

LABOR DAY: YOU STILL HAVE THE POWER—USE IT!

While Labor Day started out as a way to honor workers for their contributions to our country, maybe now it's just seen as a day off at the end of summer. Many of the rights we've enjoyed our whole lives (and our parents' lives too) are now at risk: a 40 hour work week, overtime pay, lunch and coffee breaks, and a minimum wage. Here are some things you can do:



- 1. Invest a little energy in *keeping* your rights.** Write a letter to your representative to prevent Bush's assault on overtime pay. (It's easy. Go to www.aflcio.org, where they give you sample letters and even find your rep for you.) Ask reps to support HR 2691, the Income Equity Act, so corporations will be limited to how much CEO salary they can deduct to 25 times the pay of the lowest paid worker (they can continue to pay as much as they want), which *used to be* standard here. The average CEO now makes 441 times the lowest paid worker (*Fortune* says it's 1000:1 with hidden perks), whereas in other countries it's more like 57-25-11 to 1.
- 2. Honor other workers in the present:** 'Voting with your wallet' is one of the few rights you have left. Choose not to buy from companies who use child or slave labor, or operate sweatshops. (Join the Coca-Cola boycott, for example.)
- 3. Join Jobs with Justice:** pledge to be there for other fights as well as your own—www.wsjw.org. An injury to one is an injury to all!

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Local 8 Members Show Their Strength at the Bargaining Table



Consejo bargaining team and shop stewards

More than half of Local 8's membership spent the last few months in contract negotiations. "We're proud to report our contracts saw improvements despite a weakened economy and job insecurities," stated Business Manager **Suzanne Mode**. **Providence Everett Medical Center**, **Sea Mar Community Health Centers**, **Consejo Counseling & Referral Service**, **Valley Medical Center** and **Horizon Lines** all settled contracts with significant gains. Here's a brief summary:

Sea Mar: After 8 months of difficult negotiations, a tentative agreement has been reached for the 600 medical assistants, nurses, counselors, dental assistants, receptionists and other staff at this important community health center. Workers

rejected the first contract last month and sent the Bargaining Team back to the table. The Bargaining Team now has an agreement it's recommending with a guaranteed 3% wage increase each year of the contract for all employees, protected health benefits and other gains. Workers from Vancouver to Bellingham will complete the voting process by mid-August. Thanks to Bargaining Team members for their tireless fight: **Grace Sanchez**, **Susan Matthew**, **Kim Templeton**, **Carmen Paez**, **Andy Turkovich** and **Terry Saunders**.

News on bargaining at other workplaces on page 6



MON., SEPT. 1

- **Labor Day Celebration**, 11:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m., see page 8. Stop by Local 8's table between 11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.

SAT., SEPT. 20

- **Local 8 Member Training**, 8:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m. in Olympia

TUES., SEPT. 24

- **Membership Meeting**, 6:15 p.m., Hall 6. Agenda: Mid-year Budget Review.
- **Political Action Committee**, 5:30 p.m., Hall 6.
- **New Member Orientation**, 5:30 p.m., Rm. 236.

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MEMBER ACTIVISM

Local 8's focus for 2003

By Suzanne Mode, Business Manager &
Cindy Schu, Organizing Director/Secretary-Treasurer

The upcoming Labor Day celebration seems a good time to reflect back on our State of the Union message in last February's Journal. Member activism is important for our economic and social survival, for our union and for each of us as individuals.

Washington's economy is now the second worst in the nation (Oregon is number one). The job market has changed significantly from several years ago and the health care crisis continues to escalate at a frightening rate. All the more important to fight for good union contracts, to keep organizing unorganized workers, and to stay politically engaged.

Here are a few reminders on ways we can work together to keep our union strong and make a difference in our community:

Attend Connecting for the Future. Local 8's first ever statewide meeting for members to chart a course for the union to enhance communication within the union and ensure decision-making participation for members all over Washington. See page 3 for more details.

Register Co-workers to Vote. We'll have materials at the next Shop Steward training.

Maintain Your Workplace Union Bulletin Board. We'll be sending stewards a packet of educational materials on workplace rights that can be used to inform co-workers on the union bulletin board.

Any Local 8 member can come to the Shop Steward/Activist training. There's always something new to learn either from experts from the community or expert fellow stewards. The trainings are free and open to all members.

Check out the Local 8 website. It's updated on a regular basis with the latest union news. Look to Action Updates for the Local 8 calendar and news about your workplace. The Rights, Resources and Links section has lots of information to help you enforce your workplace rights. We're adding new links all the time.



Here are some Local 8 members standing up for the rights of others: *Maureen Bo, Alan Wolfson, Christina Jensen, Suzanne Mode, Helen Hagler, Mike Maloney, Charlie Best, Clara Beckes, Karen Peterson, and Shelby Mooney.*



Why Should Health Care Workers Care about the FTAA?

(aka 'NAFTA on Steroids')

In the 10 years since the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began eroding workers' rights, jobs and the environment, not only has it not gone away, but it's growing. Like the horror movie Blob, it's morphing into Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) and trying to consume every country in the western hemisphere besides Cuba.

NAFTA made 765,000 jobs disappear like magic. When laid off workers find new jobs, they earn 23% less on average than they did before (generally not a living wage).

The lack of jobs affects those of us who are lucky enough to have one: more competition for our jobs means we have less leverage when we bargain for a better contract (or even to keep the benefits we have).

Not everyone loses in "free trade" agreements. Corporations and wealthy business owners from all participating countries (who are helping to write the rules of these agreements) stand to gain financially from a system that puts their interests above all others. The FTAA will contain a series of commitments to "liberalize services" (a broad category that includes education, health care, environmental services, energy and water utilities, postal services and more).

Possible effects of the FTAA services agreement include:

- weakening licensing and certification standards
- government contracting rules could not be used to raise pay and protect workers' rights
- fewer rights for guest workers
- weakened government support for public hospitals and health insurance programs
- the loss of manufacturing jobs would drain state and local tax revenues.

We need members who would like to represent Local 8 in the Stop FTAA campaign! Work with **Jobs with Justice** in becoming more involved in the Stop FTAA campaign. You can get more information about the Stop FTAA campaign at www.aflcio.org/stopftaa or www.jwj.org.

Many thanks to Heather for serving as our Masters in Social Work Intern from the University of Washington this year!



by *Heather Golden,*
Local 8 MSW Intern

Labor Candidate School

by *Maribel Martinez,* Local 8 member at the Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

From May 27 to June 2, members from different unions in western Washington gathered at the Laborers Training Center for the Labor Candidate School 2003.

It was a wonderful experience to share these days with people who are interested in running for office to influence policies in favor of working families; individuals who support the labor movement and the right of workers to fair wages and benefits.

Attending this seminar inspired me to get more involved with Local 8 and the labor movement at large. So far I have attended one Local 8 PAC Committee meeting and I am planning to continue showing up for these meetings. In the future my goal is to assist union members running for office and support the campaigns of candidates' friends of unions.

I would like to thank Local 8, all of you, for your support. ■



Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

MEMBERS IN ACTION



NEW LOCAL 8 MEMBERS AT FREMONT PUBLIC ASSOCIATION Local 8 welcomes a recently organized program: workers in the Long Term Care Ombudsman Program signed union cards and were voluntarily recognized by FPA after a card check. The program has four staff positions. Greet your new fellow union members at Fremont so they know who some of you are. Welcome to Local 8! ■

COMMUNITY RESOURCE PANEL: Thanks to Local 8 members who made up a panel to share information about community resources at our May 17 Shop Steward Training.

Wendy Wilson from Low Income Housing Institute talked about housing resources, Pat Hutto and Joann Kaye explained how to access home care services, Luis Vila spoke about services at Consejo Counseling and Referral and a special guest, Nancy Young, President of the King County Labor Council and director of the King County Labor Agency, spoke about their programs to help the labor community. ■



PAC GARAGE SALE & BAR-BECUE A SUCCESS: A big thank you to the more than 20 OPEIU members who volunteered at Local 8's first garage sale and barbeque back at the end of May. We raised funds to help support political candidates who will advocate for issues that benefit working people.



It would be impossible to list all the volunteers without forgetting someone who made this event so successful, so here are just a few special thanks. Thanks to Maureen Darrah for getting IBEW to allow us to store our garage sale items in their hall for two months. Other thanks to Shannon Salinas, pricer extraordinaire, to our Hauler Superstars Catherine Vance, Guy and Maia Astley, Karen Peterson and Tommy McLean, and to our master grillers Charlie Best, Benita Hyder and Mike Maloney. Thanks to our great Garage Sale Committee: Evelyn Bowles, Maureen Darrah, Christine Jensen, Mike Maloney, Karen Peterson, and Shannon Salinas. All and all, we had a great time. Start saving your items for next year's PAC Garage Sale, said event coordinator, Shelby Mooney, and come and join in on the fun! ■

HOME CARE WORKERS GET A RAISE: Some bright news came out of this legislative session. Lawmakers appropriated a \$0.75 an hour increase for all home care workers. While this falls short of the \$2.00 increase we wanted, Local 8 members are pleased that the legislature made some effort to address the poor compensation received by these workers.

Small groups of members went to Olympia each week to meet with legislators and educate them on the need to increase funding for home care workers and their agencies. ■



Home care workers Ruth Admire, Judy Hudson and Brenda Kodama with State Representative Brian Blake.

Know Your Rights!

An employee who is called to an interview with his or her employer which may lead to some disciplinary action is entitled to union representation. **It's up to the employee to request having the Shop Steward or Union Representative present** during an investigatory interview which the employee reasonably believes will result in disciplinary action.

If management wants to question or "interview" you,

First: Ask what is involved. Ask if this might lead to you being disciplined.

If so: ■ **Tell management** that you want a Union Representative or Shop Steward present.

■ **Refuse to answer any questions** until a Union Representative or Shop Steward is present, although you should attend the meeting.

■ **Refuse to allow** any tape or any other electronic recording of the interview.

■ **If management insists on proceeding** with the interview without regard for your rights, make clear that you are proceeding under protest.

If you make the mistake of starting the interview and become disturbed by the direction the interview is taking, stop the interview and request that a Union Representative or Shop Steward be present before continuing with the interview.

Remember these magic words:

"If the discussion of this meeting could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or impact on my personal working conditions, I request that my steward or union representative be present. Without union representation, I choose not to answer any further questions at this time." ■

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Free parking (for Membership Meeting only) under the new Ellington Condos. On the monitor by the garage door, punch in: *011213#.

Bargaining Power *continued*



Providence-Everett

The 700 Providence workers ratified their second union contract on August 1 by an overwhelming majority. The agreement includes an annual 2.5% cost of living adjustment in 2003 and 2004, with 3% in 2005, in addition to step increases for years of service. Five new steps have been added to the scale and employees will be able to use experience within the Providence Health System to advance their placement on the scale. The new contract inspired additional membership sign-up, boasting a nearly 90% membership level. Thanks to Bargaining Team Members: **Joe Chartier, Barb**

Barmore, John Greer, Rebecca Thomas, Lisa Andrews, Peggy Brien, Chris Fitch, Audrey Gunderson, Larry Bauer, Marjorie Lewis, Todd Rollins, Sharon Pope and Shirley Whidden.

Consejo Counseling & Referral Services

On June 24, members voted 100% approval of a new three-year agreement. Employees will receive an average of a 12% increase over the next three years, an increased number of bereavement days and paid continuing education time. Thanks to Bargaining Team Members: **Virginia Gonzalez**, Children's Mental Health Therapist, **Torri Shirey**, Geriatric Mental Health Therapist, and **Miguel Sanchez**, Chemical Dependency Professional.

Valley Medical Center

VMC members approved a three-year contract last month, thanks to Bargaining Team Members **Richele Aguilar, Sheila Veach, Antoinette Bynum and Cindy Grau**. The contract provides a unified wage scale for both clinic and hospital employees, a 2.5% cost of living adjustment each year of the contract, in addition to step increases plus one additional step, vacation increase at 3 years, enhanced job posting and overtime language.

Horizon Lines

OPEIU members from around the U.S. met in Chicago to bargain over a cost-of-living increase for this year. Instead they came away with an agreement that goes through October 2004. The new contract includes annual wage increases, higher pension contributions and a cap on medical cost increases (or a contract reopener will be triggered). The OPEIU represents shipping clerks in California, Florida, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, Texas and Tacoma. Along with **Suzanne Mode**, Chief Shop Steward **Craig Davis** represented Local 8.

More contract negotiations

continue with our two newly organized groups **King County Housing Authority** and **Lower Columbia Community Action Council**. The **Seattle Housing Authority** starts this month, as well as **King County DASAS** and five home care contracts. Watch for the latest updates on our website and the September newsletter.

Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together.
—Vista M. Kelly

A special invitation to all Local 8 members...

Local 8 Members Statewide:

Connecting for the Future Conference

October 18-19,
Tokeland,
Washington



With Local 8 now representing members in nearly every county of the state,

- How do we make sure our Union provides the opportunity for members outside King County to participate fully in union decisions and activities?
- How do we ensure our Union communication reaches all members?
- How do we build strong Union support in our workplaces and what tools do we need?

These are the questions we want to answer and plan around at the upcoming state-wide gathering. Here are the details:

When: Saturday, October 18 (registration is between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon) to Sunday, October 19 (we'll finish by mid-afternoon).

Where: Tradewinds on the Bay Motel in Tokeland, Washington. Tokeland is on the ocean in Pacific County, about 3½ hours from Seattle.

Cost: Food and lodging will be provided to participants (sorry, we won't be able to accommodate any guests). We'll help with travel arrangements to ensure maximum participation. There will be a \$20.00 refundable deposit to register.

If you're interested in attending this historic Local 8 event, please reserve your space today. There are only 50 slots available.

Call **Cindy Schu** at (206) 441-8276 or **Suzanne Mode** at (206) 441-8880 for more information and to make your reservation. Members out of the area can call 1 (800) 600-2433, ext. 5 for Cindy and ext. 3 for Suzanne.

"The future depends on what we do in the present."
—Mahatma Gandhi