

# The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



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Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

*"The unions aren't becoming more aggressive — the companies are."*

## Sometimes striking is the only option



After five weeks on the street, Local 1414 members got a decent contract at Serramonte Ford.

Since the summer, members at five of District 190's ten Locals have gone on strike. The eight mechanics at Folsom Buick-Pontiac-GMC, have been on the street for more than three months, now.

Before this wave of strikes started, there were only a few short strikes in the last four years.

"When someone walks off the job, it's the last resort," says Area Director Vern Dutton. "It's a huge, huge decision. You have to be up against the wall and be fully prepared never to go back to work there again, because you have nothing else to lose."

### Why now?

"A lot of these folks were coming off long-term contracts that started before the economy peaked," explains Area Director Don Crosatto. "Now, things are a lot tighter and employers are making some fairly measly proposals. Our members are saying 'that's not enough—we're not putting up with that. We just can't afford to, here in the Bay Area.'"

"The unions aren't becoming more aggressive, the companies are," says Dutton. "Lithia wanted to take away the pension, four holidays, seniority rights, the union

medical plan and add \$400 per month in co-pays," when Local 1173 first started negotiations with Lithia Dodge of Concord. "When the company says 'that's our offer—take it or leave it,' what can you do? You just have to fight."

This is not just happening in the U.S. Europe has now become a battleground between privatizing national governments and downsizing corporations on the one side and a growing militancy in the trade unions on the other.

In Britain, firefighters, teachers and local council workers went on strike in November, while in France, truckers, railway, subway and bus workers, air traffic controllers, nurses, civil servants, postal workers, telecoms, radio and TV workers went on strike. Blockades and street demonstrations involving hundreds of thousands shook the country.

Corporate mergers have created business monsters at the same time the economy—in the U.S. and globally—is on shaky ground. Across the globe, corporations are pushing a race to the bottom, as if the answer to business' woes is cutting workers' wages and benefits to the bone.

### Strikes around the district

At some point, workers say that they won't take it any more. Those decisions don't come easy.

"This is not something that the union pushes," says Crosatto. "getting a strike authorized takes two votes, and we don't want anyone to go out on strike unless there's really no other option."

### Serramonte Ford & Falore Chrysler-Jeep

In October, Colma's auto row was filled with strikers from one end to the other, as the 66 technicians, service writers, and body shop workers were on the streets in front of Serramonte Ford, and the 11 technicians and service writers walked out of Falore Chrysler-Jeep.

Local 1414 was negotiating with one attorney who was hired to represent these dealerships and three others. "His agenda was to get an inexpensive agreement for a long period of time and make many changes that would weaken the employees wages, hours and conditions of work," says

*continued on page 3*

## The staff and officers of District Lodge 190 wish you a very happy holiday season.

*Enjoy your family...support your community...don't shop at Wal-Mart!*



Members of the IAM, Teamsters, UFCW and other unions picketed Wal-Mart's San Leandro store on November 21.

On Thursday, November 21, thousands of union and community members nationwide challenged Wal-Mart to live up to its responsibilities as a corporate citizen. Launching the holiday season with pickets at more than 300 Wal-Mart stores, protesters called attention to the company's failure to pay a living wage, its refusal to provide decent benefits and its systematic denial of dignity to its workers.

Wal-Mart is the largest U.S. retailer, but it pays the smallest wages in the industry. The money you *may* save by shopping at Wal-Mart comes directly out of the paychecks of the company's employees.

Support good union employers this holiday season. Don't shop at Wal-Mart!



## SACRAMENTO REPORT

### Labor plays major role in November elections

If it weren't for members of unions walking precincts and staffing phonebanks, the pro-labor majority that swept into office in California on November 5 might instead be looking for jobs.

Union members supported incumbent Governor Gray Davis by a 57% to 32% margin, putting him over the top. Non-union voters preferred Bill Simon by a vote of 45% to 44%.

More than 1.8 million union members came to the polls, representing 28% of all voters in the state. In the end, Davis won by a narrow margin of 47.5% to 42.4%—he could not have done it without Labor!

California's unions helped other candidates win close races and drove a few more to resounding victory.

Cruz Bustamante, Bill Lockyer, Phil Angelides and Jack O'Connell won by solid margins, while Kevin Shelley and John Garamendi won by smaller leads. Steve Westly, who led by a fraction of a point, announced that victory would have been impossible without Labor's help in the form of phone calls and mail.

An aggressive get-out-the-vote effort in the 18th Congressional District put Dennis Cardoza over the top—boosting the pro-labor Democratic majority lead among California's Congressional delegation from 32-21 to 33-20.

#### Now that we won...

We have little time to savor these

victories: the state of the national economy and the antipathy of the Bush Administration will severely impact California workers.

The time is now to hold our "pro-labor" friends accountable, and ensure they keep the promises they made to us.

The time is now to address the crisis in health care before it breaks

the bank of our trust funds. Future state budgets require balance to protect programs while increasing revenues by restoring fair taxes paid in the top tax brackets by the wealthiest Californians.

Labor clearly made the difference in this election. Now Labor must ensure that our money and time was well spent.

#### Important victory for immigrant workers

When SB 1818, sponsored by Senator Gloria Romero, passed the California legislature and was signed into law by Governor Davis, you couldn't find anyone happier than Pedro Mendez, organizer for District Lodge 190.

"We had been doing so much to bring immigrant workers into the union and then the Supreme Court wrote a terrible decision that made our work that much harder," he said.

The decision Mendez referred to is called the Hoffman decision and it basically states that immigration policy prohibits an award of back pay to an undocumented worker who was not legally authorized to work in the U.S. In real terms, this means that employers may mistreat immigrant workers in terms of pay and working conditions and the workers have no legal recourse. This decision was seen as an open invitation to use, abuse, and then deport people not legally in this country.

SB 1818 overrides the Hoffman decision and guarantees that state agencies will assess penalties against employers who are found to violate the labor, employment, and civil rights of all workers, without regard for immigrant status.

"The Hoffman decision is detrimental to all workers, and is especially harmful to immigrant workers who, once again, will become the scapegoats in this shaky economy," said Romero. "SB 1818 sends a signal from the California Legislature that despite the decision on backpay, we stand by our laws to pay the minimum wage, to provide for overtime pay, to protect whistleblowers, to ensure compliance with Cal-OSHA standards, as well as other worker protections; and we will not bend."

Romero personally thanked Mendez and IAM District 190 for their help in passing SB 1818.



## EMPLOYER PROFILE

### Experience and a large inventory keep SP Automotive competitive

Currently 46 members of Locals 1546 and 1173 work at one of SP Automotive's five auto parts shops. "We just got a new three year contract, and it's pretty good," says Local 1546 Business Rep Pat Woodward. "We think people need to know about this company, because they've been a good union employer for a long time."

In fact, the company was founded in February 1947 and has been a union shop since 1951. Randy Ricky has been a co-owner of SP Automotive for the past 25 years, and he worked there for nine years before buying in.

SP Automotive has five retail/wholesale auto parts stores in Contra Costa, Alameda and Solano Counties and two machine shops. With a

70/30 mix of wholesale to retail, they certainly get their share of walk-ins, but mostly they sell to Kragen, Sears, Firestone and Goodyear.

"Experience is our biggest plus. I feel we have the best employees in our business—our average employee has been with us for 15 years," Ricky says. "We wear a lot of hats and try to service the whole industry. I'm proud of our service. And, of course, we have a large inventory."

#### The last contract

"We want to be fair to our people, and give good raises," Ricky says. But then he explains that he had a 40% increase in workers comp, a 20% increase in medical and a 15% increase in liability insurance. "It's

hard to please everyone, be competitive and make money all at the same time."

Most of SP's major competitors are not unionized. "That was my major complaint in negotiations," Ricky says. "We pay better and give better benefits than the competition."

Ricky works to make SP Automotive a good corporate citizen and neighbor. "We belong to the Chamber of Commerce in each city where

we have a store, and we give to each city, on an alternating basis, the proceeds from our annual Customer Appreciation Golf Tournament."

Business has had its ups and downs. Ricky says that 2001 was a really good year, and the first five months of this year were good. "The last five months have been sluggish though, probably due to the overall economy," Ricky says. "I think it'll pick up, though," he adds.



Don Bonini and Bruce Lloyd work the parts desk at SP's Martinez shop

#### Moving? The union needs to know!

If you plan to move or have moved already, please notify your Local Union office immediately. Use the mailing label on this newspaper, or write your name, local number, and address clearly and send it to your Local.

See calendar on page 8 for your local union's address.

The IAM District 190

**Sparkplug**



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## First master agreement for IAM workers at UPS almost set

The IAM entered into its first negotiations with United Parcel Service (UPS) for a national Master Agreement on behalf of 3,200 workers who repair and maintain Big Brown's familiar fleet of delivery trucks and vans.

The IAM mechanics and maintenance workers are covered by 21 separate agreements at more than 100 UPS locations nationwide, where local negotiations resolved most work-rule issues. The national agreement will deal with pay, benefits and job security language.

"This coordinated approach is designed to deliver the economic benefits of a new contract to members nationwide in the most equitable fashion possible," said Boysen Anderson, lead negotiator and coordinator of the IAM's Automotive Department.

### District 190 at the table

Directing Business Rep Jim Beno and Local 2182 Business Rep Mark

Martin represented District 190's approximately 200 members who work at UPS.

Most of the negotiations took place in Florida in October. A final meeting, slated for Atlanta, Georgia in early December should put the final touches on a tentative agreement. Ratification meetings with members will be scheduled shortly thereafter. "We'll try to bring as many people together in one meeting as possible, but we're pretty spread out," Beno said.

"The negotiations have been positive," Beno said. "The framework of the economic settlement is positive in terms of our members. But of course, you don't know what will happen at the last minute, so we can't reveal any details until there's a final contract."

According to Beno, the master agreement covers the monetary issues and is only a few pages. "This gets us into the Master Agreement concept. At the end of this process, all of the 21 contracts will be tied into

the same expiration date," he said.

"The process was more complex than either side originally anticipated," said Mark Martin about the 31 separate and distinct job classifications throughout country that needed to be addressed. "We decided as a group that we wanted to take the time to do this right. We didn't want any group to slip through the cracks."

### Key issues identified

Key issues identified by members for the national negotiations included placing limits on repair work being contracted out and control of rising health care costs for active and retired members.

"We've had constant battles over subcontracting," Martin said. "We just went through a grievance hearing at the Stockton facility and proved that the work they brought in a subcontractor to do was our work. We figured out how many hours the subcontractor took and translated that into pay for our members."

Some of our guys missed some Saturday work. They can either work our guys more overtime or hire more help."

District 190 sponsored Local Committee meetings in Oakland which were held prior to the national meetings in Florida. "We reached tentative agreements on many issues in Local negotiations," Martin said.

"UPS is a highly successful company with a worldwide reputation for quality service," said Boysen Anderson. "IAM members help maintain that reputation and deserve to be compensated accordingly. There is no limit to what we can accomplish together if we take full advantage of the opportunity before us."

"I want to express my thanks to each member of this negotiating committee," said Anderson. "We came together in the finest IAM tradition to bargain in a united, coordinated fashion. Ultimately, we will prevail."

## Strikes all over

*continued from page 1*

Area Director Charles Netherby. "For the most part, his agenda failed."

"All we're looking for is a fair contract," said Ralph Sizemore, who was on the bargaining committee at Serramonte Ford. "This is a good company—we want them to stay in business. We're just asking to be competitive with other dealers in the area."

The techs were out for five weeks at Serramonte Ford and Netherby believes they felt the strike was worthwhile. They got retroactive pay, pension increases, wage increases and language protection for some new classifications.

Unfortunately, since they ended the strike, the employer has had to downsize. "He's only been able to recall 18 people because business that was once there is gone. It takes a while to build the business back up."

The guys at Falore went back to work a week sooner and didn't get as good a contract, Netherby says. "They weighed the alternatives, and made a decision that they could live with."

Netherby says that the wife of one of the strikers asked him "how long are you going to keep these guys on strike?" My answer was...it's up to the guys. It's their destiny, not mine."

Netherby says that he makes recommendations, evaluates whether the language is protective enough or whether the wages meet the standards of the industry. "But it's their decision to accept or reject the contract."

"The end result of a labor dispute is not tangible," adds Netherby. "It's not like fixing a broken automobile. The improvements gained by a labor dispute are sometimes not recognized until decades later, in terms of base wage rates and pensions. Then we have to be thankful for those who struck before us."

### East Bay Clarklift

In September, 26 members of Local 1546 went on strike at East Bay Clarklift in Oakland. "The economic package was short," says Business Rep Mike Cook, "and there were issues around emergency roadwork." But the real issue was respect. "They struck more for respect than for anything else."

"I don't like strikes," says Cook. "When our guys at East Bay Clarklift decided to walk, this was my first strike in 16 years."

As a result of the strike, "we got a four-year contract with some important increases, but more, there's now better accountability on the training program, and the employer is more cooperative with the union. We're hoping to be part of the survival of this company in the tough economic times due to come. We're working to keep this company in business and move them forward," Cook says.

Cook wanted to give special credit to shop steward Larry Stewart. "He did an incredible job. He organized the strike, knowing that he was negotiating himself out of a job. This is about integrity, and he's really got it."



Members at Falore Chrysler-Jeep were striking just down the road from Serramonte Ford

### Lithia Dodge of Concord

What the 32 members of Local 1173 were facing in Concord was not just a contract that called for take-aways, but a multi-billion dollar, out-of-state company that wants to impose Oregon standards on the Bay Area. "It doesn't work. You can't allow an outside company to set the standards, or else it'll be a race to the bottom." Dutton says. "You'll either take what they offer because they have billions of dollars. Or you fight to the bitter end."

The techs at Lithia agreed to end their strike after 12 days because the employer promised to come back to the table and work in good faith for a contract. Six weeks and many negotiations meetings later, Dutton has his doubts that they'll get something they can live with.

"This is a contract that has been in effect for years, but we have to go to war just to maintain it. And if we get something here, we already see the next fights looming at Concord Toyota and Nissan."

At the end of the day, Dutton says, "the only thing that working people have is to withhold their labor and this has to be in these employers' minds, or they won't give you a contract. They certainly won't give it to you because they like you."

## Still on the streets at Folsom Buick/Pontiac/GMC

All they wanted was to have union representation and fair contract, but, instead, the eight techs at Folsom Buick/Pontiac/GMC have been on strike since August 26.

"And they're still holding, 100% strong," says Organizer Joe Coy. "It's been fairly ugly; we've had to file several police reports on the owners, and one of the picketers was attacked by a customer. They've even had people try to run us over."

Coy says that the picketers have been out on the street seven days a week—except for Halloween. "I didn't want to be accused of something phony," he said.

"We don't know how or why he keeps on going like this. Before the strike he was selling 240 cars a month. We think he's sold 30 cars since the strike started."

In the meantime, the Labor Board is moving very slowly. "They've taken some affidavits, but they're dragging their feet," says Area Director Howard Hays. "The Board doesn't seem to be giving this case a priority, probably because of the few number of employees and shortage of board employees."

Moving into the holidays makes a strike take an even greater toll. "Our members, have poured their hearts out as well as their pocketbooks," says Coy. "I want to give special thanks to our members at Crystal Cream, Teichert, Lasher, Great Valley, Earth Grains, Toyota Material Handling, Aerojet, as well as our brothers and sisters from the CWA and Teamsters. These folks have joined us on the picket line and shown that solidarity still works."

## AROUND

## Talks start slowly in South Bay

Glenn Gandolfo reports that negotiations between Local 1101 and the Silicon Valley Motor Car Dealers Association got a delayed start, due to the employer rep's illness. "We're moving ahead in the language area, but like with everyone, Health and Welfare coverage will be a big issue, with high premiums on the horizon." Gandolfo reports.

He adds that administration of the Trust fund has been a disaster. "We have to repair this or find a new administration." Watch *The Sparkplug* for updates on these talks.

## Future's not too rosy

An election was held at Future Ford in Roseville last September but, at presstime, the results were still sealed. "The National Labor Relations Board has investigated all of the unfair labor practice charges we filed," explained Organizer Joe Coy. "The company stacked the unit, calling people technicians who really don't do the skilled work."

In all, 34 people participated in the election, "but this dealership has done its best to scare people. Guys are sick and tired of it—they're leaving the shop."

The NLRB will decide between accepting the election results and holding a new election. "Unfortu-

nately, we know that they'll take their sweet time," adds Coy. "And we don't know how many of our guys will stick around for it."

## Bankruptcy leads to better benefits

In 2001, union National Car Rental merged with non-union Alamo Rent-a-Car and then declared bankruptcy. After a year of bargaining, the nine former employees of Alamo who now work at National at SFO have become members of Local 1414.

"Their wage increases will be up to \$3 an hour, their health care plan will cover family and dependents, they'll get four additional paid holidays, and will join the Automotive Industries Pension Plan," says Area Director Charles Netherby. "It sure pays to be union."

## Scuttling at Scully

Even after five of the seven employees at Scully National Lease in West Sacramento signed cards to initiate a union election, the election has never been held.

"The company just started to fire people," says Organizer Joe Coy. "The NLRB told me that they plan to issue a complaint about one of the fellows who was terminated, getting him back pay for when he was unemployed plus back pay for his current job that's paying him less. They also said that another fel-

low was improperly disciplined and they'll get that discipline removed from his file."

Coy is hopeful about the outcome and will stick to the guys here who want to join the union, but he doesn't expect that an election will happen any time soon.

## Strikes avoided

The same attorney that Local 1414 was confronting Falore and Serramonte Ford was representing three additional dealerships on the Peninsula. The members at two of these dealerships got contracts without having to resort to a strike, and the final shop—Peter Pan BMW in San Mateo—will be voting their contract just after *The Sparkplug* goes to press.

Actually, even before the strikes, the first of the five shops to get a contract was Stanford European Motors in Palo Alto. The 12 technicians at Mike Harvey Acura in Burlingame got a deal in November that's nearly identical to the contract ratified at Falore.

"We're very glad that we could get a decent deal without having to take to the streets. That saves our members money and heartache," said Area Director Charles Netherby.

## Doing the right thing

The owner at Walsh Station in Sacramento wanted to settle his contract with Local 2182 and was concerned about being fair to his four employees.

## What's up at the waterfront

After months of hard negotiations, a 10-day lock-out, and the Bush administration's invocation of the Taft-Hartley Act, the Longshore Workers (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) have reached agreement and a contract will be sent to the ILWU's 10,500 members for ratification in January.

While all this was going on, about 900 IAM members who work at the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach, Oakland and Tacoma were caught in the crossfire. While their contracts were not yet due to expire, their jobs were on the line. If the ILWU got a key contract demand, they would take over hundreds of jobs that have been under IAM jurisdiction for decades.

In the end, the ILWU's demand for IAM mechanic jobs was apparently taken off the table. But not without many difficult IAM decisions. When the ILWU was locked out, IAM mem-

bers had to decide whether to stay out of work in solidarity with the ILWU, or cross the line.

## I don't cross picket lines

"I've never crossed a picket line in my life, and I still don't believe that I have," says long-time Local 1484 member Jack Irving, who works at SSA. As Irving and several others tell it, "not one of their signs said 'Strike;' they all said 'Lock-Out.' The ILWU was locked out but we weren't."

"We'd meet every morning at the Reef Restaurant and caravan in," explained Local 1484 Business Rep Kevin Kucera. "We had about 200 guys from ITS and SSAGoing in. We'd face down their gauntlet as a group."

At first the ILWU members would call the IAM members scabs and would try to intimidate them by taking their pictures. "But we turned it around



(L to R) Jack Irving, Richard Duke and Kevin Kucera discuss SSA's management proposal about trainees.

by handing out information about why we felt we had to go in," Kucera said.

The IAM members worked for the first week of the lock-out and then the company laid them off. They returned a week later when the Bush administration called for an 80-day "cooling off period."

Even before the lock-out took place, the IAM took a strong stand in support of the right for the union negotiating process to continue unimpeded by government action. In August, Kucera tes-

tified before a hearing of the California legislature about the tension between the IAM and the ILWU and the state of labor negotiations at the port.

"President Bush needs to understand that on the issue of federal military intervention in a strike, the American labor movement is and will remain as solid and unified as any single period in U.S. history. We are absolutely clear the freedom to associate and collectively withhold our labor are bottom line to our democracy."

## SHOP TALK: What's the best gift you could get for the holidays?



**Bruce Lloyd**  
SP Automotive  
Local 1173

"Retirement!"



**Don Bonini**  
SP Automotive  
Local 1173

"I just want to see the happiness on my grandkids' faces. For me...I don't care if I get anything."



**Filiberto Gomez**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"Only one? I'd like to make more money!"



**Rodney Ramsey**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"A couple of houses or an apartment complex would be nice."



**Michael Curtis**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"New arms. I've been dealing with carpal tunnel and I'm tired of it."



**John Amato**  
Local 1584

"More respect and to get my family."



IE LOCALS

“We got a three year contract that includes wage creases of \$1, 50¢ and 25¢ as well as a \$50 a month crease each year to the pension...bringing it up to \$40 per month by the end of the contract,” reports Business Rep Skip Hatch. “This was a good deal that was settled without a battle.”

Similarly, the owner at Sacramento-based Fred Henson Body Shop wanted a fair agreement for her 10 employees. “It was just a wage opener, and this is a small operation so he needed to be careful,” Hatch said. “She gave them a 50¢ per hour wage increase, which they split with the pension, and she’ll cover the cost of Health and Welfare. We’re happy.”

No bingo at G12 Shop

Local 2182 has been in negotiations with the the 12 shop in Sacramento since July. “The owner here has been very stubborn,” reports Business Rep Skip Hatch. “Halfway through the process he passed off the negotiations to his son. That’s okay but the son doesn’t have decisionmaking power, so it’s slowed the process even more.”

The six technicians who do front end work and makes rejected the company offer unanimously, because they could see that over the next three years, they’d be going backwards. “He basically wants these guys to take a three-year freeze. We finally got a little bit of money out of him for years two and three, but he’s offering no pension increase and no increase in health and welfare,” Hatch said. “In the meantime, he’s done some unfair labor practices which we’ll be bringing before the Labor Board. We’re hopeful that he’ll come around, but we’re prepared to do what needs to be done.”

Worker training grant awarded

The Southeast Los Angeles County (SELACO) Workforce Investment Board was recently awarded a grant of \$2.3 million from the Employment Training Council to help small and large employers meet the challenges of out-of-state and off-shore competition. “This grant will result in more than 2,300 frontline workers, primarily in machine and manufacturing, being provided with skills needed to advance in today’s workplace,” said Kevin Kucera, Local 1484 Business Rep and member of SELACO’s Economic Development Committee.

District 190 will work with IAM Districts 725 and 147 and other manufacturing unions in the 27 Southern California “gateway cities,” along with several educational institutions to increase workers’ skills and provide training on new technologies for members who are displaced.

Sears Appliance Techs can’t make all the calls

Too much work in a day leads to call for union

Remember the old commercials about the Maytag repairman who didn’t have any work to do? Well, the 300-plus Sears appliance technicians can’t relate. In fact they have so much work to do that they’re forced to work more than 12 hours a day. That’s the main reason they’ve come to the IAM to get union representation.

Initially, the techs from Sears’ San Jose store came to Local 1101 for support. Organizer Jesse Juarez followed up and found that he’d need to organize the whole “California metro region,” so on October 18 he petitioned for a union election with the Labor board on behalf of 312 service appliance techs who work out of Fresno, Visalia, Bakersfield, Hanford, Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo, Salinas, San Jose, San Bruno, Hayward, Mountain View and Concord.

“The main issue here is too many routed calls and unreasonable productivity demands,” Juarez says. “Sears reorganized and brought in new managers who don’t seem to know how to run the system. The appliance techs are given 15-16 calls a day for an 8 hour shift which is just unrealistic. Sure they get overtime, but they’re so tired and burnt out and sometimes, they aren’t even fully trained for the appliances they work on.”

Channel 4 news did a story about how unhappy consumers are with the service they get from Sears. When one of the workers interviewed said that he couldn’t get to a service call because he was too tired, Juarez contacted the reporter and got a follow-up story—from the technician’s perspective.

At press time, an election date has not yet been set, because the union is taking Sears to the Labor Board to fight the company’s effort to stack the unit with more than 100 clerical employees.

“These are loyal, long-term Sears technicians, but they face unreasonable productivity standards,” said Juarez. “We just want to help them get a good contract that ensure fair working conditions so they can get more time with their families.”

“The goal of this project is to avert layoffs and downsizing by upgrading workers’ skills,” explains Kucera. “This can only benefit IAM members.”

Still fighting at Mercedes Benz

The employees of Mercedes Benz of San Francisco voted for union representation with Local 1414 in October, 2001. Then, last spring, the company terminated the union’s strongest supporter.

“We filed a charge with Labor Board about this, but it got dismissed,” says Organizer Jesse Juarez. “We re-filed the charge and now the Labor Board is issuing a complaint that says the company should not have fired this employee for being a union supporter, and they should not have changed working conditions. The employer will be liable for back wages, since April.”

In the meantime, contract negotiations continue. “This employer has been frustrating the agreement since

the beginning. They’re not doing the honorable thing,” Juarez says. “They’re hoping that someone will decertify the unit, but with these board charges, a decert can’t happen, because the company broke the law.”

Hard times at Stan Morri

Local 2182 has had several meetings with Stan Morri Ford in Tracy, but hasn’t reached a settlement yet. “We’re dealing with an employer facing some hard times economically,” says Mark Martin. “That part of the valley is somewhat depressed, so the dealership is just not selling many cars, new or used. It seems like his traditional customers are taking a wait-and-see attitude before making large purchases.”

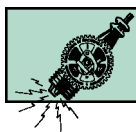
Martin notes that the service department has won Blue Oval certification and the 18 employees each received a \$1,000 bonus when they achieved that level. “These are first-rate technicians. We’ll get them the best deal we can.”

Check out the District 190 web site:  
[www.iamdistrict190.org](http://www.iamdistrict190.org)

This award-winning site has info on benefits, Trust Funds, union jobs available, organizing drives, events, announcements and much, much more!



					
<p><b>Tom Ripsom</b> Amot Controls Local 1584</p>	<p><b>Ray Dickinson</b> Amot Controls Local 1584</p>	<p><b>Carlos R. Trujillo</b> Amot Controls Local 1584</p>	<p><b>Phuong Tran</b> Amot Controls Local 1584</p>	<p><b>Sang Nguyen</b> Amot Controls Local 1584</p>	
<p>work her with</p>	<p>“Al Queda totally defeated.”</p>	<p>“To be out of here!”</p>	<p>“Either one month’s dues for free or a union jacket or hat!”</p>	<p>“More jobs for the people.”</p>	<p>“More money!”</p>



## BENEFITS NEWS

### Health care cost increases hit retiree plans

The Trustees of the Retired Machinists Health Plan fully recognize the impact of the Health and Welfare premium increases for retirees on a fixed income. Every increase of \$10, \$5, or even \$3 can throw a huge crimp into a well-calculated budget. However, costs have been going up dramatically and the Trust can only do so much to shield the blow.

The retiree monthly contribution rates are a reflection of the cost of the medical plan selected by the retiree, including the cost of prescription drugs. Therefore, any change in the contribution rate is due to the rising cost of health plan premiums for medical and prescription drug expenses.

The Trustees have no control over what health and welfare providers charge, and unfortunately, the Trustees have no choice but to pass on the cost.

Many employers do not offer retiree coverage at all or they require the retirees to pay the full cost of

their coverage.

The Retired Machinists Health Plan Trust Fund makes every effort to make appropriate benefit choices available at the most reasonable price. This is always a balancing act between monthly premium costs and the co-payments for office visits and prescription drugs. Recently Trustees reduced premium costs, but this meant higher co-pays.

#### What goes into the rates you pay

##### ◆ Higher medical care costs

The cost of medical care is related to the increase in the cost of services and the increase in the services utilized by the retiree. These costs are calculated and then spread over all eligible retirees.

The cost of medical services has increased at a faster rates than most other consumer expenses—in some cases as much as 57%. In addition, new, more sophisticated technology has become available which is more

expensive, and patients are demanding more services.

##### ◆ Increased costs for prescription drugs

Many factors have caused drug prices to go up:

- manufacturers have increased their prices;
- new medical guidelines call for earlier or more aggressive treatments of some diseases, such as elevated cholesterol;
- drugs are now available to treat conditions that were previously not treatable—some of these “bio-technology” drugs cost more than \$1,000 per month.
- manufacturers spend millions advertising their new products on television and in magazines encouraging people to seek treatment and to request specific drugs or so-called “designer drugs.”

##### ◆ The limitations in funding for Medicare

While HMOs face the same cost increases as other medical plans,

Medicare’s funding to the HMOs has not increased at the same rate. Medicare pays a fixed monthly premium directly to the HMO on behalf of each enrolled participant. When Medicare’s payments do not cover the cost of providing care, the HMO reduces benefits or passes the additional cost to the Trust Fund and ultimately to you, the participant.

Many HMOs have withdrawn their products from high-cost areas leaving enrollees with the problem of finding alternate insurers.

Active and retired members are bombarded daily with news of increasing health and welfare costs. Unfortunately, until the federal government steps in to control these costs, they will continue to skyrocket into the future, jeopardizing health care benefits for millions of Americans.

In the meantime, the Machinists Trust Fund will do its best to manage the Retiree Health and Welfare plans in a way that’s the most affordable and beneficial.

### Notice for Local 1546 members

#### *Long term care benefits will be available*

Local 1546 has arranged discounted rates for Long Term Healthcare insurance through Bay Area Long Term Care Insurance Services. The group discount rate is available to Local 1546 members, their spouses, children, **parents and grandparents!** Couples receive an additional discount.

In the Bay Area, home care currently costs \$195 per day, and facility stays average \$5,000-\$8000 per month.

You’ve worked hard to earn your retirement money. LTC coverage can help you keep it.

Long term care planning is also a valuable financial tool for younger members. Those purchasing at younger ages obtain lower rates. Ten pay plans are also available that will have your policy fully paid for life after only ten years. Aging is not the only cause of costly long-term expenses. Vehicle and sports accidents as well as serious illness can strike at any age.

**Please Note:** Ongoing rates are based on your age at the time of application. You may incur a substantial increase in premium cost of you wait to apply.

Please contact Kirk Dobson at 800-548-2671 for more details. There is no obligation and quotes are complimentary.

### 2003 IAM Scholarship Competition

The IAM makes available financial scholarships to help members or children of members attain a Bachelor’s degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification. The competition, among eligible applicants, is judged by a special Selection Committee.

**Amounts of the Awards:** Awards to members are \$2,000 per academic year. Awards to children of members are \$1,000 per academic year. These awards are granted for a specific period from one to four years to enable the member to earn a Bachelor’s degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification.

**Eligibility for Competition:** Applicants must be either an IAM member (or the child of an IAM member) having two years of continuous good-standing membership up to and including the closing date of the competition, which is February 21, 2003, plus meet the additional requirements as specified in the Scholarship pamphlet.

**How to Apply:** There are three different application packets: one for members, one for children of members, and one for vocational/technical school. Application Packets for the 2003 competition may be obtained by writing to the IAM Scholarship Program, 9000 Machinists Place, Room 117, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687. Use a coupon from the IAM Journal if possible. The deadline to submit the completed application form is February 21, 2003.

### SHOP TALK: What’s the best gift you could get for the holidays?



**Binh Ba Nguyen**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

*“I don’t want to have big wishes because then I don’t get them. So what I really want is a union calendar!”*



**Danny Thornton**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

*“A day off with pay.”*



**Deborah Adams**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

*“I want to take my kids to Disneyland—none of us has ever been there!”*



**Michael Brooks**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

*“A house, with a big garage and a big backyard.”*



**Ray Schwerin**  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

*“A week off with pay.”*



# Not just a man's job anymore

Betty Carbajal's title is driver and helper, but as she tells it, "I do everything."

And everything is heavy. "I pick up heavy stuff and take it to the ship, as well as working in the shop. It's easy in the shop—we have a forklift and crane," she says. "Men do the heavy stuff and use their body. I use my mind. I drive a forklift and big trucks. I do everything, just like the men."



Carbajal, at work at Oceanwide

Carbajal works at the Oceanwide Repair in Wilmington, near the Port of Los Angeles. If there's a ship in the harbor that needs fixing, Oceanwide technicians are there to do the work.

Carbajal says that she meets lots of people who think its weird to see a woman in coveralls, "But it's not a man's job, women can do it."

Carbajal was working low wage jobs until a friend of hers who works at Oceanwide asked her if she wanted to make more money. "I said sure. First I did grinding the platform of the ship. That was great. I made \$16 an hour and good benefits just to clean up. Then I asked a welder how much he makes, and he said \$25. So now I'm going to school to be a welder." Carbajal will earn her welding certificate soon.

Carbajal recommends this work to other women, though she says

getting started was tough. "I did have some trouble my first year. I cried. I thought that maybe I was doing it wrong. People were mean. But I finally figured out that I wasn't doing anything wrong."

For Carbajal, respect is key. "You just have to respect everybody. When you have respect for yourself, everybody gives you respect."

She also credits the IAM. "The union helped me a lot. If I have problems, the union has been there. It provides power for me."

Being a woman in a "man's job" is a constant challenge. "Sometimes when I go to the ship, people ask me what I'm doing there. My answer is 'I'm working.'"

## Opportunities for women in apprenticeship

"Women are an untapped resource for our Apprenticeship Programs," says Karl Cortese, coordinator of the northern California Automotive Apprenticeship Trust. "We've been having a hard time getting guys...then we said, 'wait a minute'...we need to recruit women. They'll be able to make \$50-60,000 per year with benefits—the same salary the men make."

To date, most women are coming into the program as service advisors, which is a two-year apprenticeship. "One of our recent female graduates got the Stedler Award for earning straight A's. Clearly, this is a good field for women and women are good for the field."

The average age of an auto mechanic is 49, and most can retire at 55, which means there is a 6-year gap. "And it's closing fast," Cortese says.

"GM and Ford are sweating bullets because there just aren't enough trained mechanics to fill the positions. This is a great time for women to get into the trade."

For more information about becoming an apprentice, contact the apprenticeship program at 510-569-8450 in Oakland or 408-291-2540 in San Jose.



### ASSOCIATED THIRD PARTY ADMINISTRATORS

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

**You can contact us at 510-836-2484.**

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## SHOP TALK: What's the best gift you could get for the holidays?



Ken Huynh  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"To see the economy pick up."



Randy Curtis  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"More time to spend with my family."



Kevin Lu  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"Money!"



Art Harry  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"A painted pony. And also, I'd like to see some of our old co-workers back in the machine shop."



Herman Billingsley  
Amot Controls  
Local 1584

"A raise!"





Robert Gillies keeps on trucking.  
Photo: Sacramento Bee/Florence Low

Before Robert Gillies joined the IAM and started his career as a Cadillac mechanic in 1945, he drove trucks. And now, more than 57 years later, he's back to driving trucks. But today, he's a volunteer driver for Senior Gleaners, collecting food and other products for the needy.

Gillies was an active member of Local 2182 in Sacramento throughout his career, serving on the

## At 88, this IAM retiree drives for others

Local's Executive Board for more than 20 years. He and his wife Bessie are still active with the Local's Vista Club. "I've been president a number of times. I just keep going," he says.

"When I retired, back in 1980, I didn't know what to do with myself," says Gillies. "When I heard about Senior Gleaners, I knew that was the thing for me."

### Food for those in need

The Gleaners is a Sacramento-based non-profit that serves food banks throughout northeastern California. Its collection and distribution center is staffed by thousands of volunteers, all more than 50 years old. It's a busy place, walk-in and drive-in refrigerators, sorting rooms and the constant beeps of backing forklifts moving loads of canned goods, vegetables and other items.

At 88, Gillies is the Gleaners' most senior driver. Among California's millions of drivers, only about 20 are over age 85 and maintain a class A license needed to drive big rigs, according to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Though he hadn't driven big trucks in many years, it wasn't a problem. "You don't forget," he said, "it's like riding a bicycle."

When Gillies started, the Gleaners only had a few pick-up trucks. Now, among the organization's 30 vehicles, several are 50 foot-long, 10-speed, 18-wheel tractor-trailers Gillies prefers.

"I used to drive to Oregon and Nevada, but these days I mostly stick to California—Woodland, Salinas, Stockton—wherever there are surplus goods to pick up."

Gillies says he enjoys the atmosphere at the charity, where he feels right at home. "To me, this is like a big family. Everybody's nice people, everybody gets along," he said. "The reason I like to do it is I figure I'm helping the poor people."

Gillies was recently laid-up for an operation but expects to get back to driving at least one run a week soon.

### Volunteer Opportunities

Food Banks need lots of extra help during the holiday season and all year round—not just driving, but sorting donated food and working in the office as well. If you'd like to volunteer, here are some numbers:

Senior Gleaners (Sacramento) 916-971-1530 x26  
Bay Area Food Banks: 800-870-FOOD  
LA Regional Food Bank: 323-234-3030

## UNION MEETINGS



### District Lodge 190

7717 Oakport Street  
Oakland, CA 94621  
510-632-3661

#### Executive Board Meeting

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
December 17\* • January 23 • February 27

#### General Delegates Meeting

Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.  
December 17\* • January 23 • February 27  
\*Note schedule change due to Nov./Dec. holidays.

### Local 801

7717 Oakport Street,  
Oakland, CA 94621  
800-655-2182

#### Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20  
Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

### Local 1101

1150 So. Bascom # 23  
San Jose, CA 95128  
408-291-2550  
All meetings are held at  
Lion's Blind Center:  
101 North Bascom Ave.  
San Jose

#### Executive Board Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 5 • January 2 • February 6

#### Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m.  
December 5 • January 2 • February 6

#### General Membership Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
December 12 • January 9 • February 13

### Local 1173

1900 Bates Ave., # H  
Concord, CA 94520  
925-687-6421  
*Special Notice:* A vote on  
the dues increase for 2003  
will be held at the Decem-  
ber, 2002 membership  
meeting.

#### Executive Board Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20

#### Membership/Shop Stewards Mtg.

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20

#### Retirees Club Meeting

Call Local for current meeting times

### Local 1414

150 South Blvd.  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
650-341-2689

#### Shop Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
No meeting in December or January • February 6

#### Executive Board Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 12 • January 9 • February 13

#### General Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20

### Local 1484

1261 Avalon Blvd.  
Wilmington, CA90744  
310-835-6688

#### Executive Board Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20

#### General Membership Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 3 • January 7 • February 4

#### Retiree Club

Third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.  
December 18 • January 15 • February 19

**Special Notice:** Local Lodge Officers Elections to be held  
at December, 2002 membership meeting.

### Local 1528

713 16th Street  
Modesto, CA 95354  
209-529-9210

#### Executive Board Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.  
December 4 • January 1?? • February 5

#### General Membership Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
December 4 • No meeting in January • February 5

### Local 1546

10260 MacArthur Blvd.,  
Oakland, CA94605  
510-638-6705

#### General Membership Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
December 3 • January 7 • February 4

#### Shop Stewards Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.  
December 3 • January 7 • February 4

#### Executive Board Meeting

Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
November 21 • January 2 • January 30

#### Senior's Luncheon

First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon  
December 4 • January 8 • February 5

**Alcoholics Anonymous:** Every Saturday, 9 a.m.

### Local 1584

8130 Baldwin Street  
Oakland, CA 94621  
510-635-2064

#### Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
December 19 • January 16 • February 20

#### Executive Board Meeting

Preceding Monday at 7:00 p.m.  
December 16 • January 13 • February 17

#### Retirees Club

First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.  
December 3 • January 7 • February 4

### Local 1596

4210 Petaluma Blvd. No.  
Petaluma, CA 94952  
707-795-0085

#### Membership Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
December 17 • January 21 • February 18

#### Executive Board Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
December 17 • January 21 • February 18

### Local 2182

967 Venture Court,  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
800-458-9200

#### Executive Board Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
December 10 • January 14 • February 11

#### General Membership Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
December 10 • January 14 • February 11

#### Retirees Club - VISTA CLUB

Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.  
December 18 • January 15 • February 19