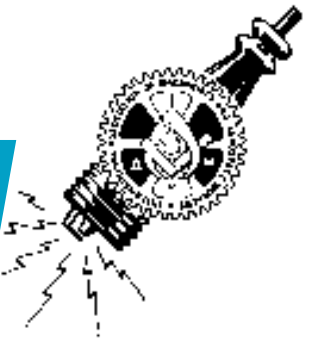


The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 1, NO. 2

FEBRUARY 1999

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

Local 1414 members work hard to keep Muni on the road

Aging fleet, lack of parts and vacancies make job that much tougher

Muni. Just hearing the word causes eyes to roll and hands to wring across San Francisco.

For years, former mayor Frank Jordan and the board of supervisors starved Muni to balance the city budget. Now, the troubled agency may be the downfall of Mayor Brown.

per square mile in the nation. Muni runs several facilities on a 24/7 schedule to inspect and repair its vast fleet of diesel buses, electrified trolleys, Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs); and historical buses and trolleys.

The Sparkplug visited with Local 1414 members at the Flynn facility, who work

on the 60 foot articulated diesel buses, to find out what Muni is like from their vantage point.

Shop Steward Mauro Benedetti explained the range of difficulties that the mechanics confront.

"First, we're dealing with a fleet of 100 vehicles that should have had their mid-life rehab in 1990 and should have been retired in 1996. They're running beyond their life expectancy and

they've never even got rehabbed.

"Next, when Muni first got these German MAN buses, several transit authorities were using them. Therefore parts and technical support were plentiful. But now, many parts are discontinued.

We have machinists fabricating parts and doing a lot of improvising."

According to Local 1414 President Tom Curran who is currently Acting Maintenance Supervisor, "these buses are running only due to the tenacity of



continued on page 6



Steven Lind fixing the guts of a 60 foot articulated Muni bus.

Members of Local 1414 work against all odds, including lots of bad press, to keep Muni buses on the road. With an aging fleet, unfilled vacancies, and the non-availability of spare parts, some would say it's a Herculean feat that the buses run at all.

With more than 700,000 daily riders, Muni is one of the largest carriers of people



Vernon Ting, Usbaldo Gonzalez and Mauro Benedetti at the Flynn facility.

A year and a half is long enough. . .

Lexus Mechanics strike for first contract

Four mechanics began a strike at Lexus of Concord by rolling their large tool boxes, worth \$30,000 each, out of the dealership on January 11. Frustrated with the company's unwillingness to cover union health, welfare and pension benefits and confronted with an on-going series of unfair labor practices, they felt that striking was their only option. The shop foreman quit as well.

The mechanics, parts people and detailers voted to be represented by IAM Local 1173 on August 1, 1997. In the 18 months since the election, the union has been unable to finalize a first contract with the dealership.

Enough is enough

Shop steward Steve Older explained, "the union picketed this shop for months, and we went into mediation in good faith last November. Just as our bargaining team agreed to settle, the mediator realized that management had left the building. They never thought we'd settle, so they backed out of making a deal."

According to Business Representative Vern Dutton, "This company has used every stall tactic in the book. This is the last straw."

Mechanic Jeff Mah was direct: "These are the best cars in the world, but they treat us like dirt. That's just not acceptable."

The key economic issues on the table were wages, and signing on to the union health and pension plans. Mechanics also complained of unfair dispatching under the flat rate system. According to striking mechanic Mark Senoren, "union activists get the lower paying jobs, while other mechanics were assigned the easy, high-paying jobs."

Unfair labor practices

To date, the federal government filed six unfair labor practices charges against the

continued on page 8



Mechanics Jeff Mah, Mark Gibson, Steve Older and Mark Senoren risk their jobs at Lexus of Concord as they roll their tool boxes out onto the street.

Local 1101 member Cindy Chavez becomes San Jose City Council member — Page 7

The joys of being a shop steward . . . Local 1546 steward fest — Page 3
ShopTalk: 20 stewards describe the best thing about doing it — Pages 4-7



IAM District Lodge 190
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Oakland, CA 94621

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CALENDAR

Local 801

Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

All meetings held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno

February 18 • March 18 • April 15

Local 1101

Executive Board Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

February 4 • March 4 • April 1

Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m.

February 4 • March 4 • April 1

General Membership Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

February 11 • March 11 • April 8

Local 1173

Membership/Shop Stewards Mtg.

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

February 18 • March 18 • April 15

Executive Board Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

February 11 • March 11 • April 8

Retirees Club Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.

February 3 • March 3 • April 7

Local 1414

Shop Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

February 4 • March 4 • April 1

Executive Board Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

February 11 • March 11 • April 8

General Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.

February 18 • March 18 • April 15

Local 1528

Executive Board Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

February 3 • March 3 • April 7

General Membership Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

February 3 • March 3 • April 7

Local 1546

Membership Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

February 2 • March 2 • April 6

Shop Stewards Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.

February 2 • March 2 • April 6

Local 1546 (cont.)

Executive Board Meeting

Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.

February 25 • April 1 • April 29

Senior's Luncheon

First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon

February 3 • March 3 • April 7

Local 1584

Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

February 18 • March 18 • April 15

Executive Board Meeting

Preceding Monday at 7 p.m.

February 15 • March 15 • April 12

Retirees Club

First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.

February 2 • March 2 • April 6

Local 1596

Executive Board Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

February 16 • March 16 • April 20

General Membership Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m.

February 16 • March 16 • April 20

Local 2182

Executive Board Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.

February 9 • March 9 • April 13

General Membership Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

February 9 • March 9 • April 13

Retirees Club - VISTA CLUB

Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. at Sacramento Hall

February 17 • March 17 • April 21



POLITICAL FORCE

Labor invited to Gov's table

Unions and their members worked hard to support the election of Gray Davis as governor last November. And it's starting to pay off. As promised, one of Davis' first acts was to move to restore the 8-hour day. Since taking office in early January, Davis has appointed several labor people to top jobs.

"For the past sixteen years, working people and their unions have not had a seat at the governor's table. I'm not going to say the table is ours now, but with Gray Davis in charge, we will be heard," says Matt McKinnon, Secretary-Treasurer of the California Conference of Machinists.

Unlike his predecessors, Davis has looked to unions for their most talented administrators.

Following is a brief rundown of some of Davis' initial appointments:

Industrial Relations

Longtime labor advocate Steve Smith will head the Department of Industrial Relations, which has jurisdiction over workers' compensation, Cal-OSHA, apprenticeship programs, wages and labor law.

Smith, 44, has spent his career fighting for California's working men and women. For nine years Smith served as the California State Employees Association's governmental relations coordinator.

Emergency Services

Respected firefighter Dallas Jones will head the State Office of Emergency Services. Jones, 55, has been a firefighter for the County of Los Angeles since 1965 and currently serves as Secretary-Treasurer of the California Professional Firefighters and President for the Los Angeles County Firefighters. He is also an advisor to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

CalTrans

San Francisco Supervisor Jose Medina will head California's Department of Transportation. Medina, 57, was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors two years ago where he oversaw transportation projects including roads

and highways, Muni and BART. Medina was a founding member and Director of the Instituto Laboral de la Raza from 1982-94, and was a field organizer for SEIU Local 790 from 1994-96.

Senate Relations & Labor

Bill A. Lloyd was named Director for Senate Relations and Labor Issues. Lloyd, 51, has been involved in the labor movement since the mid-1970's. He has served as East Bay Director for SEIU Local 790, Vice President for the California Federation of Labor, Western Regional Director for the A. Philip Randolph Institute and is on the Executive Committee of Alameda County's Central Labor Council.

Personnel Administration

Marty Morganstern will head the Department of Personnel Administration. Morganstern had been Director of the Governor's Office of Employee Relations and he was DPA's first director.

Morganstern, 64, was instrumental in creating legislation to bring about collective bargaining for state workers. He served as Chair of the Center for Labor Research and Education. California at U.C. Berkeley's Institute of Industrial Relations.

The IAM District 190
Sparkplug



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The Sparkplug is the official publication of District Lodge 190 and its affiliated local lodges and notification of any meeting or election in this paper shall constitute official notice per Article B, Section 4 of the IAMAW Constitution and Articles V and VII of District Lodge 190 By-Laws.

IAM District Lodge 190
7717 Oakport Street
Oakland, CA 94621



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The joys of being a steward

Besides attending lots of exciting meetings, what do shop stewards do, anyway?

Don Crosatto, District 190 Organizing Director says "this is not a glamour job. For the most part, you learn it OJT — on the job training — and you make it up as you go along. While most employers will give you the time you need to bring the members up to date about union issues, even that's not guaranteed. So you do it on your own time."

Being a steward is more than just a headache. It's a source of respect, camaraderie, and information. Most stewards will agree that it always feels great to help their fellow employees.

"An important goal for stewards is to settle problems quickly and quietly before they become crises" Crosatto said.

District Lodge 190 has about 400 stewards who take responsibility for trying to solve problems that arise between employees and employers, filing grievances when necessary, disseminating information from the union about benefits and other opportunities. And stewards are always involved in negotiations when the contracts are up.

MGM Brake members well-served

Ted Emell is a Local 1596 member in Cloverdale, who's worked at MGM Brake for 32 years and has been shop steward for the last eight. Ted makes sure that the company is going by the contract.

"If there's a dispute, I first try to work it out with Human Resources. If I can't resolve it there, I'll bring it to our Business Agent.

"So far we've only had to take two or three cases to arbitration. But we're fortunate to be able to work things out."

Ted has helped negotiate five

contracts, and the next one expires on March 1. "The biggest issues are wages, hospitalization and pension, but we always have a few small proposals to push for."

According to Emell, "the best thing about being a steward is trying to make it a better workplace for my fellow workers."

The worst thing, he sighed, is that "you can't always give the members the news they want to hear, so sometimes you have to be the bad guy."

Involvement is key

For Local 1101's Mark Reville, involvement is what's important. The union has a good relationship with MicroMet, his employer, and so "they give me the time I need to talk with the members. I just make sure not to abuse it."

Mark was successful in getting a couple of guys reinstated, "which felt really good."

Kevin Ferguson, from Stevens Creek BMW, isn't officially the steward, but because he sits on the Local 1101 Executive Board, he shares many of the duties. "I definitely hear about it the loudest if the members aren't happy."

Kevin says "it's important to keep the members up to date and share information. But even more than that, it's rewarding to have input into something. If you're not willing to fight for the union today, what will be there tomorrow?"

Watch the union

Ruben Jaramillo works at Piercey Toyota. He became a steward in 1969, not long after he joined Local 1101. "I wanted to keep an eye on the union and make sure it was doing the right thing." Now, he believes being a steward is an important way to be involved. And, 30 years later, he can still keep an eye on the union.

Local 1546 pays tribute to shop stewards

"The real stars tonight are the shop stewards from our 300 shops," proclaimed Organizing Director Don Crosatto as he opened the December 15 Local 1546 Shop Steward Recognition Dinner. More than 200 people attended the annual event at the Willow Park Country Club in Castro Valley and were treated to dinner, dancing, and raffle of tickets to sporting events, the Guide Dogs golf tournament, watches and more.

The winner of this year's Al James Memorial Shop Steward Plaque was Ken Davison of Signer Buick Cadillac. Crosatto explained that the choice of Davison was both easy and difficult, as Davison doesn't currently work at a union shop. "But," according to Crosatto, "the only reason his shop was union for as long as it was—and it will be union again—is due to the hard work of Davison. He walked the picket lines, sat at the

bargaining table, strived to regain the pension and benefits package and always encouraged new members."

Davison's advice: "you must keep fighting for what you know is right and never stop." Although Ken has not yet been successful at reinstating the union at Signer, he



Ken Davison receives Al James Memorial Shop Steward Plaque from District 190 Organizing Director Don Crosatto

has vowed to keep trying.

The plaque was named for Al James, a long-time activist and member of Local 1546 who died in 1989.

"I'm so proud of this award named in my husband's honor, said his widow Iola James. "Al was a dedicated member of this union, and I'll try to be here every year to help pass the torch to others who share that commitment."



AROUND THE LOCALS

Tale of persistence: Firestone settles

Local 1546 hasn't been able to get a contract with the East Bay's four Firestone stores since 1994.

The company tried every trick in the book to dump the union including a de-cert election, withdrawing recognition, and refusing to negotiate in good faith. Consistently slapped by the NLRB, they still sought to take away the pension plan and institute a large co-pay on the health insurance.

Although the employees are all new since this latest round of contract talks began, if nothing else, they'll enjoy an excellent

benefit package.

Congratulations to all who participated in this protracted effort.

Big contracts up for Local 1596

Two big contracts for Local 1596 are due to expire soon. At Cloverdale's MGM Brakes, the contract expires on March 1. On April 30 the contract is up at Hosokawa Manufacturing in Santa Rosa.

According to Business Agent Tom Brandon, "of course, wages and benefits are the biggest issue. Health insurance, in particular is a big concern for both sides, especially as the media reports 10-20% rate hikes."

In addition, all of the

local's independent garages in Santa Rosa and Eureka are up for contract renewal in June.

"It pays to be union"

Hansel Ford and Goodyear both had to pony up back pay for Local 1596 members after their cases were taken to boards of review.

The Hansel employee was awarded 21 days back pay. The Goodyear employee got a whopping \$7,000 check because the company dragged out the case for months. The lesson for Goodyear is that they can't get away with wrongful termination without just cause. And for employees, clearly it pays to be union.

1596 welcomes new Financial Secretary

Congratulations and welcome to Joyce Trumbly, from Amac Plastics, who has just taken over the financial reins at Local 1596. For over twenty years, this position was held by Jerry Fiontino, a 40-year member. "Jerry did a great job for the local," said Business Agent Tom Brandon. "He kept us on the straight and narrow, and he will be missed."

And the winner is...

Gary Tucker, a member of Local 1101, just won a trip to England for being the best

Jaguar tech on the west coast. Tucker has worked at San Jose British Motors for more than 10 years and been in the union for 20-plus years. Congratulations for a well-earned award.

Hard work deserves credit

Mark Reville, a MicroMet employee in the San Jose facility and member of Local 1101, was very involved in organizing the Roseville plant, described in the last issue of *The Sparkplug*. He went to Roseville several times and talked with employees there about the benefits of being union. Many thanks to Mark for sharing his experience and helping ensure a union victory.



GETTING IT, TOGETHER

Another one bites the dust

Besides bad karma, what do you get when you bust a union? Several union busters found out the hard way.

In 1986, Martin Swig and other dealers busted Local 1305's strike against California Porsche-Audi, San Francisco Lincoln Mercury, Ron Greenspan VW, and Martin Swig's San Francisco Auto Center.

At that time, Swig carried 16 lines of cars. His fortunes started with Nissan and grew to include Rolls Royce. But, by 1993, Swig had to start shedding lines, one at a time. Eventually, the original site was bought out, and he moved to Van Ness Avenue in 1995.

Swig's last dealership, a Chrysler store, closed last month. In its place is coming San Francisco Toyota, a union shop.

All of the other dealerships that busted the union in that fateful 1986 strike are also long gone.

Election victory at San Rafael Ford

The mechanics at San Rafael Ford voted to join Local 1414 by a vote of 9-4. In the 80s, the union was busted from this shop, then called Wayne Cross Ford. It took a protracted struggle by Local 1414 to reinstate the union and get the mechanics back. Welcome new members. Negotiations for a first contract are under way now.

Was it the holiday party?

For months, District 190's organizing staff worked to bring the workers at AdTranz into the union fold. They had a strong committee and significant community support. So in December, when the vote came in at 135-79, the disappointment was heavy.

What went wrong? The Pittsburgh-based company showed lots of propaganda films and tried to scare the

employees against voting union. They also sponsored their first-ever Christmas party, and got positive mileage out of it.

Organizing Director Don Crosatto does not believe this fight is over. "I think the public will start turning up the pressure to find out why they've been working for three years and still haven't turned out a BART car, when all of the cars are supposed to be ready by 2002. They'll learn that these

employees aren't getting the training they need and are working under terrible conditions."

Plans are to inform the Labor Councils across the Bay Area about this company to let them know what kind of outfit it is. "We're not giving up on this shop," said Crosatto.

Winning can be the easy part. . .

District 190's organizing program

has had many successes in the past few years, with more than 500 employees at several shops voting to join the IAM. While business agents have successfully negotiated several contracts, others have been much slower in coming. Lexus of Concord (story on page 1) is, unfortunately, not an unusual situation.

Broadway VW: 18 employees here voted to join Local 1546 more than a year ago. There's been progress, but the company just doesn't want a contract. They especially don't want the union pension plan. Pickets were recently spotted in front of the dealership.

Sun Valley Ford: Six service writers voted to join Local 1173. This one might be settled soon.

Napa Ford: Major progress has been made toward a contract for these ten members of Local 1173. This would mark the first union dealership in Napa since 1975.

Fremont Pontiac: After three meetings, there's been progress on non-economic issues for the 21 new members of Local 1546, but the company is pushing hard for a flat rate policy. Negotiators expect that finding agreement on the economic issues will be even tougher.

LTD Ceramics: While the downturn in the computer chip biz has forced major layoffs since the election was held, Local 1584 organizers believe this is the first time the layoffs have been done fairly — by seniority. There's been progress on non-economic bargaining, but this will be a tough nut.

Magnussen Toyota: After a full year of negotiations, these 15 members of Local 2182 in Auburn are driving the company crazy with on-going pickets.

Walnut Creek Honda: The service writers here have filed several unfair labor practice charges against the company, and continue to win them. But they, and Local 1173, still don't have a contract

"I'm glad my day job is union"



Parts by day, Rat Bastards at night



Doug Wagner & Mike Metz
after gig at Cafe Cocomo

Doug "the driver" Wagner and Mike Metz have both worked in the parts department at Broadway Ford for about six months. But that's not all they do.

These two twenty-somethings have been playing music together for more than seven years, and are now part of a rock band called The Rat Bastards. Their music ranges from rockabilly to straight ahead rock 'n roll.

Mike admits, "I know if we weren't in the union, we'd be lucky to make \$5 an hour. At this point, I still need to keep my day job, but I'm glad it offers good benefits."

Both Doug and Mike have joined the picket line at Broadway VW. According to Doug, "the best thing about a union is that people may not even know you personally, but they've got your back. It's important to be part of that kind of community."

As for the band, Doug says, "I want people to leave sweaty and happy, saying 'What was I worried about.'"

Doug muses, "As a driver, I work with every mechanic from Oakland to Richmond, but all our gigs, so far, are in San Francisco. We want to start playing in the East Bay so everyone can hear us."

The Rat Bastards are playing at Annie's on January 28, and at Boomerang on February 25, both in San Francisco.

SHOP TALK: What's the best thing about being a shop steward?



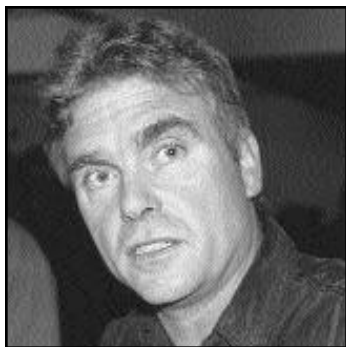
Gene Borges
East Bay Ford Truck
Local 1546

"Working with the union reps. It's a good way to repay all the good the union has done for me over the past 20 years."



Mark Reville
MicroMetallics
Local 1101

"Being directly involved between the the membership and management. And helping our guys with their benefits."



Dennis McGrellis
Mothers Cookies
Local 1546

"Being able to represent the guys in the shop. . . but I've only been a shop steward for two weeks!"



Duane Sandusky
Falore Lincoln-Mercury
Local 1101

"Being able to represent my men — the people I work with."



Rick Jarratt
Mothers Cake & Cookies
Local 1546

"I can fulfill my responsibility to represent my co-workers and serve the union. I'm proud to have been asked."

PacifiCare Ad



BENEFITS NEWS

Good times through good management

While the Automotive Industries Trustees cannot guarantee benefit improvements, making the pension plan stronger and more lucrative for retirees is always their goal. The following good news was distributed in much greater detail by mail in December. If you have any questions, be sure to contact the Administrative Office at 510-832-2484.

**Effective Jan. 1, 1998
Change in Benefit
Accrual Rate**

For retirements effective on or after January 1, 1998, the individual factors for determining the amount of the Normal Retirement Benefit have been changed. For service between September 1, 1955 and January 1, 2000, benefits have been increased from \$4.73 to \$4.90 for each \$100 of Fund contributions made on your behalf. For service after January 1, 2000, the rates remain as they had been.

Retiree Increase

Pensioners and Beneficiaries with a pension effective date prior to January 1, 1998 (with some stipulations) will receive a 1% increase in the monthly benefit amount.

Extra Benefit Check

Pensioners and Beneficiaries with a pension effective date prior to January 1, 1998 (with some stipulations) will receive a one-time "extra" check equal to the amount of their monthly pension check for December 1997.

**Effective May 1, 1998
120-month guarantee**

Participants may elect to

receive their pension benefits in the form of a Single Life Annuity with 120-Month guarantee.

Of course pension benefits are payable for your lifetime, but if you live less than 120 months after retirement, monthly payments will continue to your surviving spouse, or if none, to your eligible dependents until a total of 120 monthly payments have been made.

Participants who retired on or after May 1, 1998 have until March 1, 1999 to change to the 120-month guarantee benefit option.

Please contact the Administrative Office for a new benefit election form if you want to change plans.

**Effective Jan. 1, 1999
Change in lump sum
distribution amount**

If at the time of retirement the actuarial present value of a participant's monthly benefit is \$5,000.00 or less, the actuarial present value of the benefit will be paid in a lump sum instead of a monthly benefit. Previously, a benefit was paid lump sum if the actuarial present value was \$3,500 or less.

SHOP TALK: What's the best thing about being a shop steward?



Robert Reisman
Almaden Mazda
Local 1101

"I get paid for coming to steward meetings!"



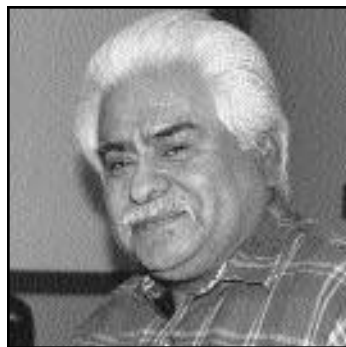
Loring Drouillard
Honda of El Cerrito
Local 1546

"I enjoy helping the guys out. . . making sure the contract is in order."



Troy Cummings
Pearson Oldsmobile
Local 1101

"Just being involved."



Tony Garcia
Coca Cola
Local 1546

"The headaches! Actually, I can tell the boss about problems and give feedback, which is important."



Juan Diaz
Anderson Chevrolet
Local 1101

"Being aware of things as they happen, and gaining respect from the other employees."

Keeping Muni on the road (Continued from page 1)

the mechanics. I meet vendors every day who work with other transit agencies and they are amazed that we've been able to keep the buses on the road at all."

Good news is that a new fleet of buses were ordered and are due to start arriving in a year and a half. Benedetti warned, however,



Tom Curran, Acting Supervising Manager and Local 1414 President

that it may take several months to check out fleet defects and get them safely on the road.

Both Benedetti and Curran lamented the large number of vacancies among the mechanics' crew. Ten years ago, Muni had 117 mechanics; now they're down to 94, and yet, this division alone has 24 additional buses. While Curran admitted that Muni tries to do the outreach needed to find skilled mechanics, "this is one place that management has let us down." Until recently, the positions were all "provisional" and some positions could receive an additional \$2 more per hour outside of Muni.

"The longer they keep the buses, the more we have to do. When you go it to fix one part, you realize that everything that part was connected to is also falling apart," said mechanic Usbaldo Gonzalez.

"I went to the Grand National Transportation Rodeo. There we get to work on new equipment with new technology.



What a difference," said Vernon Ting.

"Muni gets a lot of negative publicity," says Steven Lind, a

David Hom, a newcomer at Muni.



Randy Holliday

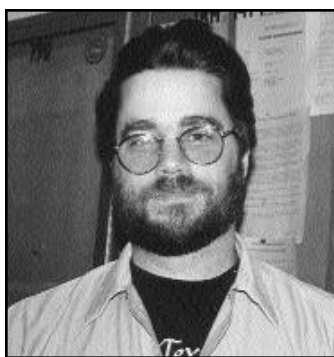
seven-year Muni veteran. "I keep seeing articles about what bums we are. Some of us work really hard under difficult circumstances."

"The negative press is tough; it sure doesn't make you want to come to work," agrees Randy Holliday. "Everyone here is conscientious and wants to do a good job, but it's a challenge when you're working on a 15-16 year old piece of equipment that should have been retired three years ago."

When Pete Hambrick came to Muni 15 years ago, "things were in much worse shape. I worked on nothing but brakes for the first six months."

"Now," he says, the fleet is in much better shape. Sure, Muni has its problems, but San Franciscans are just spoiled rotten."

"We've got good, hard-working people here," says Shop Supervisor Tom Wurm.



Tom Wurm

"Some real gems. It's hard to find mechanics who know what they're doing, and there's always a learning curve to move from cars to buses. But our guys go through the apprenticeship program and are well trained. When you get a good mechanic, you definitely want to keep him."

"Bottom line," says steward Benedetti, if they want to make Muni work, we need new equipment. Our mechanics can only work so many miracles."



Pete Hambrick



INDUSTRY NEWS

Dealerships help drive strong economy

Franchised new car and truck dealerships are a significant force in the nation's retail economy, according to the National Automobile Dealers Association.

Accounting for nearly 20% of total retail U.S. sales, dealerships sold a record \$508 billion in goods and services in 1997.

Employment at dealerships also reached an all-time high, rising to 1,056,400 or 5% of the nation's retail workforce. At \$37.4 billion, dealership payrolls represented 12% of the nation's total retail payroll. The average individual dealership had 47 employees and an annual payroll of \$1.65 million.

• **California** dealerships had the highest retail sales, at \$53.6 billion. As a percentage of total state retail sales, **Texas** dealerships topped the list, at 23.9%

• **Nevada** dealership employees were the best paid. Their weekly earnings averaged \$840. The national average was \$680.

• **North Dakota's** dealership payroll was the highest percentage of total state retail payroll at 14.6%

• **Oklahoma** and **Maryland** dealerships employed the greatest percentage of total state retail employees, at 5.6% each.

"Keep techs with golf club memberships"

The following appeared in *Ward's Auto Dealer*, a magazine for dealership owners.

For body shop managers, no more difficult challenge exists than replacing a trained technician.

Managers in many ways can prepare for a vacancy problem and then find a replacement, says Mark Claypool, executive director of the I-CAR Education Foundation which was organized in 1991 to address the shortage crisis.

"And it is a crisis," Claypool declares. "About 48,000 body repair specialists left their jobs in 1997, about 25% of the industry's total. Some 8,800 retired or moved to other jobs, like estimator, and more than 10,000 left for other industries.

"Considering that the rest moved to other body shops, and shops found 5,200 replacements with entry-level graduates of vocational training schools, 15,000 or so openings were left."

Industry analysts advocate various measures to retain personnel including: maximizing pay and benefits packages, free memberships in health and golf clubs; providing lifts that can be raised to comfortable working heights; maintaining a clean and safe work environment; partnering with local training schools, and donating funds for student training scholarships.

Editor's Note:

What do we want?

Golf club memberships!

When do we want them?

After we've got a contract for good wages and benefits, a pension plan, and union representation!

SHOP TALK: What's the best thing about being a shop steward?



Dave Lewis
Penske Truck Leasing
Local 1546

"My days off!"



Kevin Ferguson
Stevens Creek BMW
Local 1101

"Keeping the members up-to-date. As a member of the E-Board, I hear first if the members aren't happy."



Albert Almaguer
Grand Auto—Livermore
Local 1546

"You get to meet and work with a lot of good people. I'm proud of our union."



Jerome Trask
Swanson Ford
Local 1101

"It gives you the opportunity to keep your fellow members informed about insurance, pension and union issues."



Marjorie Rodgers
Dynair Fueling
Local 1546

"I just become a steward in the last few months, but it's great to come to functions like this—the annual dinner."

Cindy Chavez From Local 11 01 to City Hall

On Tuesday, November 3, 1998, voters in San Jose's District 3 elected Cindy Chavez to represent them in City Council. Formerly on the staff of the South Bay Labor Council as Director of Education and Organizing, Cindy is a member of Local 1101.

This was seen as an important victory for labor, as the San Jose City Council recently voted for the nation's highest living wage provisions, and had stopped an anti-union Super K from opening.

The Sparkplug interviewed Cindy to find out how it feel to go from union activist to elected official.

SP: What made you decide to run for City Council?

CC: I had worked on so many other people's campaigns over the years, but I was often disappointed to see that once we — in labor — helped get them elected, they didn't respond to us. Rather than backing another candidate, I decided to become one, so I could do the right thing.

SP: How was the race? Who was your opposition?

CC: The race was much harder than I expected. Business lined up against me heavy. My opponent, Tony West, is a federal prosecutor, so crime was his big issue. It became a fight between the working class and non-working class. It was very challenging, but absolutely worth it.

SP: Was support from labor important to your victory? What did union members do?

CC: Labor was the backbone of my campaign. They walked precincts and did phone banking. They were gracious, helpful, and never let me hang out there by myself. But then it's also hard to be dubbed the "labor candidate," because that probably helped my opponent line up \$25,000 in donations from business, well outspending the \$10,000 I raised.



San Jose's new city council member Cindy Chavez

SP: What are your goals as a Council member?

CC: My main goal is to bring all the communities into city hall. The neighborhoods in the downtown area have been marginalized. I want to open the democratic process and make sure everybody has a say-so. I'm also very concerned about economic development, and making the neighborhoods the best places they can be.

SP: What advice do you have for labor unions, now that you're in a position of power?

CC: I ran out of concern that unions maintain their influence on the people they help get elected. Unions have to keep open communication and plan regular meetings to educate elected officials—before issues become crises. When you're in the midst of a fight, it's hard for either side to be open-minded, especially when everyone is pointing fingers in each others' faces.

SP: What kind of advice do you have for other union members who want to run for office?

CC: Get involved in your community and in your union. An excellent place to start is with your Labor Council's political program, because you'll see how the process works.



GOOD WORKS



Pickets support union cause as they earn their way out of shelters.

Picketing: Not just a job, it's a way out of the shelter

Elizabeth Murray was stuck in a homeless shelter trying to make ends meet when she happened upon a picket at 5th and Brannan in San Francisco. She saw friends from the shelter there and wondered if she could join the line.

That was last August. She has since been earning \$8 an hour working as a full-time picket for Local 1414.

Murray came to San Francisco after getting flooded out of Lodi. But until she learned about the picket positions, the city of opportunity seemed limited to life in the shelter. Elizabeth has since "made a lot of friends on the line, and the money is good."

According to organizer Steve Gatto, the local went to St. Vincent de Paul to find people who wanted to work. "We started with 90 pickets, but over time, they weeded themselves out. Now we have 45 full-time people."

Jose Ponce has been a picket for four months. A musician by trade, he likes the work because it offers him the flexibility to pick up his kids after school.

Henry Inocencio had been serving time, but now he's serving the union. "It's a just cause. We've got to get these people back to the bargaining table."

Bobby Dansby thinks "this is the best thing that could happen. It's really helped our lives." Dansby has been living in a shelter, but this work gives him an opportunity to save for an apartment.

Picket captain Ricky Freeman has been running the lines for six months. A printer by trade, he tries to keep morale up and keep the line moving. He's in charge of scheduling and dealing with problems. "I try to make it feel like a family. Once a week we all chip in and buy lunch and sodas together."

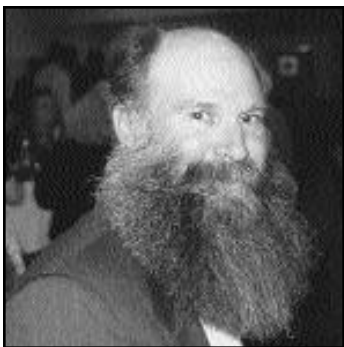
According to Freeman, "this country was built on unions. It's important for us to help keep them around."

Robert Mills has his own place now, thanks to five months of picket work. Mills knows "it could be worse. I enjoy doing this because we really get along."

Bobby Smith knows he's working on something positive, and "this keeps me out of trouble. I learn something every day, and this is much better than hanging out on a street corner."

Local 1414 is currently running picket lines at Royal Motors in San Francisco, Golden Gate Volkswagen in Daly City, Menlo Mazda and Towne Ford, both in Redwood City.

SHOP TALK: What's the best thing about being a shop steward?



Ken Stoner
Pacific Motor Trucking
Local 1546

"Getting to go to the shop steward dinner!"



Ruben Jaramillo
Piercey Toyota
Local 1101

"I started 30 years ago to keep an eye on the union. Now I know it's an important way to be involved."



Joe Araujo
Cochran Celli
Local 1546

"Getting a chance to control things. . .or at least have a hand in them."



Roger Nunez
Lucky Stores
Local 1546

"I like to help our members and the people who work where I work."



Gary Tucker
San Jose British Motors
Local 1101

"It helps me keep in touch with my guys. I enjoy being able to work with them and the union."

Lexus of Concord strike continued from page 1



January 13 support rally attracts more than 100 union members.

dealership. Additional charges are being heard by the NLRB in March.

Several area mechanics joined the 7 a.m. picket on their way to work. When asked what he had that the Lexus employees didn't, John Merryfield from Concord Nissan responded, "we have a contract. . . and we get respect."

"We've got to show the conglomerate dealerships how important the union is to us," said Rick Rodgers from Diablo Lincoln-Mercury. "I give these guys a lot of credit for fighting for the union. It really takes courage."

Jobs on the line

The mechanics will not be eligible for strike benefits and are literally putting their jobs on the line to achieve a first agreement.

"These are skilled workers who want to be working, not picketing," said Dutton. "They bring years of experience and thousands of dollars worth of tools to every car they work on. But instead of respect and a fair contract, all they've gotten are delays."

After three hours of picketing in the chilly morning air, the company called a "citizens arrest" of organizer Jesse Juarez. Charged with dis-

turbing the peace, Juarez was held by local police for one hour, and immediately returned to the picket line upon his release.

County solidarity

The Contra Costa Labor Council called for a mass picket, seeking support from unions across the county. Over 100 people came out on January 13 to support the Lexus mechanics.

According to John Dalrymple, Secretary-Treasurer of the Council, "this problem goes beyond this one shop. We have to make sure that when workers vote to unionize, they can actually get a contract."

"I don't know how to run any other kind of shop than a union shop"



Local 1546 shop steward Dave Massetti



Henry Hanzel with one of the 13 tow trucks his father designed and built.



Howard Scott, Body man



Terry Pitts, Painter



Bodyman Warren Leslie, still going strong at 72!



Body-man Marty Honda

Hanzel's Auto Body Works: Union for three generations

In 1936, when the IAM first started unionizing auto repair shops, an organizer went into Hanzel's Body Works in Oakland. He told then-owner Sigmund Hanzel about the benefits of being a union shop.

Hanzel thought about it for a minute and agreed to a contract. "But," warned the organizer, "you'll have to pay the guys \$1.25 an hour."

Sigmund scratched his chin and said "If the guys are willing to take less, then it sounds fine with me." At the time, Hanzel's was paying \$1.50 an hour.

But, he didn't make the guys take less. His shop was one of Local 1546's first, and grandson Henry Hanzel has inherited the union tradi-

tion from Sigmund and his father Ed. The shop was first opened in 1924, and moved to its current location on 23rd Street near what's now Oakland's Auto Row in 1946.

Henry Hanzel says "I don't know how to run any other kind of shop than a union shop. The union hall is a good source for employees, although I can't say we have much turnover. The biggest benefit of the union is that we have a fair and even working agreement—for me and for the employees."

Now in the second year of a five year contract with Local 1546, Hanzel recalls that "negotiations were low key. We pay the same wages as the other union shops, so that keeps us on an even footing."

Shop steward Dave Massetti said "This proves that you can have a small shop, be union and still be successful."

And business has been pretty good at Hanzel's. With four body men, three painters, and three people staffing the office, they keep busy doing the body work for Negherbon and other independent dealerships in the area.

When an IBEW member overheard this interview, he interrupted to ask if he heard right, and was this a union shop? "Cool, that's the way it should be," he said as he made an appointment for service.



Denny Vargas, Painter

ATPA

ASSOCIATED THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATORS

ASSOCIATED THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATORS (ATPA) is the administrator for the Automotive Industries Pension and Welfare Trust Funds and Machinist Health Plans (Active and Retiree).

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