

The AGITATOR

Newsletter of the University of Oregon
GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS FEDERATION
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The Coalition Building Issue

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Upcoming Events!

GTFF End of Term Party!

March 18th, 6-9pm
GTFF Office
609 E. 13th Ave, Eugene

The GTFF invites members to join us for our [Winter End of Term Party!](#) This year we are having a costume party and the theme is “*Activists, Revolutionaries, and Troublemakers.*” Dress up as someone, or group of someones, who inspire you to make positive change in the world.

Suffragettes? Famous unionists? Civil rights leaders? LGBTQ activists? Anonymous? Pussy Riot? Or even your favorite revolutionary theorist? You decide who you want your revolutionary alter ego to be! The best costumes might even win a prize!

This event is family friendly and we will be providing food and drinks



(Photo credits this issue: Jessica Neafie)

The Coalition Building Issue

co-a-li-tion
noun

1. an alliance for combined action,
2. a body formed by the coalescing of originally distinct elements

On January 29, 2017 thousands gathered at the US Federal District court here in Eugene Oregon to rally and march against the Muslim ban. Our demonstration was sibling to thousands of others across the country, taking place at airports where immigrants were detained and at courthouses where unjust laws are passed.

At our rally: solidarity. Pink hats bobbed in the sea of bodies. People held signs drawing connections between the Muslim ban and climate change, queer rights, and Black Lives Matter. Migrant workers from Mexico gathered alongside representatives from the Jewish and Unitarian religious communities. The GTFF contingent held a sign that proclaimed, “Workers fight for Muslim rights!” ([cont. page 2](#))



Coalition Building (cont)

Everyone present knew that we were stronger together.

This is our third themed Agitator issue. In December 2016 we rejected authoritarianism. Last January, we provided tools of resistance. Today, we bring the message of coalition building for political change and radical transformation of society.

Together we are strong, and together we win.

As we move forward, we need to take the struggles of other communities as our own, now more than ever. The same forces that want to turn labor rights back to the 1800s want to do the same for the rights of women, people of color, LGBTQ communities, and people with disabilities. Without resisting in large numbers in common cause, we will suffer the erosions of so many rights while the Earth, our collective home, becomes fated to transition into a burned out husk unfit for its current species, humanity included. This is a threat we can defeat, but only if we can look beyond the tendency to focus on single-issue approaches to politics.

In this spirit, we hope this issue inspires and supports your multi-faceted activism. We have an article on coalition building (with a focus on our important campaign around a better UO budget model). Also included are a list of community involvement resources, an announcement on behalf of our new Environmental Justice caucus, and a labor and social-justice themed Crossword puzzle!

We hope to encourage critical thought and multi-faceted activism in all our allied struggles. We hope to fight beside you and all our allies. And most of all, we thank you for being in the struggle with us, we're proud to fight beside you.

In Solidarity,
The Editorial Board of *The Agitator*

Ya Gotta Keep 'Em Agitated! Labor History

Did You Know...

... These Labor History Moments?

1. In the Ludlow Massacre (Ludlow, Colorado, April 20 1914), striking miners armed themselves and barricaded the entrance to Ludlow, when the Colorado National Guard and camp guards attacked. 26 people in the encampment died in the siege, and the strike influenced the need for new labor laws in the face of such heavy-handed tactics by John D. Rockefeller.

2. In 1928, the US threatened to invade Columbia to suppress plantation unionizing efforts (in the interests of the United Fruit Company, today Chiquita if you're

interested in boycotting forever). To avoid the invasion, the Colombian government killed up to 2000 striking workers near the town of Ciénaga, throwing bodies into the sea to erase records of the number killed.

3. In 2012, the Chicago Teachers' Union voted in favor of a strike, with 90% of teachers present to vote, and 98% of those voting yes to strike, and ultimately managed to undo the majority of No Child Left Behind's high-stakes testing policy within Chicago while increasing pay without layoffs.

4. Student unions all across Chile protested for 2 years from 2011-13 to force college to remain financially accessible to all students. The strikes effectively ended

for-profit universities in Chile, and nationalized the entire education system.

5. Emiliano Zapata organized and effectively ran an indigenous revolution out of Southern Mexico during the Mexican Revolution under the slogan Justicia, Tierra, y Libertad: Justice, Land and Liberty. Zapata's army managed to win land redistribution in spite of his own assassination.

...This Important Quote?

"If capital and labor ever do get together it's good night for the rest of us." -

Kin Hubbard, Journalist

*Jordan Clementi
Communications Committee*

Community Involvement Resources

WHAT: Black Lives Matter

Goal: To stop racist, anti-black policing laws and practices that result in high incarceration rates and death.

Learn more: [facebook.com/blacklivesmatterpdx/](https://www.facebook.com/blacklivesmatterpdx/)

WHAT: Rally Against the Muslim Ban

Goal: To open USA borders and stop lies that demonize Muslims as “terrorists.”

Learn more: [adl.org/civil-rights/discrimination/c/anti-muslim-big-otry.html#.WJ5m4usrLnA](https://www.adl.org/civil-rights/discrimination/c/anti-muslim-big-otry.html#.WJ5m4usrLnA)

WHAT: NoDAPL (No Dakota Pipeline)

Goal: To protect the sovereignty of Indigenous Nations and stop environmental degradation; in particular, to stop the Dakota Pipeline.

Learn more: nodapl.life

WHAT: Women’s March

Goal: To protect women’s access to abortion and other health care and to stop rape.

Learn more: womensmarch.com

WHAT: Lane Community Defense Network

Goal: An intersectional community network to stop the rise of Nazi, fascist, and white supremacist movements.

Learn more: [facebook.com/pg/LaneCommunityDefenseNetwork/about/?ref=page_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/LaneCommunityDefenseNetwork/about/?ref=page_internal)



WHAT: Scientists March on Washington

Goal: To protect evidence-based policy.

Learn more: [facebook.com/ScientistsMarch/](https://www.facebook.com/ScientistsMarch/)

Learn more (local branch): <https://www.facebook.com/science-marcheugene/>

WHAT: No Wall/Sanctuary City

Goal: To maintain open borders, protect migrants, and build sanctuary cities; stands against deportations.

Learn more: [facebook.com/eugene-springfieldsanctuarycities/](https://www.facebook.com/eugene-springfieldsanctuarycities/)

WHAT: Eugene Springfield Solidarity Network

Goal: We bring together labor unions, religious groups, and community organizations to support the civil and economic rights of all working people.

Learn More: [facebook.com/eugene-springfieldsolidaritynetwork/](https://www.facebook.com/eugene-springfieldsolidaritynetwork/)

WHAT: Community Alliance of Lane County

Goal: Educating and mobilizing for peace, dignity, and social, racial, and economic justice.

Learn more: calclane.org



The Importance of Coalition Building



organizations and unions in our University and in the community.

As many of you know, when some members of the Bargaining Team and the E-Board went at the beginning of Winter Term to officially sign our new contract to President Schill's house, we unfortunately found out about some of his plans regarding the University's budget (spoiler alert, they are not great). We left that night once again with a sense of urgency. However, the University's budget is not an issue that we, as the GTFF, could face alone, even if we are directly affected by the policies in place.

For those of us in the room that night something became clear; if we wanted to do something about how the priorities of the University's budget were set, if we wanted to strive for a bigger role in the decision making process, if ultimately, we wanted to fight for inclusive, egalitarian, democratic and emancipatory education, we could not do it alone.

There are different reasons and different moments when attempting to build a Coalition to deal with a specific issue might be a good idea. I want to use the 'Coalition for High-Quality and Affordable Education with Fair Labor Practices' as an example to talk about why is important to be thinking about Coalition building in this political climate.
(cont. page 5)

Though it might be hard to notice given the present state of things, the struggle to change the current system we live in did not start on November 9th 2016, yet there is no denying that in the past months a sense of urgency has become apparent.

If before we were organized and trying to enact change (but knew that tomorrow was just like any other day), today we don't feel like business as usual anymore. Today each day seems to count more than ever, we have become restless, and we are in despair but also full of energy. The uneasiness, that some of us have felt for years, seems to have translated to a bigger scale, and whether we like it or not (and I could make the case of

why we should like it) our trenches are becoming more crowded.

For many, the election of Donald Trump was the tipping point that made everything different. It has certainly been a massive call to action, and it's on us, those organized in unions, in community organizations, in cooperatives, in student organizations, in political actions groups, to not let this opportunity slide us by.

The present time requires that our Union do much more than just fight for a good contract, it requires that we transform it into a place where we can organize as grad students AND as community members, and for that, we need to build strong bonds with other

Coalition Building... (cont)

First, we thought that because the budget was a campus wide issue, any actions should at least include undergrad student organizations and the rest of the unions on campus.

We needed to learn about how they were affected and join them in their fights. We also needed their voices. That is why the first step was to create a working group open to all organizations, where we could all sit at the table as equals and discuss about what was happening.

Second, this was not a new issue. Although we had learned of new information that would change the current rules of the game slightly, the movement of the University of Oregon towards a market model, towards the privatization of a public institution, has been happening for decades. In that sense, it was important to start building from what had already been done.

We had to craft a strategy that took lessons from the past efforts, and the institutional knowledge that all of these organizations have.

Third, we knew that many organizations were already involved in many actions regarding the Higher Education budget, at the University and at the State level, and it was important for us to not duplicate efforts. If some organizations on Campus for example, were already doing a campaign to gather signatures to fight against the Tuition Raise, it didn't make sense for us to start a similar one, but to join efforts with them.

Fourth, having a Coalition helps consistency when addressing a community issue. Consistency is important

because having unity in our assessing of the situation, in our demands and in our goals, makes the possibility of becoming an important actor in a public discussion more real.

If what we are opposing is corporations that resist any tax bill that could help improve funding for education, a government at the State not interested in fighting against the privatization and absolute commodification of public education, a government at the

Federal level actually very interested in continue privatizing our schools, and we are serious about trying to enact change, we need to be clear and consistent.

Last but not least, building a Coalition helps us move past our individual organization. It allows us to share ideas, build trust, build solidarity, and build unity.

If what we are striving for is real change, we cannot do it alone. This is what I understand as the heart of Coalition building, the common space, the common table where we can all sit at and work together towards common goals, so that when we stand to fight back, we are stronger than ever.

*Lola Loustaunau
Co-VP of Political Education*



Caucus Corner and Updates:

Editor's Note: Another new feature I'm starting in the Agitator is the Caucus Corner, a dedicated space where Caucuses can introduce themselves to the membership, and communicate anything they wish, from simple statements to full analyses or whatever else is among their priorities. Caucuses serve important communities within the GTFF, and hopefully this will be a useful venue for their goals!

In Solidarity,

Jeff Ewing, VP of Membership Communications

Workers' Caucus Statement:

The [workers caucus](#) is committed to promoting a radical class consciousness and solidarity within the GTFF, with other unions, and with other social movements. In order to do so, the Workers' Caucus embraces and organizes around a social movement unionism approach to fight for social justice both within and beyond the GTFF.

In Solidarity,

*Andy Labuza
Chair, Workers' Caucus*

Environmental Justice Caucus Statement

The new [Environmental Justice \(EJ\) Caucus](#) has hit the ground running, after successfully starting up at the beginning of the year. With a dedicated group of GTFF members from across numerous disciplines, the caucus has focused on developing a working definition of "environmental justice," drafting a mission statement, and organizing actions that can bridge both environmental justice and labor union interests.

For those unfamiliar, environmental justice (EJ) is both a field of study and a social movement that seeks to address the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and harms.

It asks whether procedures and impacts of environmental decision-making are fair to the people they affect, and recognizes that social justice issues are inherently bound to environmental issues. It seeks to overcome unequal exposure to environmental risks, and distribution of benefits in the context of racism, classism, and sexism. EJ supports the creative resistance of different communities to environmental hazards. And finally, it examines how environmental privilege is shaped by race, class, and gender, and

acknowledges the right of non-human species and natural ecosystems to exist, persist, maintain, and regenerate.

The EJ Caucus has four main goals:

1. Outreach and support - education/recreation and allyship both within the greater Eugene-area community and the UO community
2. Internal education/analysis - educating our peers and colleagues about issues in science and the environmental field
3. Policy advocacy for decisions within the union - helping to advise the union on current issues regarding EJ in order to make informed decisions for endorsement and advocacy
4. Coalescing agent for campus and community environmental activism - bringing together environmental groups around campus and the community that have common goals and interests

To this end, the caucus has begun organizing a number of actions in which union, university, and community members are encouraged to take part:

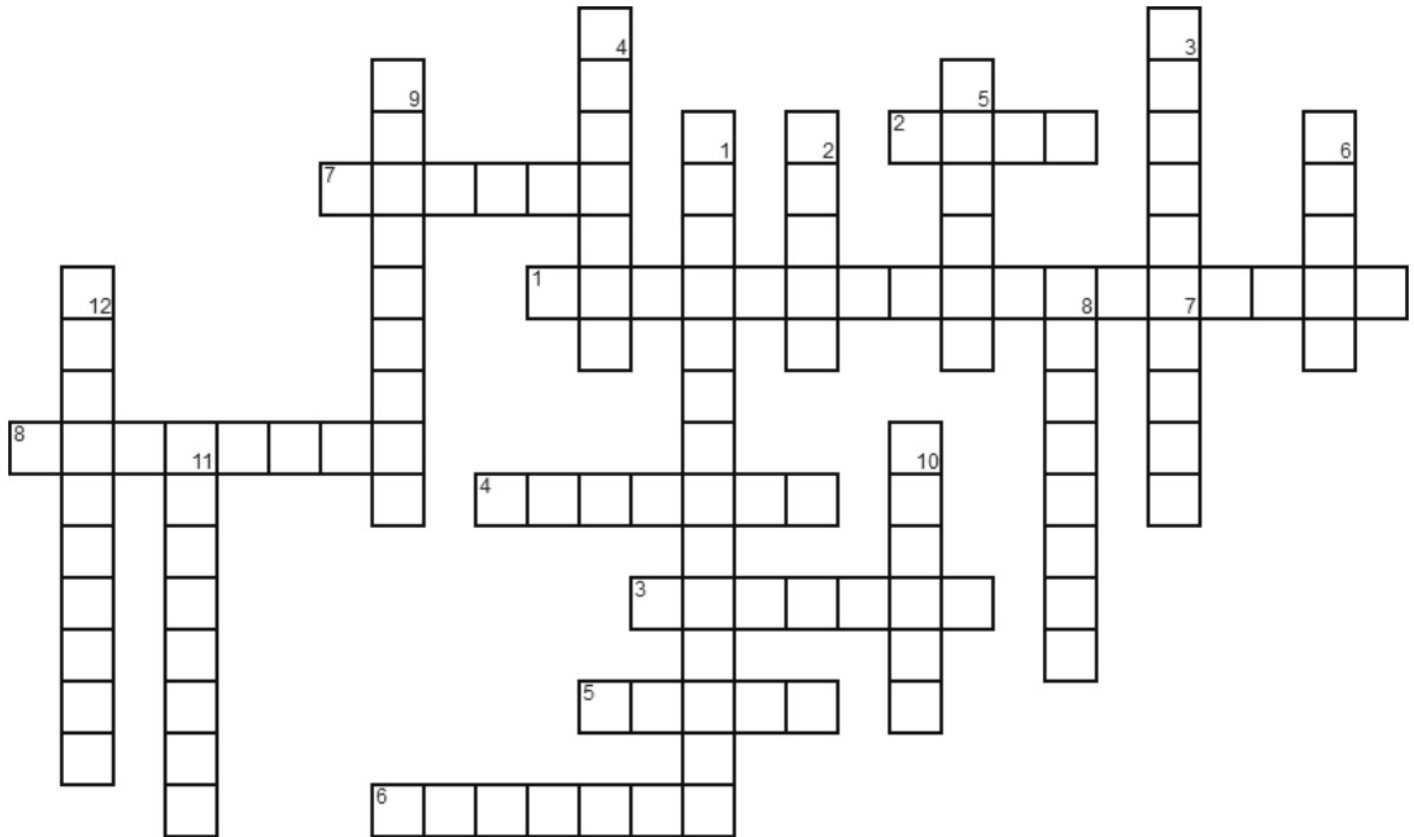
- Tabling at the [Public Interest Environmental Law Conference](#) (PIELC 2017)
- Mobilizing students to take part in collective actions, such as the the upcoming [Climate March](#), and the [March for Standing Rock Eugene](#) among others.
- Supporting the efforts of [Divest UO](#) and the [Climate Justice League](#) in the divestment campaign
- Helping out with the new Center for Environmental Futures' upcoming Environmental Justice Film Festival, April 29-30

The EJ Caucus invites all to join in our efforts. We welcome involvement at any level -- leaders, participants, or those who just want to show up every now and again. We are continually and actively looking for opportunities in the community to support EJ efforts, so please feel free to contact us with your ideas, connections, or questions.

If you'd like to get involved in the EJ Caucus, find us on Facebook [@EJGTFF](#) or visit our webpage at <http://gtff3544.net/environmental-justice-caucus/>

*Andrea Willingham
Founding Member, EJ Caucus
Communications Committee*

Troublemakers' Crossword: Women's History Month Edition



Across

1. Refrain from classic union song written by Ralph Chaplin, “_____!”
2. Parsons who co-founded The Wobblies
3. When you make 78 cents on the dollar
4. Rosie the _____
5. Lowell Mill was the first for working women
6. Anarchist activist and writer, Emma _____
7. UO donor and sweatshop employer Phil
8. Last words spoken by IWW singer Joe Hill, “Don’t mourn, _____!”

Kadie Manion

President, GTF

Jeff Ewing

VP of Membership Communications, GTF

Down

1. University Bloat
2. A day without a _____
3. Withdrawn Labor Secretary, Andy _____
4. It’s going up by 10.6% next year
5. Co-Founder of the National Farmworkers Association with Chavez
6. Unionist “Mother” Mary
7. What we want with our bread
8. This activist movement has made a lot of waves
9. Author and first female chief of the Cherokee nation, Wilma
10. Seattle Socialist Alternative candidate, _____ Sawant
11. Song written by Florence Reece during the 1931 Harlan County coal strike, “Which Side _____”
12. Slogan, “Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but _____!”

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 member.communications@gtff.net!

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!

Staying informed & connected is easier than ever!

- We want feedback! Tell us what you think about the newsletter at: member.communications@gtff.net
- Come to membership meetings and social events! (see [calendar on pg. 1](#) for times and locations)
- Join the Facebook group: [GTFF](#)
- Follow on Twitter: [@GTFF 3544](#)
- Check out the website: www.GTFF3544.net

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Want to contribute to
your union newsletter?

Submissions of all sorts are
welcome!

Contact your
VP Membership
Communications at
member.communications@gtff.net for more
Information



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 1400 Graduate Employees at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon.

Our goals are:

- to improve the quality of life for GEs 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!