

insight

Nov/Dec
2018
Vol 23
No. 6



A NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS & FRIENDS

OF PROTEC 17 (Formerly PTE Local 17)



PTE17 is now PROTEC17!



On the Cover:

Regional Executive Committee (REC) delegates from the Portland Chapter pose for a photo with PROTEC17's Portland-based staff - Union Representative Rachel Whiteside and Research Director Elliot Levin (front) - at the Oct. 20 meeting. Read more about the REC and see more photobooth fun on p. 6!

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PROTEC17 donates \$12,000 to food banks

This holiday season, PROTEC17 donated \$12,000 to food banks across Washington and Oregon to help people in need in the communities where our members live and work. The donations, approved by the Executive Board, come in lieu of holiday cards, per tradition for the last several years. We are incredibly proud that we are able to support this important need. And thank you to all of our members who are able to give so generously to their charities of choice throughout the year!

insight

Amy Bowles, Interim Managing Editor; Deidre Girard, Editor Insight (ISSN 1093-1694) is the official publication of Professional and Technical Employees, Local 17. Insight is published bi-monthly by Local 17, 2900 Eastlake Avenue East, Suite 300, Seattle, WA 98102. Periodicals postage paid at Seattle, Washington. Postmaster: Send address change to: Insight - 2900 Eastlake Ave. E., Ste. 300, Seattle, WA 98102-3012. www.ptel17.org

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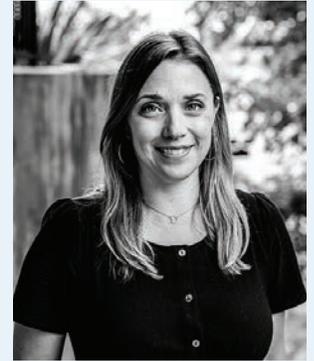
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Deidre Girard
Communications Director,
Insight Editor

What a year!

I don't know about you, but 2018 was a bit of a whirlwind for me. At times, it felt like I was getting swept up in a funnel cloud, with no control over where I would land. And at other times, I felt like I was sliding down a rainbow, excited about all of the possibilities to come.

When you're in the thick of things - especially something difficult - it's hard to take the lessons you're learning to heart. But now that the year is winding down, I'm getting contemplative, and upon reflection, this year was just plain amazing.

In our union, the staff and members came together in ways I would never have imagined. The Executive Board went through a lot of change - including the addition of newly elected Trustee Sarah Spotts (p. 5) - with the end result being that we have a really good-hearted group at the helm of this organization. The Regional Executive Committee (REC), our policy-making body, also demonstrated how dedicated they are to the success of our union at an atypical four meetings this year, the most recent of which is summarized on p. 6. And we hired some awesome people in 2018, like our new organizers Melissa and Alisha (p. 7), who saw how incredibly unified we all were under pressure, and decided they wanted to be a part of our team.

From my little corner of the office, I was able to accomplish some major professional goals, too - namely leading our union through a rebranding process to prepare us for our next century. It was especially challenging and rewarding work. I hope you like the refreshed look of *Insight*, and are as excited as I am about the rollout of our new and improved website in January (p. 5). As icing on the cake, I also won a few awards from the International Labor Communicators Association (p. 12)! (My personal life was pretty eventful this year, too, but I won't get into that... :))

I'm so grateful for all of the twists and turns in life, and for all the lessons that we learn from them. I wish you all a peaceful holiday season and a 2019 filled with positive growth and adventure.

In unity,

Kitsap Health ratifies 2019-21 contract



PROTEC17's Kitsap Public Health bargaining team reached a Tentative Agreement with the District on Nov. 7, and ratified their new 2019-21 contract on Nov. 21.

The new contract provides for a three percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) beginning in 2019, and 2.5 percent COLA increases in each of the following two years. These COLA increases represent the largest increases this group of workers has seen in the past ten years.

Another key win for the membership proved to be maintaining the status quo with respect to the medical insurance premiums split with the District. The member survey revealed that holding the line on medical insurance premiums was one of the highest priorities – and the bargaining team delivered.

Other wins include increasing the frequency of reimbursement for the purchase of raingear from once every three years to once every two years and removing the cap on general leave accrual.

While PROTEC17 Research Director Elliot Levin's market data made a compelling argument for COLA increases, truly, it was the hard work and dedication of the membership to the mission of the District – protecting the health of the Kitsap community – that made this contract possible.

A special thanks to the bargaining team for all of their hard work: Laura Ciulla, Kimberly Jones, Susana Prewitt, and Betti Ridge; Anna Gonzales and Steve Brown served as alternates. ■

King County members vote 'YES' on Total Compensation package for 2019-20



Our King County members will have a brighter 2019 thanks to the new contract for 2019-20!

As members of the Coalition of Unions, over 6,000 employees at King County – including more than 2,000 PROTEC17 members – leverage their collective power in order to get the best wages, hours and working conditions.

Through the Coalition's Total Compensation bargaining – which secures compensation items such as general wage increases and insurance coverage – PROTEC17 members will get a four percent wage increase in 2019, a \$500 bonus in 2020, as well as a 1.5 percent increase on January 1, 2020 and a 1.5 percent increase on July 1, 2020.

The County also agreed to cover 90-day long-term disability for all employees, increase the vision reimbursement, create a voluntary short-term disability plan, and restore the early retirement insurance subsidy to ensure that retirees that do not yet qualify for Medicare get the COBRA rate. The Coalition was also able to secure wins at individual tables including range increases for several classifications in Transit and Public Health.

All bargaining units will receive retroactive pay to January 1, 2019 once the contracts are passed by the King County Council.

PROTEC17 member representatives from each bargaining unit were integral to this contract negotiation. Thank you to the team for their hard work -- Peg Taglianetti and Steve Ford represented members in IT; Ross Pettit represented members in the 17F Supervisors group; Hossein Barahimi represented members in the Transit P&T bargaining unit; Jake Jacobovitch represented members in the Transit Superintendent bargaining unit; James Kost represented members in the Transit Chiefs bargaining unit; Collette Fidecaro represented members in the Transit Admins bargaining unit; Heather Eliason, Jennell Hicks and Jennifer Johnson represented members in Public Health; Mark Foote represented members in the 17M bargaining unit; and Mark Mitchell represented members in the 17A bargaining unit. Congratulations on a job well-done! ■



The King County Coalition of Unions reached an agreement on the Total Compensation package for union members in Nov. 2018. Members ratified the agreement in December.

Our new PROTEC17 website is set to launch in January 2019!



All this year, we have been working with Watson Creative – a design and branding firm based in Portland, OR – on a fresh new look and feel for our union. As covered in the last issue of *Insight*, we undertook this project to better attract new public employees, who will need to choose to join us in the post-*Janus* world that makes union membership optional.

Another reason for the rebranding was to make vital updates to our website, which had become increasingly outdated in recent years. And now, we're just about ready to launch the new site!

Starting in January, when you visit pte17.org, you will be redirected to our new site – **protec17.org**. Please be sure to update your bookmarks!

As you can see from the photo above, the website is going to look very different. You'll still find individual member pages with your contracts, Stewards, and Chapter information, but you will also find more



union-wide news, events, photos and history. We will also be prominently featuring a 'Join' button, which will help us get new hires signed up for membership more easily.

The look of our emails will be updated, too, to match the PROTEC17 brand. We will be switching to a new email system (MailChimp) that better syncs with the website and our new database. Over time, we will be changing our emails to the

@protec17.org suffix. If you stop seeing our emails, try checking your junk mail folder and marking our emails as safe so that you'll receive future correspondence.

Along with the new website comes an expanded member benefits program, which will be highlighted online. Watch for an email (using the new system and template!) in the coming weeks with more information on our new professional development fund and other discounts.

We know that there have been a lot of changes at our organization this year, and this is one we're really excited about! Please bear with us as we make these improvements. There will likely be hiccups along the way, but the hope is that the end result will provide you with tools and services that exceed your expectations.

If you have questions about the rebrand, please contact our Communications Director Deidre Girard at 800-783-0017 ext. 130 or deidre@pte17.org. ■

City of Portland member elected to Executive Board

After ballots for the Executive Board election were counted on Nov. 14, Sarah Spotts was pronounced a new PROTEC17 Trustee for a three-year term.

An active union member in the City of Portland chapter, Spotts had been appointed to fill the Trustee position that had been left vacant after some Board transitions over the summer.

Since becoming a member in 2013, Spotts has served as a Steward, a Regional Executive Committee (REC) delegate, a Chapter officer, and a contract bargaining team member. Most recently, she led a hugely successful effort to improve the vacation leave accrual rates for employees at the City.

Spotts has also been a strong advocate for having Portland representation on the PROTEC17 Executive Board, as their Chapter makes up more than ten percent



PROTEC17 Trustee Sarah Spotts

of the overall membership.

But beyond just representing her Chapter, Spotts is committed to PROTEC17 as a

whole, and doing more to promote union membership and improving working conditions for all members.

In her candidate statement, she said: "As an appointed Trustee thus far, I have asked tough questions and, at times, pushed the status quo. This ensures that we reach the best decisions for our union and that we always try to improve."

In this election, Spotts ran against a formidable opponent -- Darren Wilson, an active member at the City of Seattle. Thank you to both candidates for their leadership and willingness to serve!

As for Spotts, she is excited about the future of our union, including the rebranding and all of the other initiatives on the horizon.

"PROTEC17 is celebrating 100 years, and I look forward to helping lead at the start of the next 100 years!" ■

Regional Executive Committee (REC) celebrates PROTEC17's 100th anniversary and works to hire next Executive Director

Delegates of our Regional Executive Committee (REC) gathered at the Teamsters Hall in Tukwila, Wash. on Sat., Oct. 20 for the annual fall meeting. This meeting was a special one, as our union celebrated 100 years of being a champion for workers' rights, and revealed a sneak peek at our new PROTEC17 brand.

Nearly 90 people were on hand to conduct the business of our union, to connect with their fellow members from across the region, as well as to reminisce over a historic slideshow of images from our last century, have fun in the photobooth, and enjoy some PROTEC17 cake.

The meeting - themed 'Looking Forward' - was lead by PROTEC17 President Hossein Barahimi who reflected on our past, and welcomed a new century of unionism. He also congratulated the room, full of some of our most dedicated members, on the incredible work they've done

during 2018 - one of our most challenging years yet, given the Supreme Court's decision in the *Janus* case and other internal struggles.

Despite the challenging year, Interim Co-Executive Directors Amy Bowles and Denise Cobden spoke about the many positive initiatives that have been happening at PROTEC17 that are revolutionizing our union in preparation for the next 100 years, including installing a new database with better tools to assist our members, building an enhanced member benefit and rewards program, and revamping our look and website in order to attract new members and to help current members access the information they need. They also discussed how well our union has fared since the *Janus* decision made membership optional, with only a handful of opt-outs.

PROTEC17's Communications Director Deidre Girard recapped this year's rebranding process for the REC, which

had approved of the project in 2017, and presented a sneak peek at the new logo, colors, and website, which will launch in January (see related story on p. 5). The reveal was met with a lot of positive feedback and excitement.

The REC also continued to work on their search for our next Executive Director, including a discussion of the job description and forming a hiring committee. The committee will be comprised of all members of the Executive Board plus six REC Delegates, per the constitution. They anticipate having a new director by the March REC meeting.

Delegates also heard from the two candidates who were running for the Executive Board (see story on page. 5), and had time to ask questions and share ideas for future initiatives.

To see more photos from the photobooth, visit our (old) Facebook page: www.facebook.com/PTE17. ■



REC delegates celebrate the 100th anniversary of PROTEC17 and the grand unveiling of our new look in the photobooth at the October meeting!



Q&A with our new Union Organizers!

In October, PROTEC17 hired two new Union Organizers – Melissa Mafua and Alisha Gregory-Davis – who both come to us from SEIU 925 where they worked a combined 20 years.

Growing up in White Center, Wash., Mafua was taught that if you see an injustice happening and you don't speak up, it's as if you committed the injustice yourself. It was that core belief that led her to become an active member in her first union (UFCW 21) at the age of 15. By age 24, Mafua joined the staff at UFCW, and a few years later, she joined SEIU 925 where she gained valuable experience with Public Sector unions and working in a Right-to-Work environment. All total, Mafua has 26 years of union experience.

Gregory-Davis, also a native of Washington state, brings over 19 years of public sector work experience and 10 years of union organizing experience to PROTEC17. As a former Wash. state employee, she understood the power of her union and how she could make a difference in the lives of her co-workers and the community by being an active member. Her union experience started as a member of her SEIU bargaining team, then she later served as an executive board member and member political organizer. Most recently at SEIU 925, Gregory-Davis worked as a staff political organizer, getting members involved in various political campaigns in Washington and throughout the country.

PROTEC17 is excited to have the energy and experience that Mafua and Gregory-Davis bring to our staff, and are excited about the work they plan to do to get members involved and to expand worker power in our union. We sat down with both of them to talk about their plans and why having an organized membership is important.



PROTEC17's new organizers: Melissa Mafua (left) and Alisha Gregory-Davis (right).

The strongest union is a union that has members who will stick by each other and fight for what's right, no matter what.

What exactly is a Union Organizer?

A Union Organizer is a person who has a strong emphasis on the importance of personal contact and relationship building. Organizers focus their efforts on helping union members act on their own behalf, rather than simply offering them services. This allows members to take ownership of their union by being more active participants.

Why do we need Organizers?

PROTEC17 is operating in a new environment since the *Janus* decision by the U.S.

Supreme Court made union membership in the public sector optional. In order to maintain the integrity of our contracts, our focus needs to shift to members taking on more active roles in their union, thus creating a sense of Union Pride throughout our bargaining units, chapters, and union-wide.

What projects have you been working on so far?

We have been working on revamping our new employee orientations, signing members up for whom we don't have a membership card on file, identifying leaders throughout our union, and identifying areas for growth and involvement opportunities.

What makes a strong union?

A strong union membership lives by the motto "You hurt one of us, you hurt all of us!" It's only when members truly understand that this is their union and that it will only work when everyone gets involved, that we become the strongest union we can possibly be. The strongest union is a union that has members that will stick by each other and fight for what's right, no matter what.

How can members help strengthen our union?

Get involved in some capacity! You bring something special to the table that no one else can: YOU! Everyone has skills and experience to contribute -- they just need to be plugged into their unique gifts. As organizers, we're trained to recognize people's gifts and help them harness their unique talents and strengths. If you'd like to get more involved, feel free to contact us anytime – melissa@pte17.org and alisha@pte17.org! ■

Our new website launches in January! www.protec17.org

WSDOT members keep our roads moving with state-of-the-art traffic management center

After years working as a video editor at one of the local news stations in the Pacific Northwest, Chad Ross was laid off. This was, in part, because the big corporation behind the news outlet was very anti-union and felt they could bring in cheaper non-union labor.

Ross had been a member of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and knew the value of having a union to back him up. While he was upset about the mistreatment at his former job, upon reflection, he's been really happy with the new direction his career has taken.

In May 2014, Ross was hired as a Traffic Safety Systems Operator – which merged into the Transportation Technician classification a few years ago – in the Northwest Region Transportation Management Center (TMC) at the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). His years of video editing skills were a natural fit for the TMC where cam-

eras and data are monitored to keep roads in the I-5 corridor moving.

About three years ago, the TMC moved into its new facility with dozens more computer monitors and screens and the state-of-the-art equipment necessary to keep track of the growing number of cars on the road. This includes things like sensors on the highway that monitor occupancy and volume, and a computerized system that switches directions for the express lanes – an operation that used to take more than twice as long when done manually. At the TMC, WSDOT has also harnessed the power of social media to keep people informed of road work, traffic and accidents throughout the day.

When asked about a typical day, Ross said it's hard to describe – that's because everyday is different.

“This work is never boring,” he said. “It’s fun coming in every day not knowing what’s going to happen, but being prepared for anything to happen.”

While the TMC is always bustling, it reaches its busy peak during the morning

commute hours between 6:45 and 9:15 a.m. During their shifts, Ross and his fellow PROTEC17 colleagues – who staff the TMC around the clock – respond to emergency calls and connect to the Washington State Patrol and other incident response teams, as necessary. They control the opening and direction change of the express lanes. From the cameras, they also assess road maintenance needs, like potholes and guardrail replacement, and broadcast roadwork information to the system which connects to phone mapping applications that people use everyday.

Right now, Ross is training to be a Transportation Tech III – a job pathway that allows members to learn new skills and advance their careers. Also, in the new 2019-21 PROTEC17 contract with the State of Washington that goes into effect on July 1, 2019, all Transportation Techs will be receiving additional assignment pay due to their increased job responsibilities, which have changed tremendously in the last few years. Ross is really grateful for his union contract.

“One of the best things about working at WSDOT is the people. There are so many different backgrounds, cultures, experiences and ages represented here. I really enjoy getting to know everyone.”

Chad Ross,
Local 17 member and
Transportation Tech II, WSDOT



PROTEC17 member Chad Ross at the WSDOT TMC in Shoreline, WA.

FEATURES



“This work is never boring. It’s fun coming in every day not knowing what’s going to happen, but being prepared for anything to happen.”

Chad Ross, Local 17 member and Transportation Tech II, WSDOT

“With a union, you’re stronger and have more power and influence over how things are done than you would as an individual worker,” said Ross.

Another exciting opportunity in the TMC is a new PROTEC17-represented position created to monitor the new State Route (SR) 99 tunnel that will cut under Seattle, replacing the viaduct starting in February 2019. WSDOT members are really excited about this highly anticipated feat of transportation engineering.

But despite all of the cool tools and engineering marvels that surround members at the TMC, Ross can easily say what he likes best about his job.

“One of the best things about working at WSDOT is the people,” he said. “There are so many different backgrounds, cultures, experiences and ages represented here. I really enjoy getting to know everyone.” ■



WSDOT members at the Shoreline Transportation Management Center monitor over 100 cameras and multiple computer screens to keep our cars moving on the increasingly busy roads along the I-5 corridor.

Oregon election outcomes and preview of 2019 session



PROTEC 17 staff Elliot Levin (left) and Portland Chapter President Paul Cone (second from left) with fellow Union members and new Councilmember JoAnn Hardesty (fourth from left). *Photo courtesy David Young, Portland Jobs with Justice.*

The November 6 election provided several positive outcomes for our City of Portland members, and we look forward to entering into the new year with a stronger, labor-friendly position in Oregon politics.

Jo Ann Hardesty -- who PROTEC17 endorsed -- won a rare contest for an open seat on Portland's City Council, and we look forward to working with her in coming years.

"We believe that Ms. Hardesty's voice will help shape City policies to better match the ideals of our community," said Portland Chapter President Paul Cone.

"Her support for our recent vacation leave increase and her selection of a labor advocate for her Chief of Staff show that she will make an excellent ally for Portland's working families."

Additionally, several potentially problematic and harmful statewide ballot measures were defeated, including two that would have made future revenue reform and legislative progress more difficult.

Democrats gained supermajorities in both houses of the legislature, and with the re-election of Governor Kate Brown we

"We believe that Ms. Hardesty's voice will help shape City policies to better match the ideals of our community."

Paul Cone,
Local 17 Portland Chapter President

hope that coming years will offer an important opportunity for progress on issues important to Oregon's public employees.

2019 Oregon Legislative Priorities

The upcoming 2019 long legislative session promises opportunities to address several major longstanding issues in Oregon, and PROTEC17 will be closely following the session and engaging as we can on behalf of our members.

At the forefront of our concerns are reforms to the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS). We are involved in the Oregon PERS Coalition in order to closely track these developments. We remain steadfast in our position that public employees did not create the current

problem, and therefore promises made to them must be honored.

Additionally, PROTEC17 remains supportive of reforming Oregon's revenue collection model, which we believe currently places too heavy of a burden on working Oregonians compared to large corporations. With a larger Democratic majority in the legislature, we believe that the time is right to consider this difficult issue, and we hope to see progress made during this session.

Finally, we will be closely monitoring and supporting post-*Janus* efforts to update Oregon's public employee collective bargaining statutes in the wake of June's Supreme Court decision. Efforts were made in Washington State during the previous legislative session, and we believe there are important areas where Oregon's rules could be improved.

We will be posting updates throughout the 2019 Oregon legislative session on our new website -- protec17.org -- if you are interested in more information. You can also reach out to our Research Director and Oregon Legislative Advocate Elliot Levin at 800-783-0017 ext. 128 or elliott@pte17.org. ■

2019 WA legislative session: Meet PROTEC17's new lobbyist

In 2018, the Washington State Legislature passed a huge number of progressive priorities. At PROTEC17, we are looking forward to building on that success and the strong labor-friendly majorities in both chambers.

In the upcoming 2019 session, we'll be working with our allies in both the House and Senate on a package of post-*Janus* bills to protect public sector workers after the U.S. Supreme Court decision back in June rendered the entire public-sector a Right-to-Work environment. This includes working to find revenue to bridge an effective \$3B deficit, and partnering with labor partners to improve protections for Washington workers and their families.

There is a strong Labor team in Olympia this year. Our ability to make meaningful policy and electoral progress will depend on relationships, connections, and the ability to execute effective strategy. With many newly elected Labor champions in office, we are excited to make significant progress this year.

As part of this strategy, PROTEC17 has hired Rebecca Johnson as a legislative



Rebecca Johnson

consultant for the 2019 term. The Legislative Director position, formerly occupied by Adrienne Thompson who left late last year for an exciting position as Labor Liason with Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, will be evaluated once a new Executive Director comes on board early next year.

Johnson is an attorney and has been leading successful legislative efforts in Olympia for more than 10 years. Her early experience as a union organizer provided a strong foundation for serving five years

as the Director of Government Affairs for the Washington State Labor Council.

Since 2013, Johnson has been consulting with a variety of progressive organizations, including Labor, public health and safety and victim advocacy. She has been a key leader in landmark policies, including the 2018 Equal Pay Opportunity Act, Paid Family and Medical Leave Insurance, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Rape Survivor Safety, Rape Kit Reform and the 2012 Jobs Now package.

Johnson is well-known for crafting and executing successful and ambitious policy for a variety of clients and her engagement in progressive policy and political campaigns allows her to move seamlessly from legislative session to political season.

When she isn't writing laws, Johnson – a Colorado native – enjoys running and watching videos of baby goats and piglets. She and Stewart, her elderly, toothless muppet dog, adopted a new puppy, Nola, from the Louisiana bayou during an epic summer road trip.

PROTEC17 welcomes Johnson to our team, and looks forward to accomplishing a lot of great things for workers in 2019! ■

Your PROTEC17 dues support:

Problem-solving workplace issues

Advocacy

Research

Communications



Contract negotiations

Member trainings and meetings

Contract enforcement and representation

Your dues dollars are NEVER used to support political candidates

Periodicals
Postage
PAID
at Seattle WA

Did you move?
Change your address online at:
ptel7.org/address/form.html

Labor Victories

PROTEC17 wins multiple Labor Media Awards from the ILCA!

Each year, the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) holds a contest for the best writing, design, and publishing in labor-related journalism and communications across the globe, and this year Professional and Technical Employees Local 17 (PROTEC17) won four awards!

The 2018 Labor Media Awards highlight work done in 2017. We won an honorable mention for *Insight* in the category of General Excellence in a Print Publication, and a third place award for the Best Cover for the Jan/Feb. 2017 issue of the magazine. These categories are particularly competitive as there are some heavy hitting big unions -- like SAG-AFTRA, the actor's union! -- in the running.

But our biggest accomplishments came in two design categories this year, where we won not one, but TWO first-place awards! Our 2017 Legislative Priorities infographic took



first place for Best Flyer in the Political Action/Organizing Campaign category. We also won first place for **Best Infographic** in the Visual Communications category for our 'Local 17 at a Glance' flyer that conveyed the results of our 2017 membership survey (shown).

Deidre Girard, PROTEC17's Communications Director who is Editor-in-Chief of *Insight* and who created both of the flyers, was very proud and excited to hear the news of the awards:

"It's such a privilege to be doing the creative work that I love for an organization whose mission I value," she said. "I am so honored to be able to convey the important work that our members do across our communication platforms, and to represent our union in the ILCA community. Many

congratulations to all of the other winners whose work inspires me every day!" ■