

Pacific Northwest Labor History Association



OREGON LABOR HISTORY QUARTERLY

July 2019

Portland conference salutes 1919 Record crowd enjoyed films, music, speeches, and awards



More than 200 participants attended; History Maker of the Year award went to Burgerville union organizers with introducer Amy Coplen (left); History Person of the Year went to former SEIU leader Alice Dale with introducer Margaret Hallock and labor educator Norm Diamond with introducer Fred Glass. <https://pipilio.smugmug.com/PNHILA-Portland-2019/>

2019 Conference highlights

Opening night featured a short excerpt from a new musical film about the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. Rebel Voices and Earle Peach followed with songs from a stage musical on the 1919 Seattle General Strike. The first plenary session on Saturday highlighted the history of both strikes and the founding of the United Nation's International Labor Organization. A second plenary focused on modern-day union organizing. Breakout sessions covered a wide range of topics from radical labor to women in unions, post-Janus concerns, labor's legislative agenda, activist art, and teachers' strikes. A documentary on

Pacific Northwest labor history was screened as was a film on home care workers in Oregon. Singer David Rovics powered up the banquet crowd with several rousing statements in song. Exchanges among academic historians, students, and trade unionists continued as a favorite feature of the PNLHA conference.

Participants rate conference

Thirty-six participants completed the evaluation question. Of those, 24 said the opening night was excellent or very good. The plenaries earned an excellent rating from 23 and 11 found them very good. Eighteen participants said the

Saturday awards banquet was excellent and 10 said it was very good. Overall, 19 participants rated the conference excellent, 10 very good, and four good.

Annual PNLHA award winners

Former Oregon SEIU leader Alice Dale and labor educator Norm Diamond shared the History Person of the Year award. Both gave insightful speeches about the importance of labor history and the PNLHA. Burgerville organizers Esther Mann and Emmett Schlenz accepted the History Maker of the Year award on behalf of their IWW local.

Conference follow-ups to note

“Why Newsrooms are Unionizing Now” (<https://portside.org/2019-06-12/why-newsrooms-are-unionizing-now>) supplements the conference session on the Oregon newspaper strike and digital organizing. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation has issued several podcasts on the [Winnipeg General Strike](#), adding to the plenary session account. The CBC has also issued an article on the strike leaders who were arrested for “[their thoughts, their political analysis, and the things they wrote.](#)”

1919 history you may not recall

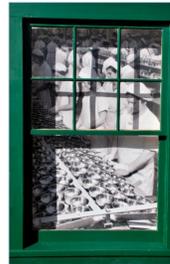


Folk singer and social activist Pete Seeger would have turned 100 during the conference. He was born on May 3, 1919.

Oregon labor history chronology

Did you know that the author of *Ten Days That Shook the World* was born in

WORKING OREGON A Labor History Chronology



Oregon's Working People
and Their Organizations

Portland? Which Oregon doctor helped spread Wobblie troubadour Joe Hill's ashes? What was the longest strike in Oregon's history? *Working Oregon* is the name of a forthcoming PNLHA booklet that

documents many such events that mark the history of working people in Oregon. The chronology could also be available online with an invitation to submit your labor history events for possible inclusion.

Member activities of note

Member Amy Coplen successfully defended her PhD dissertation on June 7 at Portland State University (Urban Studies). The topic: “Poverty Wages are not Fresh, Local, or Sustainable”: Building Worker Power by Organizing Around (Re)production in Portland's “Sustainable” Food Industry.” Congratulations, Amy.

Salem's KMUZ offers labor radio

Oregon members have long benefited from the labor shows on Portland's KBOO, <https://kboo.fm/>. Now Salem's radio station KMUZ offers a regular segment “from the frontlines of union struggles.” These labor radio segments “can help build union and social justice organization's power.” Two segments: <http://kmuz.org/06-10-2019-willamette-wake-up-special-labor-report/>.

JOIN the PNLHA – <https://pnlha.org>. Please contact rverzuh@shaw.ca with comments and suggestions.