

A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT, TWILA JACOBSEN



Twila Jacobsen

Aging is a good thing, fine wines and old growth trees come to mind. I have joined the Peace Choir here in Eugene, a longstanding group of volunteers that focus their voices on promoting peace, civil rights and the environment. Using my voice for the good that exists, even during these very disturbing and painful times, will help me continue on the

path of continuous awareness, learning and activism that involvement in our Retiree Local offers us. Thank you for accompanying me on this journey. This issue of the newsletter highlights some of our work this past year.

We are involved in nurturing and moving forward the resolutions that were passed at the last General Council in 2022. Highlighted are three resolutions:

Documenting the History of SEIU503 OPEU

This is from the Impact Statement regarding Equity and Inclusion.

This resolution has a positive equity impact. The historical context of our union is important for understanding who we are today and how we got here. Making this context available to all members makes our union more accessible, particularly for newer members and younger workers for whom 503 may be their first union experience. Our history helps us understand what we are fighting for and reminds us of what we can accomplish when we are together

in union. In this way, this resolution also creates potential pathways for newer members to get involved and step into leadership roles. Knowing the history of our union, including history of racism and other forms of oppression in that history can help us learn from our past and dismantle the historical barriers to reaching our goal of becoming an anti-racist union. Additionally, tracking our growing diversity and recognizing our antiracism work over time can encourage members of marginalized communities to be more involved in our union.

Continued page 7

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 PERS Transparency Bill
- 2 SEIU 503 History Project
- 4 The "Union Forever" Project
- 5 Union STRIKE WAVE



Our Union family has lost a selfless and courageous champion of labor and equality with the passing of SEIU 503 Retiree Activist James Jacobson. A memorial service is being held Saturday, December 9th, 5pm at the Campbell Community Center, 155 High Street, Eugene. Read more on page 3.

LEGISLATION TO BE INTRODUCED THAT SUPPORTS SEIU 503 RESOLUTION ON PERS TRANSPARENCY

by Twila Jacobsen, Retiree Local President

Senator Jeff Golden (D) from Ashland is introducing a bill relating to transparency of investments. There is an opportunity to move our General Council Resolution forward through supporting this bill in the upcoming 2024 short session. It requires the State Treasurer and Oregon Investment Council to make publicly available a complete list of publicly traded investments and assets currently held in investment funds on or before December 1 of each year.

As of September 2023, the Oregon Public Employee Retirement Fund (OPERF) holds \$91,529,794,000.

www.oregon.gov/treasury/invested-for-oregon/Pages/Performance-Holdings.aspx#OPERF

This bill will also require the Treasurer to generate or procure an annual report by June 30, 2025, and each fiscal year after, and deliver to the Oregon Investment Council and published on OST website, detailing with supporting data and citations a list of each private portfolio investment. For each investment the list shall include the Global Industry Classification Standard Code (GICS) and sector sub-industry codes, acquisition date, dollar amount, and annualized return of the investment. Due to trade secrets in a private fund's investments and investment mix, the portfolio investment list will not include the name of the portfolio investment, or of the private fund and fund manager holding the portfolio investment. It will protect the investments if any information required would cause a demonstrable loss of a private fund's trade secrets. After the report is completed, the State Treasurer shall make the report publicly available on its website.

If a report is not published in a timely manner, the Secretary of State will conduct audits as necessary to determine the information required in the missed report and the reason for the missed deadline. The Secretary of State shall make the results of such audits available to the public on its own or the Treasury's website and through a report to the Oregon Investment Council and Legislative Assembly.

by Alice Dale

The 2021 General Council passed a resolution to memorialize the proud history of SEIU Local 503. This work is well underway. A draft report will be made to the union's Board of Directors in March 2024 and the first iteration of the project will be available at General Council in August 2024. We hope this project continues over time to capture future developments and victories of the union.

A committee of retirees, assisted by terrific staff, has been gathering photos, articles, flyers, videos, songs, and memorabilia. Committee members have developed chronologies and interviewed key individuals who played important roles in developing SEIU Local 503 into what it has become today. This project will be a multi-media product. A viewer will be able to access the union's history in many ways – chronologically or by subject or by event or by interviewee. There will be text but much much more.

We know this report will be fun for retirees to look back on the many critically important events of their past but, even more than this walk down memory lane, we hope this project will capture the interest of new and young union members and be an inspiration to them as they continue to build an even stronger, activist-oriented union over the next 50-100 years.

The chronology dates back to 1943, when the union first started (80 years

Continued page 7

IN MEMORY OF SEIU MEMBER ACTIVIST JAMES JACOBSON

By Mike Powers, Statewide President and Twila Jacobsen, Retiree President

Our Union family has lost a selfless and courageous champion of labor and equality with the passing of James Jacobson.

In a world that today seems so violent, revengeful, hurtful...James provided that consistent strength of a positive approach to his lifelong activism. In 1970 James helped organize the first Earth Day(s) events at San Diego State University, born out of the peace movement. Last summer he returned to the desert near the Nevada Nuclear Test site to scatter the ashes of a fellow activist. Robert, who met James in San Diego the summer of 1970, said he was the #1 environmentalist, and the reason he eats mostly vegetarian. James brought that history and commitment to his allegiance to SEIU and the Climate Justice work of our union.

James spent much of his time building Union power with his SEIU Sublocal 085 at the University of Oregon and on our Board of Directors, and as a voice against discrimination and for respect with the Lavender Caucus. He continued that positive work as an active member of the Retiree Sublocal 001.

James was the chair of the Citizen Action for Political Education (CAPE), to support those candidates who support labor and the jobs we do.

He relished bringing together the different viewpoints and backgrounds of our elected CAPE leaders from all over the state to ensure we spoke with one labor voice. In so doing he made sure that every member's voice was heard.

James was part of and led in many different union efforts, committees, and actions. In all, he represented the best of our Union. He built us up, he invited people in, he strove to improve our Union, he made us all better.



SONG: WE'VE GOT TO LIVE TOGETHER

A timely song about what sometimes--especially lately--seems to be the impossible dream of peaceful coexistence and mutual respect and recognition between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Tune: "Everyday People" by Sly and the Family Stone; "Imagine" by John Lennon

Here in this land between the river and the sea,
We're all grappling with uncertainty,
But however uncertain the future may be,
We've got to learn to live in harmony.
We need peace for Israel's people,
And we need peace for Palestine's people.

I am no better, and neither are you,
Palestinian, Arab or Jew.
We may disagree on what's right and what's wrong,
But we've still got to find a way to get along.
We need peace for Palestine's people,
And we need peace for Israel's people.

There is the A Group that doesn't like the B Group
That doesn't like the C Group that doesn't like the D Group.
Different goals for different souls,
And so on and so on, will it forever go on?
Let's stop it. We've got to live together!

For nearly a century we've been locked in a war.
The time has come to not fight anymore.
Though you may accuse me of naivete,
I keep hoping that we'll find a way.
We need peace for Israel's people,
And we need peace for Palestine's people.

There is the D Group that's fighting with the E Group
That's angry with the F Group that can't forgive the G Group.
Different goals for different souls,
And so on and so on, will it forever go on?
Let's stop it. We've got to live together!
Different goals for different souls,
And so on and so on, will it forever go on?
Let's stop it.
We need peace for Palestine's people,
And we need peace for Israel's people.
We need peace for all of the people!
You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one.
I hope some day you'll join us, and at last the fighting will be done.

Copyright Paul McKenna 2021

UNION FOREVER!

by Barbara Casey

In 2019, Union Forever was founded by SEIU International as a place for retirees to stay connected and keep up the fight for retirement security and a better future for working people. Unlike our Retiree Local 001, those retirees had to hang up their activism along with their purple shirts. Union Forever is a way for us to continue to do what matters.

I am proud to be the NW member of the organizing workgroup. Since then, we have:

- Grown our community from a few hundred to more than 10,000 strong
- Supported fights for workers' rights, including Kaiser Permanente health care workers' fight against staffing and retirement benefit cuts
- Stood up for frontline workers during the pandemic, calling for more PPE from the government and making masks at home
- Mobilized voters in the 2020 election, sending postcards, texting voters, and making sure people registered and turned out
- Advocated for the American Rescue Plan, a higher minimum wage, protections for Social Security, and other legislation to help working people and retirees
- And more!



**“Join
Union
Forever.
Be a part
of what
matters
to you!”**

Barbara Casey
Union Forever member

Our work group of 15 members from all over the country met in Washington DC at SEIU International Headquarters in early October—our first in person meeting since December 2018!

Our goals were lofty - Build a powerful SEIU Retiree program that is connected to our unified goals. Enhance SEIU and locals' capacities to retain and activate and track retiree members. Participate in local and national political, organizing and issues campaign work to be a formidable electorate.

We heard from many speakers including Mary Kay Henry who took the time to be with us in person to introduce to us the power of digital and social media. Armed with amazing statistics we made our own “content” supporting Kaiser Workers, SAG-AFTRA Workers and the UAW. ‘Solidarity Summer’ has moved into ‘Solidarity Season’ and digital media is a part of the Union message. 72% of Americans now approve of Unions, with the number higher for those under 35. Couple that with these facts- 90% of people in the world use social media. Most popular is still Facebook/Meta and Instagram with Tic Tok rising. People are online an average of 5 hours a day checking their phone 58 times. Should they get a text 97% open them but it takes 7 times for he message to “sink in”.

The anti union right hard-wires their message very effectively. Their stories are repeated, “re-truthed” and watched and absorbed by consumers (all of us!) We have to seize the moment and use our talent to tell our stories. SEIU has put together a Union 4 All Digital Media Committee and will be reaching out to all locals throughout the country and retirees will be a part of it. Follow at [SEIU.org/unionforever](https://www.seiu.org/unionforever) and Unions for all Workers Network on Facebook.

2023: THE STRIKE WAVE ENDS WITH A TSUNAMI

by Ann Montague



It all began with SEIU organizing fast food workers in New York City 11 years ago. November 19th 2012. Joe Woodard who many of you may remember was part of our International organizing project soon to be called, "Fight for 15". Hundreds walked off the job that day demanding better wages and working conditions. The movement grew across the country. There were never strikes. But there were one day walkouts covered by Federal Labor law which allowed a day of concerted activity" to address working conditions or wages.

Recent years we have seen an uptick in organizing and strikes and worker solidarity. Mostly teachers, nurses, public workers. Specifically Starbucks and Amazon. We saw our brothers and sisters in local 49 who work at Kaiser strike and our retiree members joined them on the picket line. With a 98% strike vote they won raises and increased staffing ratios and longevity pay.

Polling is showing that unions are gaining in popularity and our members want to show up to support any workers who are fighting back. Most strikes had been in teaching and health care and store chains and coffee shops.

But 2023 was going to be different. New leadership was changing in national unions who used to be controlled by corrupt union bureaucracies who made "sweetheart deals" with management. In some cases rank and file members were not even allowed to vote on these contracts. Armed with new leadership these unions actually have the power to change the U.S. economy and they were ready to fight back. We were going to see something different. Two unions were ready to be impactful..one lost but learned a lesson and one won big.

Railroad Workers

Railroad workers had NO paid sick leave. If they had a doctor appointment or were sick they had to give two weeks notice or they could be disciplined. The union was organizing for a strike over wages and benefits. The largest division and strongest is rail "Right of Way" workers who maintain the safety of the tracks.

Their strike was shut down by President Biden when he invoked a 96 year old anti union law called the Railway Labor Act of 1926. Railroad workers had strong unions in the 1920s and the Rail Barons got this law passed that allows the government to intervene with workers bargaining (always on the side of the rail owners).

President Biden claimed the economic upheaval of the strike called for government intervention. Only four Democratic legislators opposed imposing an unpopular contract on the union. The result was that the government shut down the strike and stripped the workers right to vote on the contract the government imposed. The Right of Way workers immediately started a new organization called Railroad Workers United and stated "We will never again allow a president to shut down our strike"

Continued page 8

The NEXT Chapter



by Betty Holladay

I recently read an article which said that the universe lets you know when it is time to retire.

And so it was with me. At age 72, I could barely drag myself to be on time for work – traveling from my bedroom to my dining room table home office. I knew I had to set the date – May Day, 2022. Appropriate for a very liberal activist. I had prepared for this eventuality – endlessly computing my PERS pension amount. And sampling non-work activities so that I would have alternatives to fill my time.

But after the initial 6 month honeymoon period of retirement, I found myself floundering. I asked my brother, “Do you miss work?” He quickly responded, “Nope.” Most other people answered similarly. Some said that they missed the people with whom they had worked.

I missed it all – except of course the managers and the unraveling chaos at the Department of Human Services. I didn’t have the spouse or grandchildren to share retirement time with. I asked everyone for suggestions on what to do. They all said that I would find my way. Not helpful.

For 6 months, I rested and traveled a bit. I cleaned up my house and met with friends to collect my retirement booty. I joined an online women’s support group for those with chronic illnesses so I could be in the company of those like me dealing with day to day health issues. Fall came. I was asked to volunteer at a Nature Center. Good. I loved nature. And then my landlord proposed a \$100 monthly rent increase.

That did it for me. I got mad. With a cause and basically my future survival to fight for, I had no more questions.

My life had purpose again. I bought work clothes for lobbying. I made new friends and alliances. By the end of the legislative session, we tenants had managed to get some limits set for rents. I continued on with SEIU 503 – remaining on CAPE along with monthly meetings for fellow retirees. I traveled more – even to New York City for the very first time as an adult. I was appointed to a couple of ad hoc committees for my city, Lake Oswego. Today, I am training to be a member of a Community Emergency Response Team. I now have a hard hat!

I’ve somewhat reinvented myself. It’s taken time to circumvent the societal barriers set up for the aging. I never asked for Romulan and Klingon cloaking devices. It’s clear that working people are only cogs in a wheel who are even less valued after they leave the workplace. And don’t get me started on the healthcare system. We are indeed invisible.

Still, I’m fortunate. Many people our age cannot afford to retire. Another magazine article I read talked about the “racial retirement gap,” noting poor economic circumstances of Blacks in the good ol’ USA. Some elders must return to work citing financial needs.

And the process of aging itself spares few. Health concerns crop up taking away the simple pleasures. I spend sooooo much time in doctors’ offices. Similarly, couples who had hoped to spend their “golden years” together are robbed of that dream through at least one member’s health issues. Growing old is not for sissies.

I made it to the “other side.” I found joy again – in shared social justice work, communion with friends, and in various life adventures. To paraphrase a Jimmy Buffett song, I “breathed in, breathed out, and moved on.” Time is not our friend, but I try to live each day with a fierceness that only those of us who recognize the fragility of life can understand. And then reach out to others to create a sense of community - which sustains us all. And finally, laugh - loudly - at the universe.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

continued from cover page

Reducing SEIU 503s Climate Impact

This is from the Impact Statement regarding Equity and Inclusion. This resolution has a positive equity impact. Climate justice disproportionately impacts Indigenous communities and other communities of color. This resolution directs our union to assess our own internal policies and practices that have an impact on our climate.

A sub-committee of the Climate Justice Committee is developing a plan of action to assess current practices and procedures which produce a negative impact on the climate. The 2023 Oregon Sustainability Board Agency Sustainability Plan Guidelines provides a much needed outline for this effort. You can find it here: www.oregon.gov/das/Facilities/Documents/SustPlan_Guidelines.pdf

Transparency in State Treasury Investments

This is from the Impact Statement regarding Political Impact. SEIU members strongly believe that climate change is a crisis affecting our state and that we have to act now to mitigate the harmful impacts it will have on future generations. Our state invests billions of our members' retirement dollars in firms who are contributing to the climate crisis, and we deserve transparency around these investments. This resolution will reiterate our commitment to organizing and policy work related to climate change and pave the way for our union to join coalition efforts related to transparency.

Read on for news of a beautiful new Labor Mural in Springfield, the passage of the Healthcare For All bill and what it means for Oregonians, and how the Oregon Treasurer and staff are not providing us the information we need, as investors and citizens, to evaluate the performance related to risk of fossil fuel investments.

And please return in the enclosed envelope the annual form for renewing and/or joining Retiree Local 001 and consider a contribution to our Political Action Fund, CAPE. Your current email, phone and address information is most appreciated.

History Project *continued from page 2*

ago), as a lobbying organization founded by state managers. It picks up in 1973, when the Legislature passed the Public Employee Collective Bargaining Act (called PECBA), which moved Oregon from a "meet and confer" state (the union called it "collective begging") to affording full collective bargaining rights, including the right to strike, for state, city, county, special district, Higher Education and K-12 education workers. It covers the union's metamorphosis from an "Association" (then called the Oregon State Employees Association) to a union, led by bargaining unit members (rather than state managers). It covers the affiliation of the union in 1980 (then called the Oregon Public Employees Union) with SEIU International and key fights and victories that helped define SEIU Local 503 as a strong, unified, activist-oriented union as well as a leader in the Labor Movement both in Oregon and nationally. It covers the infamous "1987 Rolling Strike" and "Strike Back '95," two statewide strikes that indisputably demonstrated worker-power and defined what kind of union SEIU Local 503 had become – a union willing to take risks and take on tough fights and, importantly, a union that could win.

The report covers the phenomenal growth of the union's membership, its political program and discussion of ballot measures that increased Oregon's minimum wage, created collective bargaining rights for Homecare workers, won pay equity for women, made improvements and fought back efforts to reduce PERS benefits. It includes the expansion of the union's representation into local government, private not-for-profit organizations, long-term care, and adult foster care. It also covers the anti-worker decisions by the US Supreme Court in the last decade to curtail union power through eliminating union security provisions for public sector workers. There is much to tell about our union's history. We are looking forward to sharing this report with all the members of SEIU Local 503, current, past and future, and hope it helps instill a sense of pride and an ongoing commitment to fight and win for workers!

Strike Wave *continued from page 5*

United Auto Workers



The real tsunami happened with the UAW. They organized a rank and file caucus, "Unite All Workers For Democracy". After dumping the old leadership they elected Shawn Fain who led a six week strike that started in mid September.

He asked Biden not to intervene. He used the creative tactic of a rolling strike that eventually had 45,000 of the workers called out on strike in factories and parts warehouses. Those workers still working refused voluntary overtime and worked to rule.

This was the first time since the 1930's that a union had a clear theme stating that the strike was a "Fight With The Billionaire Class". UAW was also bargaining concurrently with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis. They were coming out of a period of major profits and the executives had given themselves 40% raises. The picket lines remained strong, and solidarity was high. Polling showed 71% of Americans supported the workers.

The strike was not only about raises but about the future of workers building electric vehicles. It was

about eliminating tier wages and increasing longevity pay. There was a tentative agreement with Ford and Stillantis but General Motors was a hold out so Fain escalated the strike and workers at General Motors largest factory walked out. Soon after that they got the tentative agreement with all three corporations.

The major win on wages was to end the tier system where so called temp workers were making \$16.00 an hour. In four years they will now be making \$40.00 an hour. In the past it took 8 years to reach that wage and now it will take three for new workers.

There is a 25% wage increase over the next 4 years Plus they will get yearly cost of living increases, profit sharing and a ratification bonus. They got an increased pension contribution. They did not get a defined benefit plan. Their new contract will have the right to strike over any proposed plant closures. Planned battery factories in Tennessee and Michigan will be under the new contract. There are built in protections for workers as electric vehicles replace gasoline models. It will go out for member ratification in the next week.

Tom Narayan, global auto analyst at RBC Capital Markets estimated that the final deal with UAW will "shave about 1% of a point off auto companies profit margin"

What makes this agreement the beginning of a Tsunami is the statement from Shawn Fain, "The working class is not done fighting". The UAW is starting organizing drives at non union plants: Tesla, Toyota, Honda and BMW. "The union will organize like never before," Fain promised.

NEW LABOR MURAL DEDICATED IN SPRINGFIELD



SEIU 503 Retirees Involved in Funding and Producing It

by Kurt Wilcox

Nearly two years after SEIU 503 retirees Steve Salman and Star Homberg noticed that the Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural, which had been created on a building wall in downtown Springfield in 2001 to honor a beloved SEIU 503 staffer, was being torn down, we now have a new labor mural only two blocks away thanks in part to the efforts of SEIU 503 retirees.

The new mural, "Labor Builds Community / El Obreroismo Construye Comunidad", celebrates the labor and struggles of generations of working people and their unions to build better lives for themselves, their families, and their communities. It emphasizes historically significant sectors of the local economy, as well as the need to work together to achieve common goals. And it is a tribute to the Bostelle mural that is being lost to urban renewal.

The Springfield Labor Mural Project which produced the new mural was led by Len Norwitz, recently retired political organizer for SEIU 503, Leonard Stoehr a former Teamsters 206 representative and former Springfield City Councilor, and Chris Maxie, from the Oregon AFL-CIO. They gathered a group of arts supporters, community organizations, and labor activists that found a location, hired an artist, developed a design, and raised nearly \$20,000 to produce the new mural.

Continued page 10



ALEJANDRO SARMIENTO AND ART STUDENTS WORKING ON THE LABOR RALLY PORTION OF THE MURAL



STEVE SALMAN AND STAR HOLMBERG CUT THE RIBBON AT MURAL DEDICATION

HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

by Wes Brain

Good News Sisters and Brothers! Single Payer Health Care Advances in Oregon: a report from 503's Standing Committee on Universal Health Care, co-chairs Wes Brain and Max Brown.

Everybody In ~ Nobody Out // Health Care Is A Human Right! Oregon leads all states moving to fundamental health care transformation, a system that truly makes health care a human right. Perhaps the best way to summarize the multi-year campaign for Everybody In ~ Nobody Out is to focus on HCAO 503's BOD meeting 11/4/23 when two health care resolutions passed with each getting 2/3 board votes. SEIU 503's standing committee on universal health care presented the resolutions with an accompanying "white paper" (a position paper).

SEIU 503 is a member of Health Care for All Oregon. For all retirees and everybody you know please take a look at Health Care for All Oregon, www.hcao.org to find ways to support Single Payer Health Care. Check us out! Full Disclaimer: I am on HCAO's board.

This report concludes with asking YOU to read the white paper & the resolutions passed by 503's Board of Directors. You can find these and other documents on the SEIU Local 503 website. Read the report/white paper at bit.ly/UniHC

Labor Mural continued from page 9

Key sponsors were SEIU 503, Oregon AFL-CIO, Lane County Central Labor Chapter, Springfield Public Schools, City of Springfield, and the Lane Arts Council. Major donors to the project included SEIU Sub-Local 001 (Retirees), SEIU Sub-Local 085 (UO), SEIU 503, Oregon AFL-CIO, Lane County Central Labor Chapter, City of Springfield, State Representative Paul Holvey, State Representative John Lively, State Senator James Manning, and State Senator Lee Beyer. More than 45 unions, organizations, elected officials, and individuals made donations.

Alejandro Sarmiento was the lead artist on the project, assisted by two art teachers, Nissie Ellison and Jenny Cathey, and 22 honors art students from the Academy of Arts and Academics (A3) where the mural is located. The finished mural is 65' long and 8' high. Over the summer the Springfield Public Schools facilities crew prepped and painted the wall and mounted the mural panels. Sarmiento then added the finishing touches and he and Ben Minnis from the Lane Arts Council applied the anti-graffiti coating.

On Friday, September 8, about 200 people gathered at the A3 high school to dedicate our mural and remember the Bostelle mural it is replacing. Many of those involved in producing the mural spoke, including Andy Limbird from SEIU Sub-Local 995 (City of Springfield) and Kurt Willcox, SEIU retiree and member of the Springfield Labor Mural Project. We had lots of union members there to celebrate along with local and school district officials, staff from Congresswoman Val Hoyle's office, arts supporters, and many friends of labor. Kwaziwai, a youth marimba band, entertained, video students from Thurston High School in Springfield recorded the event, and the two sheet cakes that A3 provided were completely consumed. It was a wonderful evening full of joyful labor energy.

There's lots more information and photos about the mural and its production on our website, including video from the dedication event: lanearts.org/labor-builds-community.