

UNION SPOTLIGHT

AFT Washington, AFL-CIO

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Fall 2011

Making a Difference!



Ellen Banner photo

AFT Kent Classified member **Ginger Ott** (on left) explains to AFT Secretary-Treasurer **Lorretta Johnson** the conservation and recycling program she established at Scenic Hill Elementary School. Older students work with younger students to teach them about recycling their lunch leftovers and packaging. Students are also involved in community environmental projects. *Full story on page 5.*

Inside

Local Bargaining News	2	First State Conference for Contingent Faculty	5
President's Column	3	The Future of Our Faculty	6
Faculty Hold Teach-ins	4	Positions on Ballot Measures	7
PSRPs: Making A Difference	5	So Long, Richard!	7
		Leadership Vacancy	7

Bargaining News

Lecturers who teach English as a Second Language at the University of Washington's Extension Program (*photo on right*) are preparing to negotiate their first contract. They have a couple of bargainable issues arise that are being discussed with their administration. Most recently, a position was moved out of the unit without bargaining.

Professional Staff at Clover Park Technical College are in bargaining right now. They have been meeting regularly since March with the administration and have reached tentative agreements on nine articles so far. Negotiations are going well, and there are meetings set through March 2012 with the anticipation of reaching a final agreement in December or January.

UCWU Issaquah (Food Service) started negotiations in April, reached an agreement in August, and ratified it with membership later in August.

UCWU Northshore (Food Service) started negotiations in June, settled in July, and ratified their contract with members in August.

United Faculty of Green River is still bargaining and have filed two unfair labor practices (ULP's) for bad-faith bargaining by the employer and will be going into mediation over the first ULP this month.

RTC Faculty began bargaining in March and are still at the table with new issues about background checks.

The Everett Professional Staff are working on issues and training sessions are scheduled. Their administration has also created positions and modified positions without bargaining.



From left, UW Extension Lecturers Richard Moore, Natalie Pret (former member), Rozanna Carosella, and Ken Latsch (PERC)

They are meeting to talk about one of them and will set a time to review the others.

The Yakima Professional Staff are working on a bargaining issue (wages were arbitrarily reduced). We filed a ULP scheduled for a hearing the end of October. They are still in mediation but very little progress has been made. The employer continues to say no to such things as job security, workload, and wages. They also are hanging onto a management rights clause that, if we agreed to it, would gut the contract and allow for contracting out work and other major issues.

Clover Park Classified is engaged in negotiations training and they will go to the table soon.

Cornish College's faculty contract is open and will be going to the table. Training sessions are scheduled in preparation for negotiations.

Tacoma Community College finished their contract in June.

South Puget Sound Community College was able to roll over their contract.

The contract for classified members at Lake Washington Institute of Technology is up for negotiations but they are hoping to roll it over.

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Board meetings are usually held on the first Saturday of the month except for holidays and summer months. Board members are elected to two-year terms.

AFT Washington represents over 6,000 members in early childhood education, K-12, and higher education in Washington State and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers, which represents 1.5 million members nationwide.

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Photos by Sylvia Watson unless otherwise noted.
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President's Column



In the next months, we will face an enormous challenge, one that will test our commitment to stand up and speak out. That challenge is to protect education and public services from the devastation we see in states like Ohio and Wisconsin.

Our state's budget crisis continues. With the new shortfall estimated at \$1.4 billion, the governor called for \$2 billion in cuts so that she can refill the Rainy Day Fund, which will be depleted by the end of the biennium. Cutting an extra \$.6 billion to fill a fund that will be used to finance future shortfalls in state services is extremely odd. That's like putting your money in savings instead of paying off your credit card, which would give you a better return.

But, you might say, the governor won't propose a revenue package because Tim Eyman has hobbled the legislature with a requirement that no revenue increases can pass without a two-thirds vote. The governor could show more leadership though, by offering two proposals, one that would be all cuts, the other presenting a more balanced approach. But she won't.

Fortunately, there are legislators who want to protect programs from more serious cuts. They may not be able to get a bipartisan two-thirds to do it, but with a simple majority they can pass a revenue proposal as a referendum to the public, voted on as early as April.

Are you willing to meet the challenge?

All of us have to fight to make that happen. We have to rise up and speak. Here at AFT Washington we are developing an action plan that we should be able to roll out in two weeks. But whatever you do at your colleges can be wrapped into the state plan. For example, Green River CC has organized a series of teach-ins to reach out to students on a range of issues that threaten the quality and accessibility of higher ed, among them budget cuts, astronomical tuitions, and attacks on higher ed and its unions.

AFT Seattle is developing a long-range campaign to educate the public starting with listening forums to help develop their messaging.

In recent weeks hundreds, then thousands, now millions of people followed the lead of those who began the Occupy Wall Street protests. Discontent nationally and at our colleges is finding a focus. All AFT Washington members are surely part of the 99%. That fact alone should unite us as never before.

We will not be alone in our fight to help legislators with hearts and spines who know what must be done. A coalition of over 100 progressive organizations, including labor unions, has worked together for over two years to stop the worst proposals from getting traction in Olympia. There has been little hope for more. But hope is rising and we want to spread it to you.

The budget cuts have touched all of us. You know someone who has been laid off or had hours cut. You may have been threatened. You've seen the damage to students. You are probably worried about what's next. But the real damage is to our spirits and our belief

that others are on our side, whether they are in Olympia or live next door.

We will engage not only with legislators but with our friends and neighbors about how important it is not to cut more from education and human services but to instead pass a revenue package, a "jobs" bill that can mean that no more go on the unemployment line, further damaging our fragile economy with lost buying power.

You will hear from us in one way or another as action escalates. But don't wait for us. Contact your legislators now. Write the governor now. Send us your home email address now to Clandon@aftwa.org. Be ready to march, rally or sign petitions. Be ready to stand up and speak out wherever you can. ■

The State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, over the continuing protests of faculty, recently chose again to declare a so-called "financial emergency" that offers the colleges a weapon to get rid of middle-class, tenured jobs. A few colleges might take them up on the offer.

The ranks of full-time faculty have thinned continually for 30 years with those positions part-timed. Young professionals who believed their hard work to achieve advanced skills would be rewarded with decent pay and respectful security are instead cast adrift on the seas of contingency.

Be ready to heed the call of your local union leaders to pressure the college president and board not to fall into temptation and pass a local "financial emergency" even if it means you start your own Occupy your college movement.

Faculty hold “teach-ins” to raise awareness of attacks on higher ed

Vik Bahl, GRCC United Faculty 2195, contributed to this article

On October 5, over 150 students, staff, and faculty attended a ‘60s-style teach-in to raise awareness of the state of education at Green River Community College (GRCC) and across the state. This is the first in a series of six teach-ins that United Faculty Local 2195 will hold throughout the academic year.

“As faculty, we’re concerned about the effects the budget cuts are having on students,” said **Hank Galmish**, a long-time English instructor at the college.

Since the 2007 academic year, according to the faculty union, Green River Community College’s annual revenue has actually increased by more than \$18.5 million dollars¹ and state contributions have gone up more than \$3 million. However, the college’s administration cites state budget cuts as the need to implement a recent 10.5 percent across-the-board cut to classroom and instructional supply budgets² and a refusal to hire full-time faculty.



State Labor Council Secretary-Treasurer Lynne Dodson speaks to students.

During the teach-in several students went up to the microphone to speak. The common refrain: what can they do about the economy and the attacks on public education?

Political science instructor **Lloyd Jansen** enthusiastically responded, “You have to organize!”

As Lloyd told the overflowing room of students, “if you don’t stand up and say something, that’s acquiescing . . . that’s letting it happen.”

One student talked about how the economy has made it difficult for her to feed her family. “We have to put our foot down and say ‘enough is enough!’” she exclaimed.

Frank Primiani, a Business Administration instructor,

said, “The teach-in is designed to educate students and get them involved in advocating for their education.”

Student enrollment at GRCC has increased 10 percent as more people are unemployed and seeking re-training and education. At the same time, student tuition has increased by double digits. GRCC has seen an increase of over \$5 million in paid tuition coupled with the tuition hikes.

The next teach-in is October 26.

There is an accompanying film series that will be viewed at times between the teach-ins.

To find out the date for the film series and other teach-ins, go to <http://grccteachin.wordpress.com>.

1) all figures taken from GRCC’s “Report to Community” 2007-2010, available at GRCC’s website 2) memo dated September 27, 2011

Left: Students comment about their higher education experience and the struggles they face.



AFT's "Making a Difference" campaign comes to town

To kick off the new school year, AFT President **Randi Weingarten** and then-Vice President **Lorretta Johnson** set out across the country to call attention to the value of K-12 school-related members and the good things that are happening in our public schools.



TFP member Ann Twoomey provides interpretation services in the automotive class. (photos: Ellen Banner)

Lorretta Johnson came to our state on September 1st and 2nd and visited with members, congratulating them for their contributions.

On her first day, she met with Head Start leaders who filed cards to have union representation.

The second day, Johnson's first stop was at Mt. Tahoma High School in Tacoma to observe paraEducators who provide translation services to students who are deaf.

Next she went to Scenic Hill Elementary in Kent to see their student recycling program started by **Ginger Ott**, a custodian and member of AFT Kent Classified Local 6344. The award-winning recycling program teaches children to recycle their leftovers and packaging from

their lunches, maintain a worm bin, and conserve energy and water. The school was recognized by King County as the first school to reach the highest level of conservation efforts.

Johnson then met with professional staff at Seattle community colleges. Johnson told them "We have to fight to keep the mission of 'community' in our community colleges."

The last stop of the tour was at Community Day Center for Children in Seattle to talk with early learning educators about the federal Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant the state is applying for. The center owner, **Lois Martin**, is on the statewide advisory committee for the grant application.



After listening to their concerns, Johnson assured them "You got a voice in me!"

Child care center owner Lois Martin (standing) and staff meet with Lorretta Johnson about the Early Learning Challenge grant, professional development, and organizing their profession.

Contingent Faculty: First state AFT conference

Contingent. Part-time. Adjunct. Non-tenured. Sound familiar? Confused? Have questions? Need answers? This group of Washington State employees — who teach and mentor a substantial number of Washington's higher education students — have distinct and varying issues and concerns.

The First Annual Contingent Faculty Issues Conference "Bridging the Gap: Stronger Together," a conference focusing specifically on this group of college employees, is happening **Saturday, November 19, at Renton Technical College (RTC)**. All faculty (no matter what classification!) are invited.

The AFT Washington Contingent Faculty Issues Committee earlier surveyed adjunct faculty about their work conditions and issues, and then planned this conference to present in-depth information based on the survey results.

Learn, meet others with similar concerns, share stories, ideas, and information, attend breakout sessions regarding unemployment, conditions for student success in faculties' work conditions, and best practices. Talk with those who have direct connections and influence on Washington state policy and enjoy a delicious lunch provided by RTC's culinary program!

Registration is needed for a meal count. Please go to wa.aft.org to register. There is **no cost** to attend.

*by Carol Wilkinson,
Whatcom CC Local 3591*

The future of our faculty

by Phil Ray Jack, conference planning committee member and Green River United Faculty member

In 2009, the State Legislature mandated that task forces be established to assess higher education in Washington State and set strategies for reform. Faculty were not included in these important discussions until there was a cry of outrage from both AFT Washington and the Washington Education Association, and even then, the views offered were too often dismissed. It became clear that this was symptomatic of the modern educational reform movement — faculty and teachers are considered obstacles to change rather than experienced professionals.

If faculty were to have a voice in the future of higher education, we would have to organize our own group so *Faculty for the Future* was created. In the Fall of 2009, more than 70 faculty representing 19 of Washington's community colleges and one representative from the four-year system gathered for a forum. The discussions centered on how faculty view and describe their work, which led to the development of a list of core values that faculty could use to help shape and guide future discussions.



In 2010, a second Faculty for the Future was held at Shoreline Community College, and attendees used the core values to generate strategies and communication to help preserve these values as the profession evolves. Those in attendance created draft work plans on meaningful accountability, creating pathways to student success, instilling rigor and passion in the learning environment, and other identified core values.

After a morning work session, the faculty were joined by **Charlie Earl**, Director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges; Representative **Bob Hasegawa** (11th District) and member of the House Higher Education Committee; and Shoreline President **Lee Lambert**. The guests praised the participants for the work they were doing and spoke on their views on the future of higher education — adding some interesting

political and strategic perspectives — and then answered questions from participants.



Charlie Earl pointed out that 78 percent of Washington's population is currently enrolled in Washington's community and technical college programs and spoke of the importance of communicating the "return to society" that investing in the

It became clear that this was symptomatic of the modern educational reform movement — faculty and teachers are considered obstacles to change rather than experienced professionals.

system yields through our students. Representative Hasegawa suggested that two-year college faculty members "bring public benefit back into the classroom" and portray taxes as a means to solidify our "ownership in society."

A third forum is being held this month. Any member who wants more information about the outcome can sign up at <http://facultyforthefuture.ning.com>. To become involved in future efforts, contact a Planning Committee Member: **Gary Parks** at gparks@shoreline.edu, **Phil Venditti** at phil.venditti@cptc.edu, **Liz McKinney** at bloomoon10@yahoo.com, or **Phil Ray Jack** at PJack@greenriver.edu.

Photos of 2010 Faculty for the Future Forum by Phil Venditti

AFT Washington on November's ballot measures: it's a No, Yes, No

On or before Tuesday, November 8, AFT Washington members will be presented with three initiatives: I-1125, I-1163, and I-1183. We recommend that members vote **NO** on Initiative 1125, **YES** on Initiative 1163, and **NO** on Initiative 1183. Here's why.

Initiative 1125, sponsored by Tim Eyman, would prohibit the use of motor-vehicle-fund revenue and vehicle-toll revenue for other transportation purposes and would also require that road and bridge tolls be set by the Legislature and be project-specific. It would also ban peak-hour tolling and ban the use of gas taxes and toll funds for light rail. Finally, it would require that tolling end after a given project's construction is paid for, and not take maintenance costs into account.

Why does AFT Washington recommend a **NO** vote on **I-1125**?

The changes make no sense. It would make Washington the only state in the country to ban variable toll pricing (a practice to encourage people to drive during non-peak times) and the only state to require the Legislature, not independent, non-partisan transportation policy experts, to set pricing. The idea of a partisan legislator from Seattle setting toll rates and transportation policies in Eastern Washington or vice versa doesn't make sense.

It would create massive funding problems. The State Treasurer has determined that the initiative would create a \$500 million funding gap in the financing for the 520 Evergreen Point floating bridge project alone — meaning the state would revert to using gas taxes repay back those bonds. Further, the State's Office of Financial Management has also found that the measure would result in the loss of at least half of the \$123 million in federal grant funding our state is currently counting on for

immediate projects. And, over the long-term, any future bonding would also be threatened because it would downgrade Washington's bond rating. Paying the increased interest rates on these downgraded bonds would then be shouldered by all of Washington's taxpayers.

It would cost jobs. At a time with record unemployment, this measure would threaten thousands of construction jobs across the state.

Initiative 1163 would reinstate background checks, training, and other requirements for long-term care workers and providers (after state legislators voted to end or revise them), and it would address financial accountability and administrative expenses of the long-term in-home care program.

Why does AFT Washington recommend a **YES** vote on **I-1163**?

cont'd on page 8

So long, Richard!

As you may have heard by now, **Richard Burton**, our State Affiliate Political Organizer, has taken a similar position with the Washington Nurses Association. They happen to be across the street from our office so we shouldn't have any problem staying in touch with him.

Richard not only helped mobilize members for legislative and political issues but also staffed the Human Rights Committee and the COPE



Committee. We are in the process of filling the position. Whoever takes his place will have big shoes to fill!

Best wishes, Richard!

Leadership Vacancy

The AFT Washington Retiree Chapter, Local 8045R, has a Director vacancy on their executive board. Requirements: be a member interested in helping to keep your former colleagues up-to-date on changes and threats to retirees, and helping to organize support among our retired colleagues. The executive board generally meets in the Puget Sound area three or four times a year, including the annual membership meeting in the spring.

If you're interested, please contact Local 8045R president **Ross Rieder** at **206.406.2604** or **rossr241@aol.com**.



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No, Yes, No (initiative recommendations from pg. 7)

We already said Yes! In 2008, Washington’s voters overwhelmingly passed legislation on I-1029 but legislators this year reduced training requirements and delayed criminal background checks.

Safe, quality care. This measure requires federal FBI background checks to make sure our seniors don’t fall prey to elder abuse or fraud. Further, it increases the amount of training that home care aides must receive to be certified to 75 hours so seriously ill seniors and people with disabilities can remain in their own homes as they prefer.

Saves tax dollars. Thousands who would otherwise qualify for care in

expensive nursing homes would remain in their own homes if they have qualified and trained caregivers who can help them live safely at home.

Initiative 1183 would close state liquor stores and sell their assets; license private parties to sell and distribute spirits; set license fees based on sales; regulate licensees; and change the regulations for wine distribution.

Why does AFT Washington recommend a **NO** vote on **I-1183**?

It’s just a profit-making scheme for “Big Box” Stores. Regardless of the rhetoric about revenue generation or safety, the underlying motive is profits. And, when corporations spend millions on measures, it is a distortion of the state’s initiative process.

The social costs are still too high.

This measure would have the state license private parties which could expand the number of stores selling alcohol. Currently, private retailers sell to an average of 1 in 4 minors versus a 96% compliance rate at state liquor stores (best rate in the country). Underage drinking already costs the state more than \$500 million annually in youth violence and traffic accidents.

We already said NO! There were two measures on this subject that were soundly rejected by the voters just last year.

Each person’s vote is their own decision. We offer these recommended positions for you to take into consideration.

by Richard Burton