations will give every member an opportunity to have a voice not only in their workplace but also in their regional Membership Action Chapter and the statewide organization" commented Executive Board member **Audrey Gunderson**. Part of the recommendations includes holding two statewide Member Assemblies each year in rotating locations.

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M e m b e r s

Employee Free Choice Act: Good Family-Wage Jobs in the Green Economy

By Patrick Neville, Local 8 Member, Worker Center Division,
Martin Luther King, Jr. County Labor Council/WA Apollo Alliance

OPEIU Local 8 was represented loud and proud amongst 4,000 union activists at the **Employee Free Choice Act** rally and march on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. on February 4th. We marched to Congress to help deliver 1.5 million signatures on petitions from workers from around the country who are fighting to pass the **Employee Free Choice Act**.

The **Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA)** amends current federal labor law in order to restore its original spirit. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 was

intended to encourage collective bargaining as a means to affirm workers' rights to organize into unions, bargain collectively with their employers, and take part in concerted activity. However, over the last 74 years the Act has lost teeth, its force has been whittled away, and in all too many cases it is simply ignored by employers seeking to deny their employees' workplace rights. **EFCA** presents the greatest opportunity in decades to bring our labor laws into the modern age and empower workers to exercise their voice in the workplace.

John Sweeney (AFL-CIO), Leo Gerard (USW), Larry Cohen (CWA), and **EFCA** co-sponsors Rep. George Miller (D-CA) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) all delivered powerful speeches in true form and lead chants at the February 4th rally. However, most of the stage time was given to individual workers, who told

personal stories of how their lives have been affected by illegal and repugnant employer tactics and retaliation for organizing with their co-workers. From harassment, threats, and reassignments to forced meetings, cut hours and, of course, firings—these real stories were

utterly moving and reinforced the notion that we must act now (not later) to pass **EFCA** and restore these and all workers' dignity.

Especially in this economy, where workers of all stripes are acutely concerned about job security, the last thing we

should have to worry about is losing a livelihood simply because we organize with our fellow workers, simply because we attempt to achieve some equity. **EFCA** would help conquer fears. In fact, a down economy is the perfect time to move **EFCA** forward and demand fair treatment for workers, given that the impact of the economy is being felt extraordinarily hard by workers. Heck, we have even been known sometimes to find innovative solutions to economic problems by working through them in a collective bargaining environment.

Will you take action? Go to www.opeiu8.org and click on Employee Free Choice Act.

Watch for member **Patrick Neville's** article on the "Green Economy" in the next newsletter.



OPEIU members rally in Washington D.C. in Support of EFCA.

Executive Board

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Marie Cook
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Recording Secretary
Valancy Blackwell
Mike Gimlin
Audrey Gunderson
Ruthie Jacobs
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Shannon Halme
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Union Representative
Amanda Saylor
Member Support Representative
Colleen Shelton
Office Manager
Libby Alejandro
Administrative Secretary
Betty Devereaux
Secretary/Receptionist
Lori Risteyn
Bookkeeper
Mary Silver
Billing Clerk

Social Work Interns

Thomas Walton
Jessica Osborn

i n A c t i o n

Local 8 Members Working in Housing, Home Care and Community Health Stake a Claim in Olympia

Over the past 18 months, the Washington State Labor Council has created a coalition with affordable housing and homeless advocates to identify common issues and priorities. The idea to create this coalition came from a resolution from OPEIU Local 8. This year the following issues to work together on during the 2009 legislative session are: maintain funding for the State Housing Trust Fund, end source of income discrimination, promote transit oriented communities, maintain funding for the Transitional Housing Operating and Rent Program, maintain funding for the Emergency Shelter Assistance



Members Carol William and Chris Wright from Seattle Housing Authority at Housing Advocacy Day



Members from Community and Migrant Health Centers Sea Mar and La Clínica; Michelle Gamble, Maria Michels, Josie Lopez, Blanca Garcia, José Pulido and Jim Michels.

over 500 other housing advocates around the state to advocate for issues they cared about. This was the first time Local 8 recruited members to attend this event and we hope next year we will have a larger Local 8 presence.

Local 8 also sponsored successful Advocacy Days for members in Home Care and Community Health Centers.

Member Michael Blumson from Low Income Housing Institute and Local 8 Intern, Jessica Osborn

Program. You can see the joint position papers on these issues by going to the www.wslc.org under legislative issues.

Local 8 also did outreach to our Union members working in Housing to attend the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance Housing and Homelessness Advocacy Day on Feb. 24, 2009. Local 8 members from LIHI, Solid Ground, and Seattle Housing Authority joined



Thanks

Many Thanks to our dedicated University of Washington Social Work Interns:

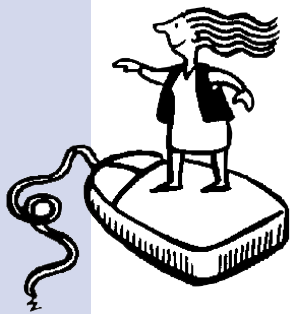
Thomas Walton (helping with our Voice of the Membership Assembly and Advocacy Days) and

Jessica Osborn (helping with our Diversity Survey and Advocacy Days)

Local 8 Goes Green!

Starting in June, members who've signed up for email alerts will now receive the Local 8 Journal on line only. Paper copies will not be mailed if we have your email address unless you request to continue receiving your newsletter by mail as well.

We want to eliminate the need for wasteful paper as much as possible while enhancing communications for members. To start receiving your Local 8 Journal via email please go to www.opeiu8.org and click on Email Alert Sign-up.



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The **Voice of the Membership Assembly** is open to all members but we only have space for 75 participants so be sure to get your application in as soon as possible. Some spots are reserved for members in certain geographic areas and in certain industries to ensure a wide range of representation. If you'd like to receive a Registration Packet with more information, please be sure to call or email Organizing Director/Secretary-Treasurer **Cindy Schu** at 1-800-600-2433(ext.102) or cindy@opeiu8.org or go to www.opeiu8.org.

Welcome to the new Local 8 Political Action Chair **Corinne Cosentino** (left) and thank you to outgoing chair, **Angela Boehlke**.

Local 8's Political Action Committee usually meets each month before the General Membership Meeting.



Local 8 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 Meetings only. After 5:00 p.m., punch in *011213# on the monitor by the garage door.

Email: opeiu8@opeiu8.org

www.opeiu8.org

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