



THE AGITATOR

Newsletter of the University of Oregon
 GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS FEDERATION
 870 E 13th., Eugene, OR 97401 (541) 344-0832 <http://gtff.net> gtffnewsletter@googlegroups.com

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Mark Your Calendar!

Wednesday, Nov. 7

LESST Meeting
 GTFF Office
 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 10

International GTF Caucus Potluck
 Contact Eva Hoffmann,
evah@uoregon.edu
 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 13

E-Council Meeting
 EMU Oak Room
 6:00 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 17

GTFF Potluck with host Greg Liggett
 1272 Willamette St. Apt. 401
 6:30 p.m.

Sunday, Nov. 18

Women's Caucus Naked Lady Party
 Contact Judith Lechner,
lechner@uoregon.edu
 4:30 p.m.



In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, GTFF volunteers raise awareness for the Womenspace crisis line on Oct. 12. See full story on p. 3.

Bargaining: Contract Ratified

After several months of bargaining, the GTFF and the UO finally reached an agreement on Sept. 6th, which was ratified by the General Membership in an election held earlier this month. A full report on the new contract is available on our website, but here are some highlights!

- **Raises** – We bargained a **2%** raise to the minimum wage in September 2012 and a **1.5%** raise in September of 2013. This should help keep GTFs' earnings competitive with the minimum wage earnings of our comparator universities.

- **Fees** – We successfully lowered fees **from \$140 per term to \$61 per term**. Also, fees for self-support courses required for degree completion will be covered by the UO. These fees had typically been more than **\$1000 per class**.

- Additionally, we were (finally) able to eliminate the \$75 per credit fees charged to Music GTFs. This should save the roughly 75 Music GTFs about **\$675 per term**.

- **Health insurance** – The deal we signed on ...*cont'd* p. 2

***Election day is tomorrow, Nov. 6!
 Don't forget to vote!***



Letter from the President: Time to Get Involved

Have you ever wondered how the GTFF works? Well, it's simple! The GTFF is a union, run by its members with support of our staff Amber Cooper (Organizer) and Lisa Hamilton (Benefits Administrator).

The GTFF consist of three "organs": the executive board—eight annually elected officers; the executive council—the departments' stewards, the officers and caucus representatives; and the General Membership—including every full member of the GTFF.

The General Membership is our union's highest legislative power. Important changes,

such as contract ratification, by-law changes, or approving the GTFF's budget, have to be presented to the membership and approved by our full members.

However, these changes affect every single GTF on campus; they affect every person with a GTF appointment. This is why it is important for every GTF to get involved and to follow the development of the GTFF.

The easiest way to keep up-to-date with our union is to come to the General Membership Meetings (usually held during the first week of each term), to become a steward of your department or to frequently keep

in touch with the steward of your department, join a caucus, read the newsletter and our GTFF emails and posts on our website.

You can swing by the GTFF office on 870 E.13th Ave, talk to our organizer Amber as well as fill out an involvement sheet. We are also always looking to support GTFs who volunteer and would be glad to support projects that help our community.

In solidarity,
Judith Heidi Lechner
President
German & Scandinavian Studies

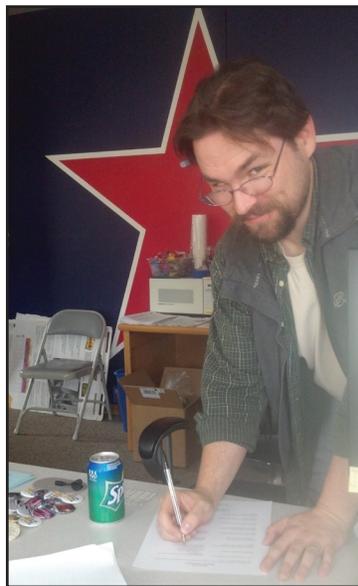
From p. 1: Bargaining Agreement Signed

health care is a bit complicated, but mostly very positive.

- Most importantly, while we ultimately agreed to sit on a committee to discuss the future of GTF health care, we **fought back all proposals that would have significantly altered the way we run our health care plan.**

- We added a new benefit, accomplishing our long-sought goal of having **birth control covered at 100%**, instead of as a prescription (70% coverage).

- **Almost everyone will pay significantly less for health care next year.** The deal we signed has the UO paying 95% of health



Treasurer Steve McAllister signs the new collective bargaining agreement

care premium costs for individual GTFs, GTF partners, GTF children, and GTF families in the Fall, Winter, and Spring terms. GTFs will be responsible for paying for 5% of the premium costs in these terms.

- For the first time, however, **GTFs will be responsible for paying a portion of their health care premiums.** It will cost approximately \$50 per term for an individual GTF to be on the plan, **substantially less** than the reduction in fees and savings on summer health insurance for all members.

Drop by the GTFF office to talk to Lisa Hamilton and get your paperwork set up!

- The 2012 GTFF Bargaining Team



What is a Steward?

Somebody new to our union occasionally approaches me wondering about the nature of a steward and the roles stewards perform in the union. Allow me to share with you the response I've grown accustomed to giving. I typically say:

"When addressing the question, 'what is a steward?', there are at least three approaches that we may take.

"First, we might define a steward by their function. A steward acts as a departmental representative, communicating between the GTFFs in their department and the GTFF as an organization. They are the first line of defense when it comes to grievances and the disseminators of vital information to the membership. From this vantage, stewards are essential cogs in the greater machine that is our union.

"Second, we might define a steward with reference to their symbolic value. Because there are so many of them, stewards are arguably the most visible

"It is this abundance of meaning that . . . makes the office I now hold so rewarding and interesting"

aspect of the union. In the minds of undergraduates, other GTFFs, university administrators, and faculty, stewards form many sections of the face of the union—perhaps the eyes, ears, and nose.

"Lastly, we might define a steward with appeal to their history—to the history of the steward's position. Stewards have historically been the life's blood of labor unions in general, not just our own. Stewards have led departmental campaigns, set the bargaining agenda year after year, and have repopulated the various officer positions that need refilling every year."

Of course, much more could be said about stewards in our union and what they do. It is this abundance of meaning that in large part makes the office I now hold so rewarding and interesting. For the VP of Organizing is in charge of coordinating stewards—and sometimes, even, of defining them.

David Alexander Craig
VP Organizing
Philosophy

Annual Fall Volunteer Event: Womenspace Banner Event

On October 12th, the GTFF recognized National Domestic Violence Awareness Week with our annual fall volunteer event. As in past years, we partnered with Womenspace, a nonprofit organization working to end domestic violence by empowering women and children and changing community standards.

In order to get the word out about the services offered by Womenspace, groups of GTFF members stood on street cor-

ners during the Friday afternoon rush hour holding banners with Womenspace's phone number printed on them. Despite the chilly and damp weather, a total of 29 volunteers stood on five different corners around town, which is a record-high level of participation in this event for the past several years.

All the groups reported overwhelmingly positive responses by passing drivers who honked and waved in support. A Wom-



enspace employee drove past one of the banners and stopped to take the volunteers' picture and to enthusiastically thank them for their help. The Womenspace ... cont'd p. 4



Time to Caucus

One big advantage of our union is that we have a strong caucus system. Our caucuses are designed to give underrepresented groups a voice and to address particular problems these groups might have and how they can contribute to changing our union's culture. The two most active caucuses right now are the GTFFF Women's Caucus and the International GTF Caucus.

In order to get in touch with the Women's Caucus, please contact Kathryn Miller (Women's Caucus Leader, Political Science, klm@uoregon.edu).

The women's caucus is planning a "Naked Lady Party" on November 18th. At the NLP, we will get together and donate clothing for the Eugene's women's shelter. Please bring clothing you don't wear anymore but still is in a good condition and bring a snack or something to drink. For de-

tails, please contact Kathryn Miller.

To join the International GTF Caucus, please contact Reza Motamedi (International GTF Caucus Leader, Computer and Information Science, motamedi@uoregon.edu).

The International GTFs caucus meets every other Thursday at 6 pm. They are planning an international potluck on November 10th. International GTFs bring dishes and music from their home country! This event requires an RSVP to Eva Hofmann: evah@uoregon.edu

If you would like to get more information about available caucuses please check out our website: <http://gtff.net/caucuses/> or contact David Craig, VP Organizing: organizing@gtff.net

Judith Heidi Lechner
President
German & Scandinavian Studies

From p. 3: Womenspace Event a Success

staff tells us that they receive a noticeable spike in calls from people seeking their services after one of these banner events, and they are grateful for our participation year after year. Thank you to everyone who volunteered and made this event a success!

For more information on Womenspace, call 541-485-8232 or visit www.womenspaceinc.org. If you are involved with a local community organization that needs volunteers, please contact Sarah Praskievicz, VP-External Relations, at praskievicz@gtff.net.

Sarah Praskievicz
VP External Relations
Geography

Civil War Brew-Off III

The 3rd annual Civil War Brew-Off was a smashing success! Over 60 GTFs, along with a couple hundred folks from the Coalition of Graduate Employees (CGE) and the Corvallis community, came together to share delicious homebrews, raise money for the Linn-Benton Foodshare, and rock 'n' roll.

This year, to foster solidarity between our unions, the GTFFF E-Council hired a bus to safely transport GTFs and friends to and from the beer-stocked hall in Corvallis. To our delight, the bus was packed and lively, including soccer chants lead by Phil Mayo.

Ninkasi and Block 15 also added to the over 30 homebrews competing for crowd favorite. While sampling the brews, revelers enjoyed the sounds of the *Psych Country Revue* and *Meatbomb*. Meanwhile, representatives from Ninkasi, Sky High, Block 15, Flat Tail, and Oregon Trail slipped through the crowd incognito, picking their personal favorites for five Brewers' Choice Awards and offering expert advice to the home-brewers. The competition has gotten fiercer and no ale was truly funky. I extend my sincerest thanks to all the home-brewers who donated their time, money and precious beer. Without you this event would be im- ... *cont'd p. 5*

2012 Election News Update

The 2012 General Election is drawing to a close! Ballots are due on Nov. 6th; at this time, its too late to trust the mail service. So you should drop your ballot at a ballot box; there is one in the lower courtyard of the EMU next to the ASUO entrance.

See the panel to the right for a reminder of the official GTFF election endorsements. Note that Barnhart is not 'officially' endorsed as, due to an oversight, his name was left off the original list. He likely would have been approved at the GMM meeting, so I personally encourage you to vote for him!

Labor-friendly legislators in the Oregon House help block anti-union legislation and keep the GTFF strong! Please vote!

Steve McAllister
Treasurer
Biology

Oregon House Districts

#8 (S.W. Eugene):

P. Holvey (D*)

#12 (Springfield):

J. Lively (D)

#13 (Central Eugene):

N. Nathanson (D*)

#14 (W. Eugene, Junction City):

V. Hoyle (D*)

#11 (S. Eugene, including UO):

P. Barnhart (D*)

Other Oregon Offices

Ore. 4th Cong. Dist., U.S. House:

P. DeFazio (D*)

Ore. Labor Commissioner:

B. Avakian (D*)

Ore. Secretary of State:

K. Brown (D*)

** Incumbent*

From p. 4: Brew-Off

possible.

Prizes were awarded for a variety of things: Best Name, Best Experimental, Overall Favorite and Brewer's Choice.

Jonathan Marshall and Kory Plakos (both Chemistry) took 3rd place in the Best Overall category with their mountainous 10.5% ABV 100 IBU IPA, "Jack's Middle Finger." Dave Cecil (former GTFF staff organizer) brought home a Brewers' Choice award for his clean and light (but hoppy) "Swing Shift" India Session Ale. I also took home a Brewer's Choice award for my "Old Grandad's" Kentucky Common Ale. The "Best Local" prize, chosen by averaging the scores of the top 5 brews from each union, went to CGE yet again—though they certainly had the home-field advantage with 470 of the 530 judges.

While only one local can technically "win" the brew-off, the greatest glory goes to us all. We built union solidarity over many miles and raised over \$3500 and 530 cans of food for our community's most vulnerable. And we did it all while rocking out and tasting over 130 gallons of homebrew. If that ain't glorious, then I don't know what is.

Cheers,
Wes Miller
Steward
Physics



Left: Wren Keturi (President, CGE) drinks from the popularity trophy



Right: Wes Miller (Steward, Physics, GTFF) with Brewers' Choice Certificate

Every Stitch

By Nathan Moore (Steward, Folklore)
and Kate Downing

Bangladesh and other countries who work in terrible conditions to produce clothes for The Gap, J.C. Penney, and others retail giants in the U.S. Recently, a factory fire occurred in a garment factory in Pakistan that left over 300 workers dead. We need to keep up the fight against the greedy garment industry and stand by those who are struggling for labor rights, just as folks did in New York City in the beginning of the last century.

In New York's garment district
A century ago
Flames swept through a sweatshop
Where young women came to sew
They tried to flee to safety
But they found the stairwells locked
Some perished from the smoke and
fire
Some fell on the hard sidewalk

Present day in Bangladesh
Eleven stories high
Workers stand before the glass
How they wish that they could fly
Exit doors are locked up tight
The air is full of screams
Twenty-six will die today
For the sake of cool blue jeans

Chorus:
For every stitch of clothing
Someone sweats away unseen
While the tangled threads of justice
Unravel at the seams
From the slums of New York City
To the streets of Bangladesh—
One hundred years of struggle
And it ain't over yet

In the ashes of disaster
New York's unions stood to fight
They won safety on the cutting floor
And basic workers' rights
But now the union label's faded
And the war is waged anew
Along a global chain of greed



and pain
Hidden from the public view

Chorus
All across America
In every crowded mall
Shoppers shop beneath the smiles
Of models on the walls
But the promise of a logo
Is nothing more than sleight of hand
A corporate mask to hide the lives
That lie behind the brand

There are tears tonight in Dhaka
See the workers in the street
With banners flying high above
Their weary marching feet
And we who sport the fashions-

Can be a voice that calls for change
In blood and fear and poverty
Union rises from the flames.

Chorus:
For every stitch of clothing
Someone sweats away unseen
While the tangled threads of justice
Unravel at the seams
From the slums of New York City
To the streets of Bangladesh—
One hundred years of struggle
And it ain't over yet
No, one hundred years of struggle

And it ain't over yet.

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Join the LESST Movement!

The “Education is NOT a Commodity” Rally was held by the League of Educators and Students Slashing Tuition (LESST) on Wednesday, Oct. 3rd at the EMU Amphitheater. LESST is composed of undergraduate and graduate students, classified staff, and faculty members. Phil Barnhart (Ore. House Dist. 11) and Rep. Peter DeFazio also came in support.

Our current purpose is simple: raise awareness about the increasing rate of tuition.

This year’s graduating seniors are paying 40-45% more tuition than what they paid as incoming freshmen. Tuition increased 6% for 2010/2011, 9% for 2011/2012, and 6.1% for 2012/2013. Enrollment is also at record highs; more students crowd unexpanded classroom space. Meanwhile, the UO has an \$89 million surplus. Where does tuition money go?

It doesn’t go to paying educators. GTFs, who do 31.5% of UO teaching, are paid at or below the federal poverty line. The administration uses the high cost of tuition waivers to justify this low pay. Classified staff also struggle for fair wages and benefits. And the faculty recently won a fight against the University and its hired union-busting firm last year as they formed their union, United Academics.

We at LESST do not think education is an investment. As Ameri-

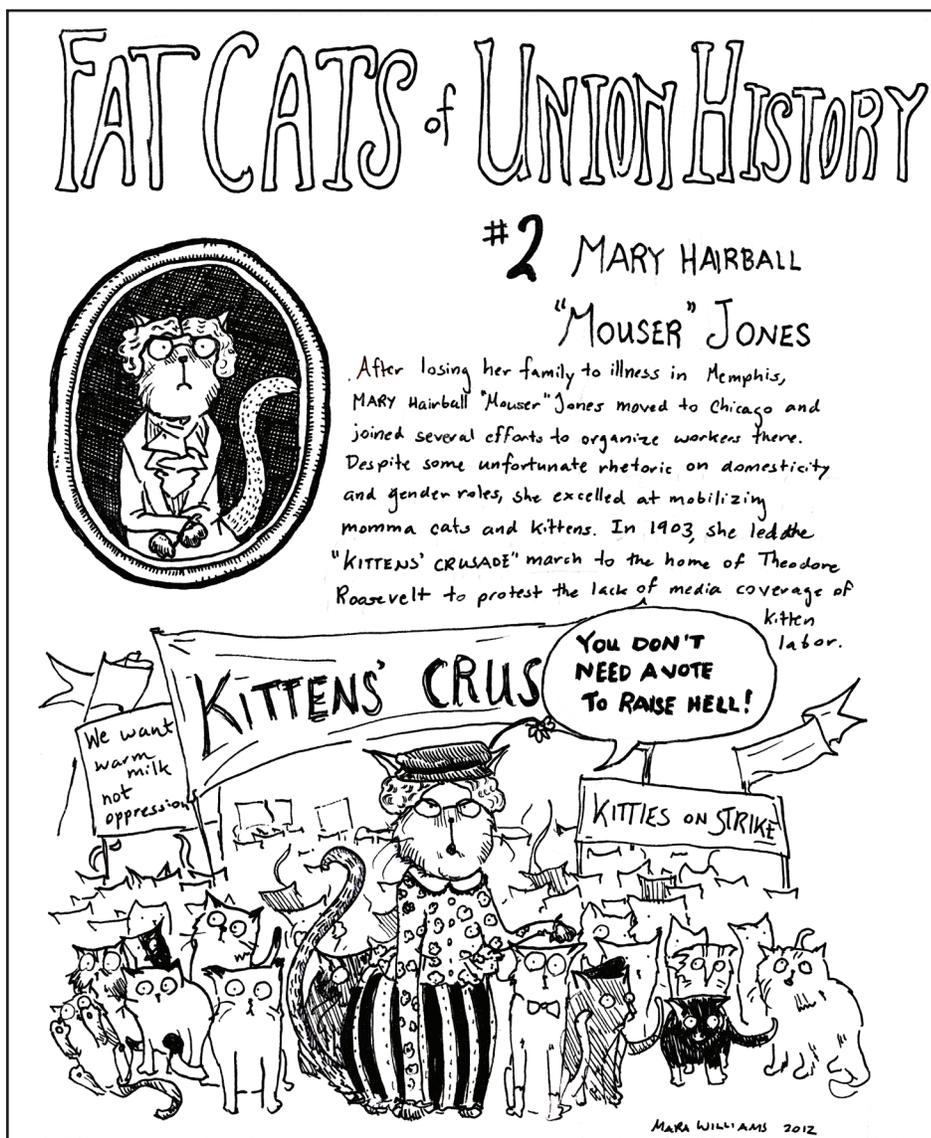
can philosopher John Dewey once claimed, “Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself.” But that life should not be burdened with student loan debt, nor exhausted by balancing a 40-hour workweek to pay for full-time tuition. These conditions hamper education, and therefore hamper life itself. And that’s a logical syllogism.

A Cowfish fundraiser held Friday, Oct. 5th earned \$605 to be used to

defray the costs of the movement, including sound systems, banners, etc.

If you are interested in getting involved with the movement, please contact Judith Lechner, Dana Rognlie, or Michael King (ASUO Multicultural Center, Undergraduate, mjk@uoregon.edu).

Dana Rognlie
VP Membership Communications
Philosophy



Mara Williams, VP Grievances, J-Comm



From the Editor

The Editorial Committee for The Agitator is very pleased to have received so many submissions to the newsletter. Keep them coming to GTFFnewsletter@googlegroups.com!

If you do submit, we ask that you submit up to 300 words in a Word document with standard formatting. Also, don't forget to include a title! Thanks :)

Staying informed & connected is easier than ever!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about the newsletter at: gtffnewsletter@googlegroups.com
- Come to membership meetings and social events! (see calendar on p. 1 for times and locations)
- Join the Facebook group: GTFF
- Follow on Twitter: @GTFF3544
- Check out the website: www.GTFF.net

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About the GTFF

Our Mission Statement:

"The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation, a union of the graduate employees of the University of Oregon, commits to creating a strong, safe, and diverse community of educators and scholars for the purpose of protecting and promoting the interests of its membership."

The Graduate Teaching Fellows Federation (GTFF) is a labor union representing over 1300 Graduate Teaching Fellows and Research Assistants at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

Our goals are:

- to improve the quality of life for GTFs in the areas of salary, workload and working conditions through collective bargaining and the enforcement of our contract,
- to fight for an adequately funded educational system, accessible for all people, and
- to help create a revitalized, socially aware union movement, which is a positive force for change for the entire community. Volunteers and activists are welcome!