

Pacific Northwest Labor History Association



PNW Labor History Quarterly

Winter 2025-26

A Nurse Is Killed – and Labor Erupts in Protest

By Don McIntosh, *NW Labor Press*, February 5, 2026

We protest the illegal detainment of immigrants and non-immigrants, United States citizens murdered in the streets of Minneapolis. Not all of us share the same opinion, but this is a labor issue when our members are afraid to leave their house.

Minneapolis nurse Alex Pretti was recording federal immigration agents with his phone Jan. 24 when they pushed a woman to the ground. When he tried to shield her they pepper-sprayed him and forced him to the ground. One agent removed a concealed handgun from his waistband, and another agent shot him 10 times in rapid succession, killing him as a third agent clapped. And yet within hours Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem was calling Pretti a “domestic terrorist” who’d been “brandishing” a weapon and “attacked” officers and White House chief of staff Stephen Miller called Pretti “an assassin” who “tried to murder federal agents.” Multiple videos of the shooting show those to be complete fabrications.



Outside the federal building in Eugene, several hundred members of two Oregon nurse unions attended a Jan. 27 candlelight vigil remembering Minneapolis nurse Alex Pretti., Photo courtesy of Oregon Nurses Association

Working at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Minneapolis, Pretti was a member of American Federation of Government Employees Local 3669. His killing drew condemnation from organized labor.

To read the full article in *NW Labor Press*: <https://nwlaborpress.org/2026/02/a-nurse-is-killed-and-labor-erupts-in-protest/>



2026 Labor History Calendars

The educational 2026 Labor History calendar will be mailed to all 2025 PNLHA members.

The **PNLHA Labor History Calendar** is more than just a collection of dates; it is a celebration of the struggles and triumphs of workers in our region. Monthly content emphasizes labor history as well as current struggles over the past year.

Additional calendars may be ordered. See flyer at the back of this newsletter.

Time for Your 2026 Membership

If you haven't renewed your dues for 2026, please do so by either going to the website, www.pnlha.org or filling out and mailing the form that is in the back of this newsletter. If you are not sure if your dues are paid for 2026 contact us at pnlha2@gmail.com. Individuals or organizations who are not members are also encouraged to join. Thanks

***PNW Labor History Quarterly* is published for PNLHA members four times a year.**

Contributors this quarter are: Tom Lux, Don McIntosh, Frank Laolagi, Frank Stonebanks, Kurt Willcox, Judi Gibbs, Zack Pattin, Shonna Roberts and Canadian correspondents Ron Verzuh.

Excerpts: *NW Labor Press, Portside, Mother Jones and as noted*

Interpreting the Marshall House Through Labor History

By Frank Laolagi

The George C. Marshall House is often interpreted as the home of one of the most influential military figures of the twentieth century. But when viewed through a labor history lens, the house also offers an entry point into how military institutions and global economic policies affected workers' lives in the Pacific Northwest.

George C. Marshall lived in the house that now bears his name from 1936 to 1938, while serving at the Vancouver Barracks, part of what is now Fort Vancouver National Historic Site. Although Marshall did not live here during World War II, the Barracks itself has a long association with regional labor history. During World War I, it served as headquarters for the Spruce Production Division, which organized tens of thousands of soldiers to work in the Northwest forests and helped in 1917 to establish the Loyal Legion of Loggers and Lumbermen, which was a company union to counter the IWW and the AFL which were strong in the woods. At other moments, troops from Vancouver Barracks were dispatched in response to labor unrest tied to railroads, mining, and waterfront work across the region. Long before WWII, the federal military presence in Vancouver had already intersected repeatedly with labor organizing, labor discipline, and industrial production in the Pacific Northwest.

After the war, Marshall's attention shifted from military organization to global economic recovery. As Secretary of State, he proposed what became known as the Marshall Plan. While the plan is usually remembered as a foreign policy initiative, it also had important domestic consequences for American workers. By providing U.S. grants and loans to European governments to rebuild war-torn economies, the Plan enabled Europe to import food, fuel, machinery, and industrial goods during the early years of recovery. Although it did not explicitly require European countries to buy American products, its structure strongly favored U.S. suppliers during a critical transition period.

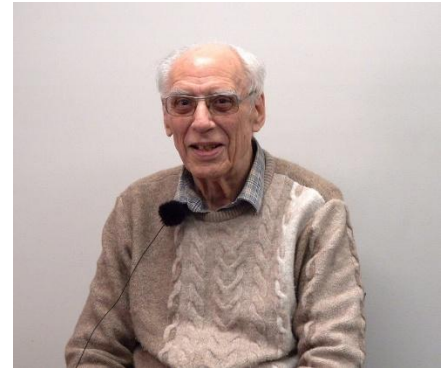
For workers in the Pacific Northwest, the effects were indirect but meaningful nonetheless. Marshall Plan procurement helped stabilize postwar employment by keeping export markets open as wartime contracts ended. Ports along the Columbia River handled Marshall Plan cargo, sustaining longshore, rail, warehouse, and clerical labor. Aerospace and manufacturing firms in the region benefited from renewed European demand for their products. In the timber and forest products sector, the Plan generated short-term surges that helped mills and logging operations avoid an abrupt collapse in the late 1940s.

The Marshall House is a small site, but it sits within a less familiar chapter of Pacific Northwest history. Located within Vancouver Barracks, it reflects how military institutions and postwar recovery efforts intersected with PNW industry, employment, and economic changes taking place in the mid-twentieth century. For those interested in how national and global policies played out locally, a visit to the George C. Marshall House offers an opportunity to explore this history and to see how the Pacific Northwest fits into broader stories of recovery and transition after World War II.

In Memorial: Roger Stonebanks

By Frank Stonebanks

It is with profound sadness that we reflect on the life and legacy of my Dad, Roger Stonebanks, a dedicated father, husband, journalist, union advocate, and passionate labour historian who called Victoria, British Columbia, home for much of his life. Roger passed away peacefully and without pain January 15, 2026, after quietly battling cancer, leaving behind a remarkable legacy of integrity, tenacity, and commitment to workers' rights and historical truth. I am grateful I got to spend a few days with him before his passing.



Born on March 27, 1940, in Harrow-on-the-Hill, London, England, Roger went to boarding school in London and then got his “dream shot” as a junior reporter with CP (Canadian Pacific wire service) on Fleet Street.

He immigrated to Canada in 1959, drawn by new opportunities, including an offer from CP to take on a reporter job in Montreal. He eventually settled in British Columbia in 1962 and made Victoria his permanent home, where he built a career and community rooted in fairness and storytelling. Roger's journalistic journey began early with The Canadian Press (CP), where he served from 1956 to 1964 in bureaus across London, Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, and Victoria. Disillusioned by issues such as inadequate pay and the absence of union representation at CP, he sought a path that aligned more closely with his values. In 1964, he joined the Victoria Daily Times (later part of the Victoria Times Colonist following the 1980 merger), where he worked with distinction as a reporter covering the legislature and the courts, covering many of the top stories that took place in Victoria during those years, until his retirement in 2000. As a labour reporter and steadfast union member, he chronicled the struggles and triumphs of working people with honesty and depth. A lifelong member of the Newspaper Guild (now The NewsGuild-CWA), Roger held numerous leadership roles that demonstrated his unwavering dedication:

- President and vice-president of the Victoria Newspaper Guild (1966–1995).
- Western Canada Vice-President of the Newspaper Guild (1973–1985).
- Co-Chairperson of the Victoria Joint Council of Newspaper Unions (1971–1995).

One of the defining moments of his career was the six-month strike-lockout in 1973 at the Victoria Times and Victoria Colonist. As chair of the negotiating committee and co-chair of the joint council, Roger played a pivotal role in guiding the unions through the dispute. The workers' publication of their own newspaper, The Victoria Express, not only sustained momentum but turned a profit and helped secure a victory for the union members—a testament to Roger's strategic leadership and belief in collective action.

In retirement, Roger turned his formidable intellect and research skills to preserving the stories of those who came before. His crowning achievement was the 2004 book Fighting for Dignity: The Ginger Goodwin Story, published by the Canadian Committee on Labour History. This meticulously researched biography chronicled the life of Albert "Ginger" Goodwin, the influential BC labour leader and socialist—from his Yorkshire coal-mining roots through his experiences in Cape Breton and British Columbia to his tragic 1918 death while evading conscription during World War I. Roger's work, drawing on extensive archival sources, ensured Goodwin's contributions to the labour movement were not forgotten. Portions of his research also appeared in newspaper articles, and his materials on Goodwin are preserved in the Simon Fraser University Library Special Collections as the "Ginger Goodwin research collection."

Roger remained engaged in his community, contributing articles to the Times Colonist on local history and issues, and sharing oral histories—such as his interview with the BC Labour Heritage Centre—where he reflected on his career, the 1973 strike, and his passion for labour history.

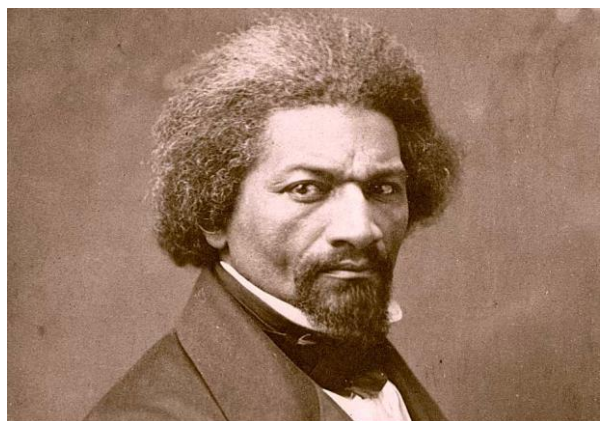
Roger Stonebanks was a man of principle, a fierce advocate for dignity in work, and a guardian of the past who illuminated the paths of those who fought for justice. His voice—clear, principled, and compassionate—will echo in the annals of Canadian journalism and labour history. He is survived by the many lives he touched, the stories he told, and the enduring spirit of solidarity he embodied. Rest in peace, Dad. Your fight for dignity continues in the hearts and minds of all who knew you and those who will discover your work in the years ahead.

“Our Government at Some Time May be in the Hands of a Bad Man”

December 17 was the 164th anniversary of one of Frederick Douglass's most well-remembered speeches, which has earned the appellation “Danger to the Republic”. Many of the issues that concerned Douglass more than a century-and-a-half ago are headline news at this very moment.

To read the article in Portside:

https://portside.org/2025-12-15/week-peoples-history-dec-17-23-2025?utm_medium=email&utm_source=portside-snapshot



2026 CBTU Black History Month

“THE WORKING CLASS THE SLEEPING GIANT AWAKENS”

Feb 26, 2026: Labor History is Black History

- Face-to-Face Discussion
SEIU Local 503 Building
525 NE Oregon St
Portland, OR 97232
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Vincent Blanco: Moderator
-

Labor Builds Community Mural

Back in early November, the Springfield Labor Mural Project began a campaign to establish a healthy Maintenance Fund for the **Labor Builds Community** mural on the A3 High School in downtown Springfield. We set a goal of \$6,000 to ensure that this wonderful celebration of labor and community will be maintained well into the future.

Today, we are proud to announce the successful conclusion of that campaign. Thanks to donations from unions, elected officials, and numerous individuals we have raised just over \$10,000 for the Maintenance Fund. Our donors are listed on the Maintenance Fund website (see Online option below), and we greatly appreciate everyone’s support.

Thanks again to PNLHA for your generous donation. You have made an important contribution to the labor culture of our community.

The mural continues to look great. The paint remains vibrant and intact; there has been no vandalism; the protective and anti-graffiti coatings are doing their jobs; the school district maintenance staff is keeping it clean; and the explanatory plaque looks as fresh as the day it was installed. And now, thanks to many of you, the mural’s future looks bright, as well. If you are nearby or will be in Springfield in the future, we hope you will stop by at 645 Main Street and take a look.



Finally, if you know anyone who has considered contributing, but hasn't done so yet, we are still accepting donations through the Lane Arts Council. They can donate:

Online at: <https://lanearts.networkforgood.com/projects/259300-springfield-labor-mural-project>

Or by **sending a check** to: Lane Arts Council, c/o Springfield Labor Mural Project, 174 E. 16th St. #125, Eugene, OR 97401 (Note on check: "Springfield Labor Mural Project")

Thanks so much for your support,

Len Norwitz, len@oregonlaborcandidateschool.org

Kurt Willcox, kurtwill085@gmail.com

for the Springfield Labor Mural Project

Mural information website: lanearts.org/labor-builds-community

Canadian Workers Gain

By Ron Verzuh

Unionized workers in Canada negotiated "the highest annual increases since at least 2016," the *Globe and Mail* reported in early January. Here's an excerpt from the report, citing federal government data.

"In the first eight months of 2025, average annual wage increases for unionized workplaces of more than 500 employees reached nearly 4 per cent, a figure that surpassed inflation and was materially higher than gains in the years before the pandemic.

"The data, which was recently updated by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), show that between Jan. 1 and Aug. 31 of last year, the average annual wage increase in settlements was 3.9 per cent across private and public sector unions. In 2023, it was 3.3 per cent, and in 2024, it was 3.4 per cent.

"In previous years, wage increases had hovered between 1.5 and 3 per cent, closely tracking inflation."

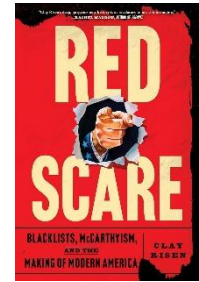
BOOK REVIEWS

Hounding Harry Bridges

Review by Ron Verzuh

Author Carl Risen's *Red Scare* (Scribner, 2025) takes us back to the McCarthy era of the 1950s when trade unionists were hounded by J. Edgar Hoover's G-Men at the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In a chapter on longshore union leader Harry Bridges, the leader of the 1934 West Coast dock workers strike, Risen describes the relentless attempts to find evidence that Bridges was a communist. The Australian immigrant “got very little support from the CIO,” Risen writes. “By the early 1940s, its leadership had begun to sour on its Communist membership.” Perhaps shocking to some, “it was Walter Reuther of the autoworkers who drove the incipient campaign against the Communists within the CIO’s ranks.”

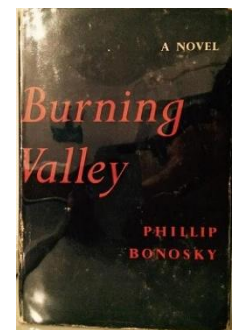


Other chapters cover singer/activist Paul Robeson, atomic spies Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, and atom bomb creator Robert Oppenheimer. Anyone looking for one more reason to kick Richard Nixon around will also find it here.

<https://rabble.ca/books/its-happening-again-the-red-scare-has-come-out-of-hiding/>

Phillip Bonosky’s Fight for the Working Class

Born in the Mon Valley, Bonosky transformed from a devout Catholic into a committed Communist writer, chronicling the struggles of working-class immigrants.



To read Richard Gazarik’s review in the *Pittsburgh Review of Books/Portside*:

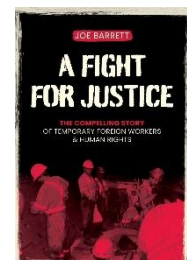
https://portside.org/2025-12-10/phillip-bonoskys-fight-working-class?utm_medium=email&utm_source=portside-snapshot

A Fight for Justice

by Joe Barrett. Ronsdale Press, Vancouver, BC, 2026, Reviewed by Judi Gibbs

Twenty years ago, in the spring of 2006, 41 Latin American workers in Costa Rica were offered \$1,000US (net – overtime included) monthly for 60-hour work weeks in Vancouver, BC. Their employer was excavating twin tunnels under the downtown core and under the ocean at False Creek. It was a section of a new rapid transit line in preparation for the 2010 Winter Olympics. The workers thought they’d won the lottery. One told the employer he’d swim to Canada if he was offered work in Vancouver. The promised salary was twice what they had earned on their last tunnel excavation job in Costa Rica. Soon after arriving in Canada, the workers discovered the miserable reality of their wages given the Canadian cost of living.

In his new book, Joe Barrett tells the story of these Latin Americans, the early deception and seven-year battle for fairness. Readers learn about the workers’ impoverished upbringing in rural Costa Rica and tightknit community support that backed the courage they needed to fight for their rights. Readers also learn about the support from Canadian construction unions in the legal battles that ensued.



The story is a first person account by Joe Barrett, fluent in Spanish, who served as both interpreter and union organizer. Readers are taken on a roller-coaster ride of victories and setbacks. The Latin Americans became the first group of Temporary Foreign Workers in Canada to unionize in the construction industry. Hearings at the BC Labour Board and BC Human Rights Tribunal were among the longest and most litigious in the history of the province. The loss at the BCLRB was followed by a BC Supreme Court decision finding bias at that judicial body. The ultimate victory at the BCHRT upheld the discrimination complaint based on country of origin. The decision has helped equalize wages for all workers from developing nations when employed alongside workers from Europe. In Vancouver, the Latin Americans were awarded over \$2 million, the difference in pay between what the employer paid Italians, Spaniards, and Portuguese who were doing the same work—workers who in some cases had less experience than the Latin Americans.

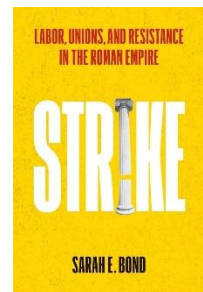
The settlement changed the lives of the recipients. They were able to live much more comfortably than they had before leaving for Canada.

Gladiators and Plebians Unite

Fighting for Labour Rights in Ancient Rome, Reviewed by Ron Verzuh

The “Secession of the Plebs” was probably the world’s first general strike. Huh? Yes, this collective action by the common citizens (plebians) of ancient Rome 2,500 years ago shook the bosses (patricians) out of their togas. We know this thanks to a new book by historian Sarah Bond (Yale University Press, 2025) that explores early forms of worker protest, including strikes.

Here’s what happened in the first secession back in 494 BCE. Plebians (read workers and small business owners) were conscripted by the wealthy patrician class to fight in Rome’s wars as payment for their debts. “Exploitation of plebians ultimately compelled them to join together and withhold their most valuable contribution: military service,” Bond explains. The tensions boiled over and eventually the plebs won a new popular legislative assembly, and the rest is history mixed with some Roman myth.



The plebs had used “physical withdrawal from the city as a means of collective bargaining.” Sounds like a general strike to me! Bond’s point is that workers have been fighting for their rights for millennia and the fight for those rights didn’t begin with the 19th Century Knights of Labour or the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the putative start of the trade union movement in Britain. In fact, the fight goes back to times when people were guided by gods and goddesses like Mercury and Venus.

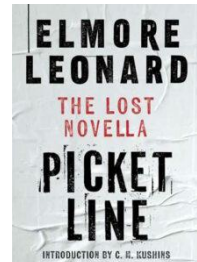
Elmore Leonard’s *Picket Line*

published by **Mariner Books: New York, 2025**, Reviewed by Ron Verzuh

American novelist Elmore Leonard has come back from the dead with a posthumous novella featuring some of his trademark characters. This time they are on a picket line during a melon pickers’ strike in Texas. Here’s a brief excerpt highlighting the bullhorn-toting Connie Chavez.

“She raised the binoculars and, for another moment, studied the figures scattered through the melon rows; like a herd grazing in the low vines. When she lowered the glasses, Connie said, ‘Let me have it’. The man next to her handed over a bullhorn. ‘Venganse! Por respeto, hombres!’ The amplified words broke the stillness and brought the workers up from the vines to gaze this way, toward the road. ‘Come over here, join us! Show them we all stand together for our rights’.”

PNLHA member Marcus Widenor, writing in the *Northwest Labor Press* (January 14, 2026), noted “how lucky we are to have a newly found novella by the master, which takes an intimate look at an iconic labor institution – the picket line.” Recalling his own experience, Widenor describes picket lines as “exciting” and “often dreadfully boring.” But “There are moments of heightened empowerment and others of despondency.” As strike leader Vincent Mora puts it in the book: “If a man comes out of the field and joins a picket line, he’ll never be the same again.”



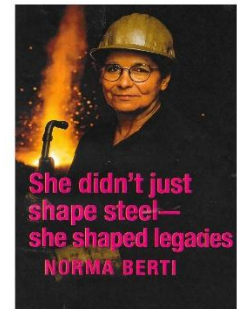
To read Marcus Widenor’s review in the *NW Labor Press*:

[https://nwlaborpress.org/2026/01/newly-found-crime-novel-captures-turmoil-and-triumph-of-strikes/?utm_source=Northwest+Labor+Press&utm_campaign=4509e1bb17-June 29 2016 COPY 01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a098a455a3-4509e1bb17-1210126353](https://nwlaborpress.org/2026/01/newly-found-crime-novel-captures-turmoil-and-triumph-of-strikes/?utm_source=Northwest+Labor+Press&utm_campaign=4509e1bb17-June+29+2016+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a098a455a3-4509e1bb17-1210126353)

Strong As Steel

Review by Ron Verzuh

Ontario trade unionist and amateur historian Ed Thomas recently released *Strong As Steel: Norma Berti, 1925-1997*, the story of a “fearless advocate for justice, equity, and workers’ rights.” As a United Steelworker local executive member, Norma rose up to challenge the bosses and some of her union’s leaders. “In the clang of steel and the quiet of union halls, she found her voice and used it to lift others,” Thomas writes. “Her legacy is a blueprint for anyone who has ever felt silenced, overlooked, or underestimated.” Copies from ed.thomas@rogers.com.



MAKING LABOR HISTORY TODAY

Organizing Down the Supply Chain: Logistics Workers Win First Contract

By Zack Pattin / *LABOR NOTES*

One hundred and fifty workers at a vehicle processing center in Tacoma, Washington, won their first contract last year, in a huge step for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union organizing down the supply chain.



Wallenius Wilhelmsen Logistics had opened the VPC across the street from a major terminal in the Port of Tacoma, where longshore workers are represented by ILWU Local 23. This “roll-on, roll-off” (ro-ro) terminal handles vehicles and other cargo that is driven on and off ships.

Wallenius is the largest ro-ro carrier in the world, with 128 vessels. In 2024 it brought in \$5.3 billion in revenue and more than \$1 billion in profits. Yet, until ILWU’s win, it was running a non-union operation immediately adjacent to longshore work.

To read the complete article in *LABOR NOTES*: <https://labornotes.org/2026/01/organizing-down-supply-chain-logistics-workers-win-first-contract>

Portland Labor Rally Against ICE Attacked with Tear Gas

By Shonna Roberts / *LABOR NOTES*

On January 31 my husband and I stood shoulder to shoulder with thousands of union members and community allies in Portland’s South Waterfront. We gathered for a peaceful, permitted rally and march: “Labor Against ICE.” More than 30 labor organizations had united under one banner for the first time in my memory, not just for contract fights or strike support, but to say “ICE Out” and “Solidarity Now.” I’m president of the Longshore (ILWU) Auxiliary 11 and my husband Jamison is president of ILWU Local 4.



There was music. There were speakers about peace and unity. Children ran around with their families. Retirees, pensioners, nurses, teachers, and working people filled the park. You could feel it in the air: hope, resolve, togetherness. We sang “Bella Ciao,” raising our voices for our immigrant siblings, people who are an integral part of our communities, our workplaces, and our struggles.

To read the complete article in *LABOR NOTES* : <https://labornotes.org/blogs/2026/02/portland-labor-rally-against-ice-attacked-tear-gas>

Milwaukee Discovery World Workers Vote to Join the IAM Union

Approximately 56 Science museum workers at Discovery World in Milwaukee have overwhelmingly voted to join the IAM Union (International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers). This vote marks a significant victory in their campaign for fair compensation, a clear path to career advancement, and a real voice on the job.



To read the complete article in *IAM UNION*: <https://www.goiam.org/news/imail/milwaukee-discovery-world-workers-vote-to-join-the-iam-union/>

Student Workers at Portland State Form a Union

More than 1,400 student workers at Portland State University (PSU) are on track to become union members. The unit would be the second group of undergraduate student employees to unionize at a public university in Oregon following University of Oregon.

To read the complete article in the *NW Labor Press*:

[https://nwlaborpress.org/2026/01/student-workers-at-portland-state-form-a-union/?utm_source=Northwest+Labor+Press&utm_campaign=4509e1bb17-June 29 2016 COPY 01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a098a455a3-4509e1bb17-1210126353](https://nwlaborpress.org/2026/01/student-workers-at-portland-state-form-a-union/?utm_source=Northwest+Labor+Press&utm_campaign=4509e1bb17-June+29+2016+COPY+01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_a098a455a3-4509e1bb17-1210126353)

Nevada Brothel Workers Are Unionizing to Protect Their Digital Rights

Sheri's workers showing up say they were presented with a surprising and objectionable new contract that would give the brothel unprecedented control over them, their intellectual property, and their digital likenesses.

To read the complete article in Mother Jones:

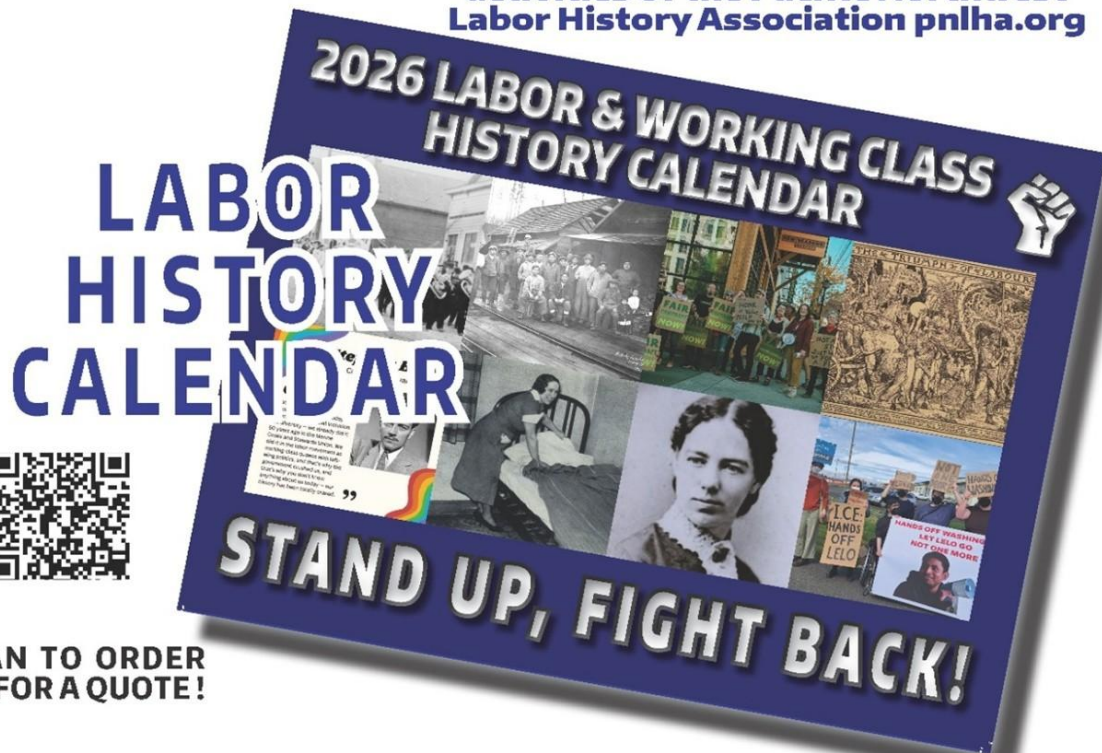
https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2026/02/nevada-sex-workers-brothel-union-ai/?utm_source=mj-newsletters&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=daily-newsletter-02-20-2026

First Starbucks Organized by Starbucks Workers United in December 2021, Elmwood Ave., Buffalo NY
PNLHA on Mastodon
<https://zirk.us/@pnlha>
www.pnlha.org
pnlha2@gmail.com



Labor History Education Tool and Fundraiser

A fundraiser supporting the educational activities of the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association pnlha.org



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450-699	\$7.20 each	\$7.70 each
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Pacific Northwest Labor History Association

Preserving the History and Heritage of Workers in the Pacific Northwest

www.pnlha.org

PNLHA 2026 Membership

- ☐ Sustaining Membership **\$250**
(Includes **two** free registrations to labor history conference or event)
- ☐ Organizational Membership **\$150**
(Includes **one** free registration to labor history conference or event)
- ☐ Union Retiree Councils **\$50**
- ☐ Contributing Membership **\$50**
- ☐ Individual Membership **\$25**
- ☐ Student / Low Income **\$15**

Please submit your membership in US dollars on our web site www.pnlha.org , or mail this form to: PNLHA; PO Box 75662; Seattle, WA 98175. Include your name, address, phone & email.

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OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION: _____

CHOOSE: ☐ New Member ☐ Current Member ☐ Past Member

Thank you for joining PNLHA! Included in your 2026 membership will be a complimentary copy of the 2027 PNLHA Labor History Calendar.

Note: Membership is from January 1 through December 31. Memberships received after Labor Day of any year will be considered for the following year unless we are instructed otherwise.