

January 27th, 2017

The AGITATOR

Newsletter of the University of Oregon
GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWS FEDERATION
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Upcoming Events!

Winter GMM

Our Winter General Membership Meeting is January 27th at the Campbell Senior Center from 6-9pm!

General Membership Meeting
Campbell Senior Center
155 High St., Eugene, OR 97401

This is a particularly important one, where we will nominate delegates for the upcoming American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Oregon Convention and discuss our own priorities! Our union has a significant number of votes and many higher education union allies—we can have a substantial impact on the resolutions that get proposed and adopted at Convention. We hope to see you at the GMM so your priorities can be heard!

We're also providing food and beverages, and will be handing out department awards.

We look forward to seeing you!



(Photo credit: Jessica Neafie)

Solidarity, Strikes, Resistance

With the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, also known as the Taft Hartley Act, in 1935 the American labor movement was finally legally recognized. The NLRA secured the rights of workers to form unions, collectively bargain, and to go on strike. But this doesn't mean workers didn't already engage in these activities before 1935. Up to that point, the worker's struggle to advance their well being had already been fought between workers and employers for the better half of a century. It was through the withdrawal of their labor power, through the strike, through solidarity that workers would challenge the power of employers and secure a qualitatively better life. The NLRA itself was the result of a massive strike wave from 1934 to 1936 that gripped the country in the mist of the Great Depression.

Strikes are effective because they amount to massive disruptions. When thousands of employees decide to go



Solidarity (cont)

on strike it can effectively shut a company, or even a country, down. This kind of disruption is unsustainable for these parties, and thus they must be dealt with by the powers that be. In other words it is through collective action, strength in numbers, and solidarity that such massive disruptions occur.

Disruptions in the form of blocking a street, a sit in, an occupation, or a strike (among others) are the ways in which people outside of decision making positions can force those with power to acknowledge, listen, and meet their demands. Collective action is the voice of democracy, the will of the people, and the way in which the people can exercise power against a power structure that is opposed to their interests.

Collective action for individuals is not just an exercise of power, but also a process by which the participants realize the power they truly have. It's a moment when the people participating in the action recognize that they aren't merely powerless at the hands of dominating institutions. These disruptions are also moments whereby people realize where that power truly lies. That power lies in solidarity, standing side by side on the picket line, or standing side by side in the street, in occupying a space in unity. Even small disruptions (say, a letter writing campaign), can demonstrate this power to the participants.

The elections of 2016 is truly scary, as an authoritarian-at-best government seeks to roll back the rights of citizens on every evident front. We, as a public, cannot rely on those currently in power to do anything about it. All signs already hint to most politicians willingly if not overtly supporting collaboration with the Trump regime.

The only way to stop this assault on our rights is to stand up and fight back. But to stand up and fight back together, and in solidarity, for that is where our power lies.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER.

Andy Labuza
Chair, Workers' Caucus

Ya Gotta Keep 'Em
Agitated:

Labor History Edition!

Did you know...

... This Labor History Moment?

The first wildcat general strike in history took place in the unrest of May 1968. The general strike spread to factories and industries across the country, and by the end of the month millions of workers were on strike.

... These December U.S. Labor
Events?

January 17th, 1915 - Lucy Parsons leads hunger march in Chicago; IWW songwriter Ralph Chaplin writes "Solidarity Forever" for the march.

January 17th, 1962 - President Kennedy issues Executive Order 10988 guaranteeing federal employees the right to join unions and bargain collectively

January 25th, 1890 - United Mine Workers founded.

January 27th, 1850 - Birthdate of Samuel Gompers, first president and founder of AFL.

January 30th, 1919 - International Labor Organization founded.

...This Important Quote?

"Governments never lead; they follow progress. When the prison, stake, or scaffold can no longer silence the voice of the protesting minority, progress moves on a step, but not until then." –

Lucy Parsons

Well, now you know!!

Jeff Ewing

VPofMembershipCommunications

Notes from the D.C. Women's March

On Saturday, January 21, I marched in Washington, D.C. for women's rights: the rights of ALL women to be able to make their own medical choices, to receive equal healthcare, equal pay, equal consideration in our governmental institutions, to freedom of religion, equal rights in a court of law, and to protections from all of the other injustices that specifically befall women of color, Muslim women, trans women, and all others that are judged by their genitalia first.

When I had travelled to the capital at 10 am on January 20, the metro cars had been fairly empty, the exception being the anti-abortion flyers lining the seats, untouched. But not during the day of the Women's March.

On that day, we got lucky and a new metro train pulled up to the station; it was full by the time the doors closed. When we reached the capital, it was packed with people, making it difficult to even walk to the Mall, a stark contrast to the emptiness of the day before.

Entering at 4th and Constitution, the march had already filled across the Mall, almost to the location of the Bikers for Trump rally, which I could barely hear over the Women's March chants as we passed it later in the afternoon.

It took us nearly two hours to cross the Mall and get to the stage. By that time there were people lined up from the stage down Independence and all the way to the White House, not including the marchers in the

Mall and those already marching down Constitution Ave.

People could barely move, but everyone was there to support each other. When we started marching, it might have been chaos in the streets, but our voices were crystal clear.

Women were excited to be there and excited to march. To get here, we had to overcome problems of dissention between different groups, a problem that exists throughout the liberal, democratic masses. But through organization and communication, women and allies showed up. As the march ended, my cousin turned to me and asked, "So, what do we do now?"

Our presence was inspiring, overwhelming, and could be a sign of the political engagement to come.

Though we all have our own priorities, and we are often divided by the diversity of our opinions and beliefs, we cannot let this momentum, organization, and camaraderie end. We might have gone home, but our demands have not been met.

We need to ORGANIZE, and we cannot let this march be the end of this movement. It's up to us to continue the fight. One thing this march has taught me is that we CAN work together.

We have less than two years until the 2018 midterms... we must educate and we must organize!

Jessica Neafie
VP of Operations



(Photo credit: Jessica Neafie)

On Hope and Resistance in the Present Challenge

The Present Challenges

“When Fascism came into power, most people were unprepared, both theoretically and practically. They were unable to believe that man could exhibit such propensities for evil, such lust for power, such disregard for the rights of the weak, or such yearning for submission. Only a few had been aware of the rumbling of the volcano preceding the outbreak.”

-Erich Fromm (1900 - 1980)
Psychoanalyst

There are just too many opportunities - and an increasing number of them - to hide systemic, institutional wrongdoing behind legal veils, legal theories, and arbitrary exemptions. I hope that we can start to chip away at this, but it sure looks like society is still sliding in the opposite direction.

- Chelsea Manning (b. 1987)
Whistleblower

“The greatest mistake of the movement has been trying to organize a sleeping people around specific goals. You have to wake the people up first, then you’ll get action.”

- Malcolm X (1925 - 1965)
Minister, human rights activist.

It is in revolutionary periods that the culmination of previous trends and the beginning of new ones appear.

- C.L.R. James (1901 - 1989)
Historian, journalist, and socialist.

On Hope

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

- Martin Luther King Jr. (1929 - 1968)
Minister, civil rights leader

“I’m a pessimist because of intelligence, but an optimist because of will.”

- Antonio Gramsci (1891 - 1937)
Italian Marxist politician, theorist

“To face the realities of our lives is not a reason for despair—despair is a tool of your enemies. Facing the realities of our lives gives us motivation for action. For you are not powerless... You know why the hard questions must be asked. It is not altruism, it is self-preservation—survival.”

- Audre Lorde (1934 - 1992)
Womanist writer, civil rights activist

“If you assume that there’s no hope, you guarantee that there will be no hope. If you assume that there is an instinct for freedom, there are opportunities to change things, there’s a chance for you to contribute to making a better world. That’s your choice.”

- Noam Chomsky (b. 1928)
Linguist, political historian

“Growth is a painful process. If we’re ever going to collectively begin to grapple with the problems that we have collectively, we’re going to have to move back the veil and deal with each other on a more human level.”

- Wilma Mankiller (1945 - 2010)
First female Cherokee Nation chief

“Hope will never be silent.”
- Harvey Milk (1930 - 1978)
First openly gay elected politician



(Photo credit: Jessica Neafie)

On Hope... (cont)

On Resistance

“Protest is when I say I don’t like this. Resistance is when I put an end to what I don’t like. Protest is when I say I refuse to go along with this anymore. Resistance is when I make sure everybody else stops going along too.”

- Ulrike Marie Meinhof (1934 - 1976)
German left-wing militant

“Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.”

- Paulo Freire (1921 - 1997)
Brazilian educator and critical pedagogist

“If you are trying to transform a brutalized society into one where people can live in dignity and hope, you begin with the empowering of the most powerless. You build from the ground up.”

- Adrienne Rich (1929 - 2012)
American poet and radical feminist

“We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.”

- Elie Wiesel (1928 - 2016)
Nobel Laureate, writer, Holocaust survivor

“Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are people who want crops without ploughing the ground; they want rain without thunder and lightning; they want the ocean without the roar of its many waters. The struggle may be a moral one, or it may be a physical one, or it may be both. But it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

- Frederick Douglass (1818 - 1895)
African American abolitionist, orator, writer

“Justice is not a flexible tool. Unless we all do our part to ensure that justice is applied equally to all human beings, we are a party to its abuse. We must stand together to protect the rights of others.”

- Leonard Peltier (b. 1944)
Native American activist, American Indian Movement member

“Every day I get better at knowing that it is not a choice to be an activist; rather, it is the only way to hold on to the better parts of my human self. It is the only way I can live and laugh without guilt.”

- Staceyann Chin (b. 1972)
Spoken-word poet, LGBT rights activist

On Self-Care and Self-Change

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

- Audre Lorde (1934 - 1992)
Womanist writer, civil rights activist

“To make a revolution, people must not only struggle against existing institutions. They must make a philosophical/ spiritual leap and become more ‘human’ human beings. In order to change/transform the world, they must change/transform themselves.”

- Grace Lee Boggs (1915 - 2015)
Feminist activist and author

“One of the most vital ways we sustain ourselves is by building communities of resistance, places where we know we are not alone.”

- bell hooks (b. 1952)
Intersectional feminist author, theorist, activist



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

T.R.U.S.T. Caucus Request Regarding Workplace Harassment Issues

The GTFF T.R.U.S.T. Caucus has been informed of workplace harassment issues, and is collecting stories of experiences in response (which can be kept anonymous). The request is below:

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Dear members,

It continues to come to our attention that many GEs have and are experiencing workplace harassment at the University of Oregon. Often, GEs have sought resolutions to these issues but have received little to no support. The T.R.U.S.T. Caucus would like to support GEs experiencing workplace harassment in any way possible. We believe a start may be gathering stories (anonymous if preferred) of GEs who have experienced workplace harassment and what steps have or have not been taken to stop it from recurring. If you would like to share your experience(s) please email Larissa Petrucci at lpetrucci10@gmail.com.

Editor's Note: The following is an update from Hilary Hunt, our Graduate Families GE

Graduate Family Updates

Coinciding with the start of the new year, several initiatives to improve the experience of graduate families are underway at the Graduate School.

First, this year's new admissions materials highlight the experience of graduate families, putting admitted students in touch with the Graduate Family GE, childcare centers, and other resources from their first interaction with the university. Formerly, there was no outreach to students with children. The new survey and flyer, sent to students admitted for Fall 2017, will assist the Graduate School in serving student family needs before they even arrive on campus.

Second, the Family GE distributed a survey to grad families in late 2016, determining that the primary unmet need of UO grad families is the need for community and connection with other students with children. We are currently working on addressing that need by publicizing free university events on the Grad Families Listserv (see below) and coordinating student-hosted playgroups and meet-ups. Are you a graduate student with children? Would you like to be connected with others who have similarly-aged children? Email Hilary with your children's ages, genders, interests, your neighborhood, and ideas for what kind of meet-up or play-group you'd like to create at familyge@uoregon.edu. We'll connect you with other graduate students who have kids around the same age or live in the same neighborhood.

As always, grad families are encouraged to sign up for the Grad Families Listserv by sending an email to:

gradstudentfamilies-join@lists.uoregon.edu.

The listserv provides a biweekly emailed newsletter of resources, help, and free family-friendly events for grad families.

Hilary Hunt
Graduate Families GE

Some Post-Election Legal Resources

The Rights of Protesters

You have a constitutionally protected right to engage in peaceful protest in “traditional public forums” such as streets, sidewalks or parks. But in some cases the government can impose restrictions on this kind of activity by requiring permits. This is constitutional as long as the permit requirements are reasonable, and treat all groups the same no matter what the focus of the rally or protest.

The government cannot impose permit restrictions or deny a permit simply because it does not like the message of a certain speaker or group.

Generally, you have the right to distribute literature, hold signs, collect petition signatures, and engage in other similar activities while on public sidewalks or in front of government buildings as long as you are not disrupting other people, forcing passerby to accept leaflets or causing traffic problems.

Under the USA Patriot Act, non-US citizens who are not permanent residents can be investigated solely because of their First Amendment activities. Immigrants who choose to engage in a protest, march, or a demonstration should carry with them the telephone numbers of friends and relatives, as well as the telephone numbers of an immigration attorney or an immigrant advocacy organization.

[See Below]

Limitations on Speech

The First Amendment does not protect speech that is combined with the violation of established laws such as trespassing, disobeying or interfering with a lawful order by a police officer. Also unprotected are malicious statements about public officials and obscene speech.

Although an inflammatory speaker cannot be punished for merely arousing an audience, a speaker can be arrested for incitement if he/she advocates imminent violence or specifically provokes people to commit unlawful actions.

Limitations on Action

Demonstrators who engage in civil disobedience – defined as non-violent unlawful action as a form of protest – are not protected under the First Amendment.

People who engage in civil disobedience should be prepared to be arrested or fined as part of their protest activity.

If you endanger others while protesting, you can be arrested. A protest that blocks vehicular or pedestrian traffic is illegal without a permit.

You do not have the right to block a building entrance or physically harass people. The general rule is that free speech activity cannot take place on private property, including shopping malls, without consent of the property owner. You do not have the right to remain on private property after being told to leave by the owner.

(Source: <http://www.aclu-or.org/content/know-your-rights-your-rights-oregon>)

Resources for Immigrants:

- Immigration Advocates Network’s national directory of more than 950 free or low cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states:
<https://www.immigrationlawhelp.org>.
- The immigration courts’ list of lawyers and organizations that provide free legal services: justice.gov/eoir/list-pro-bono-legal-service-providers-map.
 - National Immigrant Justice Center allows you to schedule a legal consultation by phone (312-660-1370) or email (immigrantlegaldefense@heartlandalliance.org).
 - United We Dream’s hotline: 1-844-363-1423.
 - At <https://www.adminrelief.org/legalhelp/>, there’s a search engine that allows you to type in a zip code and get a list of all the legal services near you.

(Source: www.informedimmigrant.com)

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, commit 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!