



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!

Monday, Feb. 4 - Friday, Feb. 8
AFT-OR Convention Delegate Election
GTFFF Office

Saturday, Feb. 9
CGE RA Organizing
Contact treasurer@gtff.net for details

Union Night w/ Emerald City Roller Girls
Lane Events Center, 6 p.m.

Thurs., Feb. 14 - Sat., Feb. 16
Social Justice, Real Justice Conference
Erb Memorial Union

Tuesday, Feb. 19
Executive Council Meeting
203 Chapman Hall, 6-8 p.m.

Friday, Feb. 22 - Saturday, Feb. 23
LESS-T at UO Parents' Weekend
Contact president@gtff.net for details



GTFs and friends beat the winter blues with weekly flag football games. See pg. 3

For GTF diagnosed with MS, changes to healthcare plan prove invaluable

To the UO GTFFF and to GTFs at the University of Oregon:

I write this letter to express my profound gratitude for recent changes made to our GTF healthcare plan. In writing, I thank both the GTFFF, for fighting for these changes on behalf people like me, and to my fellow GTFs, who have sacrificed some benefits in order for people like me to have access to more affordable coverage. Not only have these changes had a profound effect on my life, they have given me faith in our union's ability to fight for better working conditions and benefits for us all.

Until September 2012, whenever a fellow GTF talked about how great our healthcare coverage was, I would always reply, "Well, only if

you're healthy."

This is why I used to respond in this way:

I was beginning a Master's degree at UO when I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. I had a GTF position, but our plan at that time included a 30% co-pay for all prescription medications, including specialty drugs.

My monthly prescription medication was (and still is) \$3500 a month, uninsured. I could not afford to make monthly 30% payments of \$1050. As my friends can attest, I tried many different ways to lower my monthly payments, including visits to the National MS Society, as well as pleading sessions with the par- ... *cont'd pg. 5*



Letter from the President: Cast your vote for your AFT-OR representatives!

Our Winter GMM on January 11th was a great success and much was accomplished, including the nomination of delegates for the American Federation of Teachers of Oregon (AFT-Oregon) convention in April. Due to our membership growth, we are allowed to send up to 25 delegates to Sunriver, Ore. in April to represent the GTFF on the state level.

This year is particularly important for several reasons. First, it is an election year and delegates will be voting for the next president of AFT-Oregon as well as the new executive council. Second, the GTFF intends to submit a resolution drafted by the League of Educators and Students Slashing Tuition (LESS-T) advocating lower tuition and the allocation of more state

funds towards education.

YOU get to vote for who will be representing you in this delegation. You've all now received post-card notifications of the election, which will be held at the GTFF office (870 E. 13th Ave) beginning Monday, February 4th to Friday, February 8th. So come and choose from the many that have been nominated to help determine who has the honor of representing you and your union in Sunriver.

It is important that you swing by the office to cast your vote.

And also get some free candy.

*Judith Lechner
President*

German and Scandinavian

Save the Date: Great Cover-Up V

Do you play an instrument? Want to showcase your talent for a good cause? Then you should come participate in this year's Great Cover-Up!

The Great Cover-Up, now in its fifth year, is an annual fundraiser organized by the GTFF to collect money and food for Food for Lane County.

Each year, GTFs and their friends organize themselves into cover bands, about a dozen in all, and converge to perform in a fun-filled night at Luckey's Club Cigar Store.

Last year, we had 13 bands perform for over 300 of their friends, raising roughly \$2000 in the process. Let's see if we can do even better this year!

This year's Great Cover-Up V will be held on the evening of May 10. This may seem like a long way off, but it's never too early to start getting the band together. So recruit some friends, bust out some instruments, and start jammin' on your favorite artists!

More details about the event will follow in weeks to come, but please feel free to direct any questions to Ian Pilgrim at pilgrim@uoregon.edu.

GET YOUR DISCOUNTED ROLLER DERBY TICKETS!!!

The GTFF and United Academics are teaming up for a solidarity event at the Emerald City Roller Girls' Bout on Saturday, Feb. 9th.

Get your \$10 tickets from Amber at the GTFF office!

Those that volunteer for the CGE RA Organizing event get an additional \$2 off!

The bout will be held at 6 p.m. (doors at 5) at the Lane Events Center

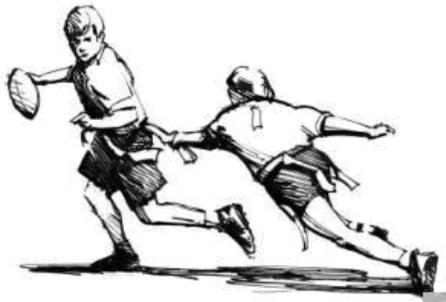
*Want to contribute to your union newsletter? Submissions of all sorts are welcome!
Contact GTFFnewsletter@googlegroups.com for more information!*



Need a study break? Come join us for GTF & Friends Flag Football!

Need some athletic stress relief? A little extra weekend exercise? Just want to meet more grad students?

GTF Flag Football is now more than a year-old tradition of weekly Saturday afternoon fun. No experience is necessary! Fellow GTFs from Philosophy, Physics, Music, Math, Environmental Studies, and Counseling Psychology have been playing completely unserious, good old-fashioned football for the last five quarters, and we welcome you to join us!



We meet weekly on Saturdays at 3 p.m. on one of the two northernmost turf fields on the east side of the Rec center. If you're interested in coming out to call some creative plays (past successes include the classic "Statue of Liberty" and the brand new "Dosey Doe"), work on your quarterback arm (ten-foot throws are highly encouraged), or just have a blast running around with a great group of grad students, stop by on a Saturday or email trh@uoregon.edu to receive weekly reminders.

Hope to see you there,

*Tyler Harvey
Steward
Physics*

Inquiry: A Poem

Who does not feel like a drop of rain
smacked, swiped, and skidding on a
smooth window pane?
How can one live without growing
frail
with wild winds whipping at the
threadbare sail?
When does the tree at last cease to
grow
and buckle beneath the burden of
snow?
Where can one go no longer to long?
Nowhere: together we all sing this
song.

*Jacob Barto
VP Operations
German and Scandinavian*

Seeking presenters for UO Climate Change Symposium

Do you do research related to the environment? Come talk about your work at the 2nd Annual UO Climate Change Research Symposium on April 10th!

Too often we segment our research by department, unaware of what our neighbors in other faculties are doing. Our goal is to bring together a diverse group of people to present and discuss their work related to climate change—all disciplines welcome. Got climate change related art? Going to study indigenous peoples and climate justice? Writing a book on the melting ice? Examining the change

in precipitation and how it affects wine in Oregon? Got a law brief on

"Our goal is to bring together a diverse group of people to present and discuss... climate change.... This is the place to share your research."

international negotiations? This is the place to share your research.

Last year was a success—we're

hoping that with your participation we can make it an even bigger event. We're looking to get a good cross-section of presenters—so please share this information with professors and undergrads. Participant registration forms need to be in by February 18th, abstracts by April 1st.

Check out climatechange.uoregon.edu for a participation form, or e-mail henin@uoregon.edu for any inquiries.

*Thibaud Henin
Member
Political Science*

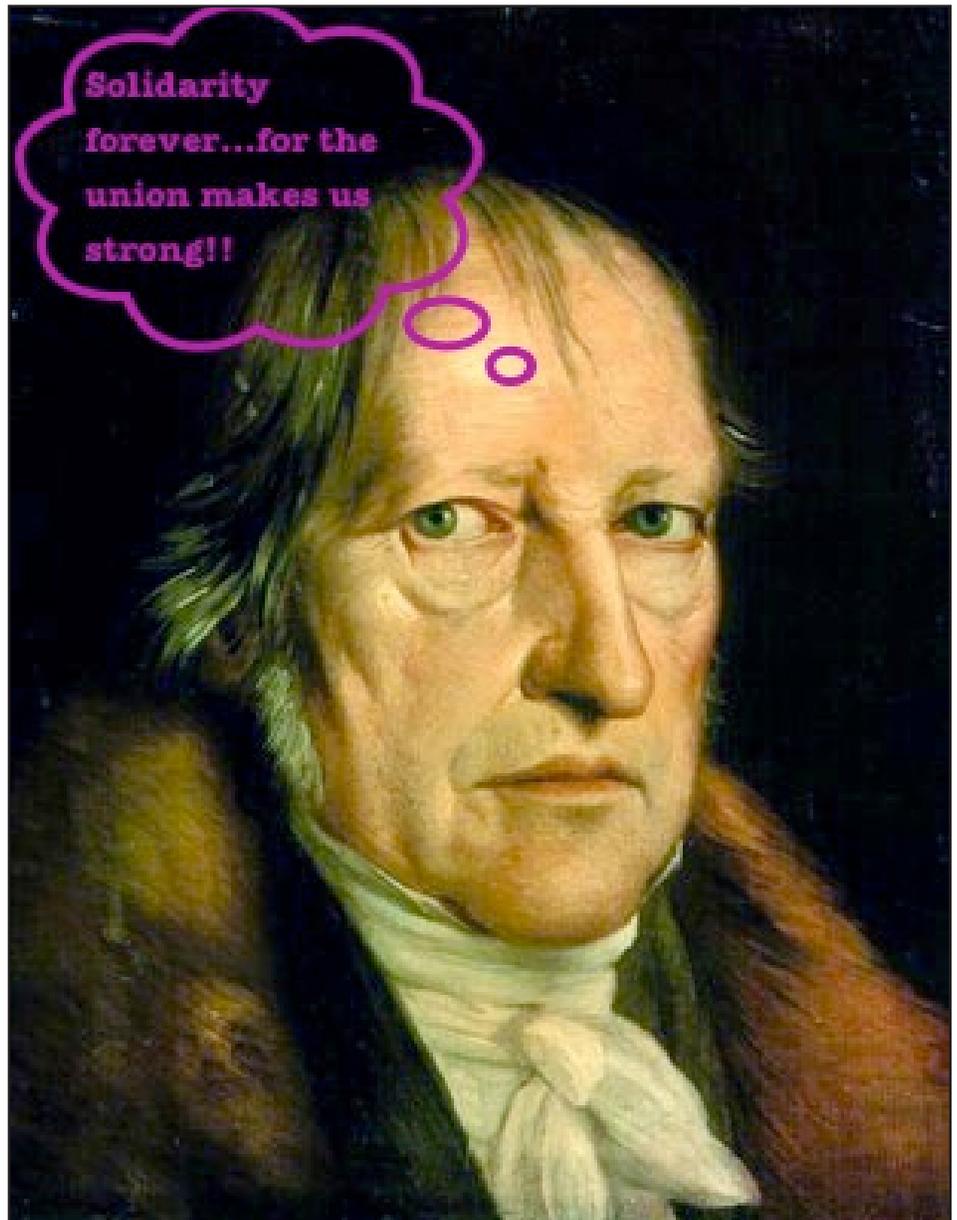
Exploring the ethical space of our union: Hegelian Organizing

In the Philosophy of Right, Hegel remarks, “Within the ethical, individuals actually possess their own essence, their inner universality.” Reading passages like this leads me to reflect on the relation our union holds to its members, as well as the relation they hold to it. Allow me to say a bit more.

For many of us, the GTFF is an ethical space. This is not because all those involved in the union are especially ethical people, though many of them indeed seem to be. Nor is it because the union as an organization assumes especially ethical positions in the various struggles into which it enters, though it does largely seem to do so.

Rather, the GTFF is an ethical space because of the curious relation in which it stands to its members. For, when an individual member takes part in a union activity or event, or takes charge of some decision in his or her role as a member of the executive council, executive board or bargaining team, he or she acts ethically simply by virtue of acting as part of the union. For the union is that space which affords these actions actuality, and in that they achieve ethical status.

Put in slightly different Hegelian terms, the union is the whole of which each of these actions are merely moments. This would seem to subordinate the individual member to the union-whole of which they are a part. But, to return to the Hegel line quoted above, this is not exactly the case. For in being a part of the larger ethical whole, the individual gains something priceless: “their own



essence, their inner universality.”

Though it would probably be an overstatement to say that the GTFF is the essence and inner universality of every GTF on campus, I believe it would be fair to say that those GTFs who take active part in the union (qua ethical space) achieve something essential for themselves, as well as activate a dimension of themselves with truly universal scope.

This month, I will help lead an organizing drive to sign up new members from statistically under-represented departments. And as I do so, I might just take Hegel along with me—for if the benefits of participation Hegel advertizes are not enough to win over new members, I am at a loss as to what would be.

David Alexander Craig
VP Organizing
Philosophy

GTFF, undergraduates continue to fight for lower tuition

The League of Educators and Students Slashing Tuition (LESS-T) has been meeting regularly since September organizing to freeze and lower tuition at the University of Oregon.

Composed of members from the GTFF as well as dedicated undergraduates, the group has several exciting upcoming actions:

- Proposing a resolution to the AFT-Oregon convention
- Seeking legislative action in the Oregon House of Representatives
- Petitioning the UO
- Participating in the Social Jus-



tice Real Justice conference February 14-16

- Talking to parents at the February 22-23 UO Parents' Weekend

The group currently meets Monday afternoons and evenings. If you're interested in becoming involved with the group and/or

any of the listed activities, please contact Judith Lechner (president@gtff.net) or Dana Rognlie (member.communications@gtff.net).

*Dana Rognlie
VP Membership Communications
Philosophy*

Cont'd from pg. 1: Healthcare plan benefits all members

ticular drug company and PacificSource.

I am now in a Ph.D. program at UO, and for the 2 years of my Master's degree and the first two years of my Ph.D. I made monthly and sometimes bi-monthly trips to California to obtain care through my parents' health coverage. The costs of airfare (\$300 per month) and the costs of being on my parents' plan (\$450 per month) were still less than the monthly co-pays I'd have had to make in Oregon.

During this time, I lived in fear that I would suffer a serious relapse (e.g., blindness or paralysis) and would not be able to receive care in time to prevent permanent disability. I also worried that I would suddenly be dropped from my California coverage. And there were

many times I thought of quitting my program and moving back to California, where I'd have access to healthcare I could afford.

But perhaps worst of all, I knew there were other GTFs in similar situations who did not have access to their parent's healthcare plans. I have no idea how they managed to pay for their care.

Our new healthcare plan has changed all that now. The significant reduction in co-pays for specialty medications (now a maximum \$300 out of pocket per month) has enabled me to set up healthcare in Oregon. I am now able to afford my prescription medications without getting on a plane. I do not live in fear of disability due to limited access to care. And best of all, other GTFs with chronic illnesses—or

who will become chronically ill during school—will not have to contemplate leaving graduate school, forgoing treatment, or paying \$12,600+ annually for prescription medications.

So now when a fellow GTF mentions how great our healthcare coverage is, I say, "Yes, for everyone!"

On behalf of graduate students living with chronic illnesses, thank you. To the GTFF and to my fellow GTFs, your willingness to advocate for these changes and make sacrifices on our behalf has made us feel that we belong in graduate school at the University of Oregon too.

With gratitude,

*"Hope Wright"
Member*

GTFs ironically invade park to remove unnatural species



On a brisk and rainy Saturday morning, a handful of GTFs braved the elements and headed to Alton Baker Park to volunteer their time removing invasive ivy species.

For the past few years, Park Host Erin Lamb, along with the local nonprofit organization Nearby Nature, has been spearheading projects dedicated to the eradication of harmful invasive species in Alton Baker Park while disturbing other plant life as little as possible.

Although the successes of these projects are often subtle, the ecological dividends are abundant to a keen eye: the repopulation of numerous native plants and wild flowers encourages the restoration of natural habitats and fauna,

fostering a healthier environment for Alton Baker Park visitors to enjoy.

The GTFs were joined by 70 bleary-eyed UO Environmental Science students who were also ready to get to work. While densely woven thickets—like unmatted-plush-'70s-carpet-beneath-a-plastic-covered-couch thick—of English Ivy covering the forest floor were ruthlessly extricated, Himalayan Blackberry bushes were lopped off without mercy (we've got Luther Burbank to thank for that).

Oh, and let's not forget about the trash pick-up—most of which was littered along the footpath to Autzen Stadium.

A really big Thank You to Nearby

Nature, the Park Host, the ENVS students, and to the GTFs who volunteered their time! If you aren't familiar with Alton Baker Park and its incredible natural treasures, go check it out—it's just across the river and has many trails for running, walking, biking, and exploring nature.

Also, if you are interested in other volunteering opportunities, in either Alton Baker Park or for other GTFF functions, please contact Nearby Nature (nearbynature.org) or Sarah Praskievicz (external.relations@gtff.net), respectively.

*Scott Maguffin
Steward
Geology*

Ruby and Giggles' Kitchen Korner: Carnitas with Pineapple Salsa

Super tasty. Really hard to mess up. Difficult to write full sentences about. Eat in tortillas, sandwiches, or with a big spoon. Serves four.

Carnitas

1 tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
Two medium yellow onions, julienned
1/4 cup tomato paste
1/3 cup apple cider vinegar
Juice of one lemon
Juice of one orange
One (roughly) 3 pound pork shoulder roast
1 cup of water
Salt and pepper to taste

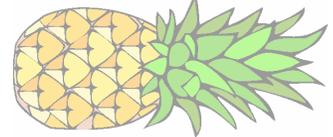


Combine onions, oil, and a large pinch of salt in a Dutch oven or oven-safe pot. Sauté over medium heat until the onions are just translucent. Add tomato paste, and heat until it darkens slightly. Add lemon juice, orange juice, vinegar, and water, scraping the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to free any stuck-on brown bits. Set the pork shoulder in the pot. Cover it. (Ruby thinks you should brown the meat before cooking, but he's fussy.) Braise in a 350° F oven

for 3.5 hours or so, until the pork shreds easily. Once finished, use a fork and knife to shred. Finally, mix the pulled pork together with the onions, tomato broth, and rendered pork fat. Some will have you believe that you should discard the fat from braised dishes, but they're wrong. Fat is delicious. Salt and pepper to taste.

Pineapple Salsa

1/2 pineapple, skin and core removed, cut into half inch cubes
Juice of 3 limes
1/2 large red onion, finely diced
2 jalapeños, seeds and stems removed, finely diced
1 habanero, seeds and stems removed, finely diced (optional)
1/4 cup cilantro leaves, finely chopped
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
White vinegar, to taste



Combine pineapple, lime juice, onion, jalapeño, habanero (if using), cilantro, and salt. Let sit for half an hour. Taste. If necessary, season with vinegar. The salsa should be refreshing, but not overly sour.

GETTING INVOLVED IN YOUR UNION!

Want to make a difference in the GTFF? Consider applying for one of these officer positions!

ORGANIZING

Work to increase the level of involvement and activism in the GTFF; work to organize members and coordinate campaigns

organizing@gtff.net

POLITICAL EDUCATION

Educates and advocates around political issues affecting GTFF's membership; forges solidarity with other unions

political.education@gtff.net

BARGAINING

Engage in contract negotiations with the Administration by doing research, preparing proposals, and strategizing

president@gtff.net

GRIEVANCES

Helps enforce the GTFF contract by stewarding employees through the grievance procedure and providing contract education

grievances@gtff.net

COMMUNICATIONS

Ensure that information is available to GTFF members through newsletters, the GTFF website, and other media

member.communications@gtff.net

Or, join a caucus with fellow grads!

**INTERNATIONAL CAUCUS, DISABILITIES CAUCUS,
PARENTS CAUCUS, WOMENS CAUCUS,
QUEER CAUCUS, STUDENTS OF COLOR CAUCUS,
AGE DIVERSITY CAUCUS**



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!