

#### VOL. 6, NO. 2

#### February/March 2004

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

# **Grocery strike in So Cal is everyone's business**

cross Southern California, 70,000 workers are on strike or locked out at the more than 800 Vons/Pavillions (owned by Safeway), Ralphs and Albertsons stores. So far, they're solid—"hold ing the line for health care."

But with the strike approaching the five month mark, union members are feeling the pinch. Only a few have crossed the line, but many are being forced to find other jobs, as mortgages, health care and other payments are long overdue.

The two key issues the UFCW members are fighting for are maintaining decent health care coverage and opposing implementation of a two-tier wage system, where new employees can never reach the earnings level of current employees.

Business is way down at the stores, but the companies seem willing to lose hundreds of millions of dollars rather than pay their current and future workers the decent wage and benefits package that make a middle class lifestyle possible.

**Ramping up the fight** On January 31, an estimated



13 members of labor and community engage in non-violent civil disobedience at the Rockridge Safeway in Oakland on January 31 to support the striking and locked out grocery workers in Southern California

20,000 union members and supporters came to Inglewood for a boisterous rally and march from the Forum to an empty, heavily guarded Vons supermarket.

In a sign of the heightened involvement in strike strategy by the AFL-CIO, several national union presidents presented giant checks for a strike hardship fund. The rally also featured several elected officials,

STOP

including California Attorney General Bill Lockyer and Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn.

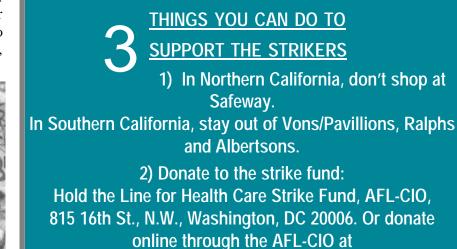
Many of the speakers characterized the battle as a watershed.

"The community is behind you; that's why they're not crossing the picket line," Hahn said. "They know if you lose your health benefits, they're next."

Grocery workers in the crowd said the support comes at a critical time. "It's vital to our morale. When you see this kind of unity, you know you're not alone," said Martha Beach, who worked as a cashier at a Ralphs in Torrance. "We know what we're out there for, but it sure is nice to have it validated."

Also on January 31, about 500 supporters marched from Oakland's Mosswood Park to the Rockridge Safeway, where 13 labor leaders and Oakland City Council President Ignacio De La Fuente were arrested.

Other actions, including large demonstrations marked by civil disobedience, were promised in a dozen cities from Seattle to Baltimore, and a national boycott was promoted, as leaders try to increase the financial pain of the grocery chains involved in the dispute.



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More than 2,000 union members and supporters in Oakland march in solidarity with UFCW strikers, closing the Safeway store for several hours.

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3) Adopt a store (see story below)

https://secure.ga3.org/08/holdtheline

## Support the strikers: Adopt a store

Local 1484 member Frank Honratto, who works at SSA Marine, has adopted an Albertsons Store in Long Beach, and you can too.

Honratto says that he ran into some tough times several years ago when his father and brother both died suddenly. His co-workers at the C60 Terminal in Long Beach took up a collection to help pay for the burials. Honratto vowed that he would always strive to help other union members in need as a way of returning the kindness.

Adopting a store means doing a Labor Council.

few key things: raising money to buy food for picketers or donate to the strike fund, and helping to maintain the picket line. Honratto takes up a weekly collection from his fellow workers at the C60 Terminal and then brings donuts every morning.

Union members in Northern California are urged to adopt a Safeway Store, and support the strikers who are maintaining picket lines in an effort to educate the public about the strike. For more info about how to adopt a store, call your local Central Labor Council.

#### **THE DISTRICT 190 SPARKPLUG**

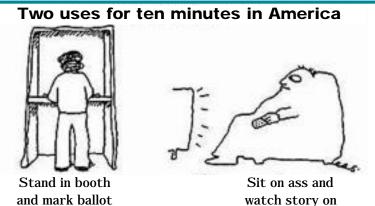
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# **The March 2 Primary Ballot**

On Tuesday, March 2, Californians will have the opportunity to vote in their party's primary election to choose a Presidential Candidate. We'll also be choosing the candidates for U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, and the State Senate and Assembly, as well as many local offices.

The IAM knows that our members hold a wide range of political views, so we generally don't make candidate endorsements. We will, ment, and to those proposihowever, bring to your attention those candidates who have a history working in or with the labor move-

tions that impact our lives and work, so that you can take that information into consideration.



watch story on low voter turnout

In addition to the candidates, your primary ballot will also include several statewide referendums, described below.

However you decide to vote on the issues and candidates, we encourage you to be sure to vote. Union members can play a key role in deciding California's future, but only if they come out in numbers and demand that their voices be heard.

# **Statewide Ballot Measures**

## Proposition 55: VYES

#### **Kindergarten-University Public Education Facilities Bond Act of** 2004

This \$12.3 billion dollar bond issue will provide funding for necessary education facilities to relieve overcrowding and to repair older schools. Funds will be targeted to areas of the greatest need and must be spent according to strict accountability measures. Funds will also be used to upgrade and build new classrooms in the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California, to provide adequate higher education facilities to accommodate the growing student enrollment. These bonds may be used only for eligible projects.

Fiscal Impact: State costs of about \$24.7 billion to pay off both the principal (\$12.3 billion) and interest (\$12.4 billion) costs on the bonds. Payments of about \$823 million per year. **Recommendation: Vote yes on 55** 

## Proposition 56: VES

#### The Budget Accountability Act

Permits enactment of budget and budget-related tax/appropriation bills with 55% vote. Legislature, Governor forfeit compensation each day budget is late.

Fiscal Impact: Varying impacts from lowering the vote requirement for budget-related measures-including changes in spending and potentially significant increases in state tax revenues in some years. Impacts would depend on the composition and actions of future Legislatures.

The Budget Accountability Act will:

- Require legislators to deliver a fair budget on time. If the budget is late, legislators won't get paid and can't take time off until it's done. No budget, no pay and no vacation or action on other bills.
- Show voters how the money gets spent and how their elected officials vote on the budget.
- · End budget gridlock by changing the legislative vote requirement to pass a budget and related taxes from two-thirds to 55%.
- Set up a "Rainy Day Fund" to protect services in bad times.

**Recommendation: Vote yes on 56** 

## Supplemental Ballot Measures

## **Proposition 57**

#### **The Economic Recovery Bond Act**

- A one time Economic Recovery Bond of up to 15 billion dollars to pay off the state's accumulated General Fund deficit as of June 30, 2004.
- The Economic Recovery Bond will only be issued if the California Balanced Budget Act is also approved by the voters.
- The bonds will be secured by existing tax revenues and by other revenues that could be deposited in a special fund.

Fiscal Impact:

port Prop 57, the budget will be in chaos and there will have to be even deeper cuts.

#### **Arguments against Proposition 57:**

The question is whether we should support the concept that it is appropriate to borrow to pay for the ongoing cost of government operations or whether taxes should be raised to pay for those costs. If you borrow, then the debt service reduces the possibility of increased spending in future years. In addition, the debt bonds crowd out infrastructure borrowing that actually creates jobs and stimulates the economy. Do we want to put our children in debt to pay for the cost of services that they will not receive?

NO RECOMMENDATION

## **Proposition 58**

#### The California Balanced Budget Act

- Requires enactment of a balanced budget where General Fund expenditures do not exceed estimated General Fund revenues.
- · Allows the Governor to proclaim a fiscal emergency in specified circumstances, and submit proposed legislation to address the fiscal emergency.
- Requires the Legislature to stop other action and act on legislation proposed to address the emergency.
- Establishes a budget reserve.
- Provides that the California Economic Recovery Bond Act is for a single object or work.
- Prohibits any future deficit bonds.

#### **Fiscal Impact:**



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Beagle & Bleiweiss Communications Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



- One-time increase, compared to a previously authorized bond, of up to \$4 billion to reduce the state's budget shortfall.
- Annual debt-service savings over the next few years.
- Above effect offset in subsequent years by high annual debt-service costs due to this bond's larger size and the longer time period for its repayment.

#### **Arguments for Proposition 57:**

The Governor and the Republicans will not vote to increase taxes and so this is the best we can do. If we don't sup-

- Unknown net state fiscal effects, which will vary year by year and depend in part on actions of future Legislatures.
- Reserve provisions may smooth state spending, with reductions during economic expansions and increases during downturns.
- Balanced budget and debt limitation provision could result in more immediate actions to correct budgetary shortfalls.

#### **Arguments for Proposition 58:**

The Legislature is out of control and it needs external controls to discipline itself.

#### **Arguments against Proposition 58:**

The provisions of this measure don't really do anything.

#### NO RECOMMENDATION

NOTE: Propositions 57 and 58 must both pass for either one to go into effect.

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# Some key Local Races

# Voters in Contra Costa have opportunity to slam Wal-Mart

We have many important battles on the March 2004 primary ballot that affect union rights and our quality of life. In Contra Costa County, there is a battle brewing that will impact wages and health benefits paid to union workers.

AYES vote on Measure Lwill prohibit the development of big box superstores-those 90,000 square feet and larger-that devote more than 5% of their total sales floor to non-taxable items like groceries. These stores

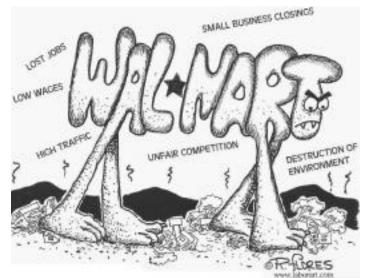
directly compete with and tend to undercut unionized grocery stores.

A concern for IAM members is that Wal-Mart pays low wages, encouraging its workers to rely on public assistance. Few Wal-Mart workers get health insurance, so they often use the ER for routine health matters, driving up costs for those of us who are insured.

Wal-Mart's push to expand superstores into California will have a devastating impact on our neighbor-

hoods,

our



locally owned businesses and our workers. In their quest for profit over community, Wal-Mart has rolled over the will of the people and forced a vote to allow them to build superstores the size of five football

## Health care roll-back on November ballot

A judge has blocked the measure on the March election ballot that would have asked voters to repeal the labor-sponsored Health Care for Working Families law (SB2). However, the referendum was approved for the November ballot.

In barring the referendum from the March ballot, Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Lloyd Connelly ruled that the description of the referendum was "inaccurate and misleading." The summary of the bill misleadingly stated that the bill would apply to employers of 20 or more employees. In fact, employers of 20-49 employees would only be included if the legislature and Governor pass a care ballot initiative.

tax credit to assist them.

SB2 was approved last year by the legislature and signed by Gov. Gray Davis before he was recalled.

Chamber of Led by the Commerce and the California Restaurant Association, opponents of the law gathered more than 620,000 signatures of registered voters to force a voter referendum on the insurance law. They say it would be too costly to business.

Efforts to support the bill and defeat the referendum are continuing. A committee, Californians to Protect Our Health Insurance, has just been formed to help defeat this anti-health

### $\star \star \star$ Endorsement $\star \star \star$ TORRICO for Assembly

#### Fremont, Newark, Union City, Milpitas, Hayward & Castro Valley

The IAM urges members in Assembly District 20-Fremont, Newark, Union City, Milpitas, Hayward and Castro Valley-to consider voting for

# Vote YES on L

Phone banks: Monday-Thursday • 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm Martinez and Pittsburg.

Precinct walks: Every Saturday at 9 am

February 7: Richmond February 14: Concord February 21: Antioch February 28: GOTV (everywhere!)

For more information on the schedule and locations, contact the Labor Council at 925-228-0161.

fields in unincorporated Contra Costa County, the area of our last remaining open space. Wal-Mart is on record as willing to spend over \$1 million to defeat Measure L.

Whenever a big box superstore comes to town, local businesses are forced to close. For every two jobs created at a Wal-Mart superstore, three jobs are lost. Often, those three jobs are good union jobs with health benefits and competitive wages. The two jobs created are low paying and offer no benefits. Wal-Mart also has a horrible track record of union-busting, gender discrimination and mistreatment of workers.

We are on the front lines of the battle for justice. The October 6, 2003 issue of Business Week called Contra Costa County, "the most hotly contested battleground" to control the size and location of big box superstores.

A victory in March for Yes on L will be a victory for Labor in our fight to preserve good-paying union jobs in California, and to beat back the Wal-Martization of our state. To learn more about the campaign log on to www.na4lc.org.

## Key dates to remember

February 17: Last day to register to vote before primary election (or re-register in case you moved or want to change party affiliation)

> March 2: California Primary Election **November 2: General Election**

## New jobs, lower wages

Not only has America lost millions of jobs since 2001, but the few new jobs being created pay lower wages, according to a new study by the nonprofit Economic Policy Institute.

The study found the average pay in industries where jobs are declining, such as manufacturing and information technology, is 26% more than the average pay in expanding industries such as leisure and hospitality-\$44,570-ayear jobs are being replaced by \$35,410-a-year jobs.

This shift to lower-paying jobs could significantly slow the growth of living standards for working families, the report says.

For more information, visit http://www.jobwatch.org.

Alberto Torrico. John Dutra, a good friend to labor, held this seat for six years but has reached his term limit.

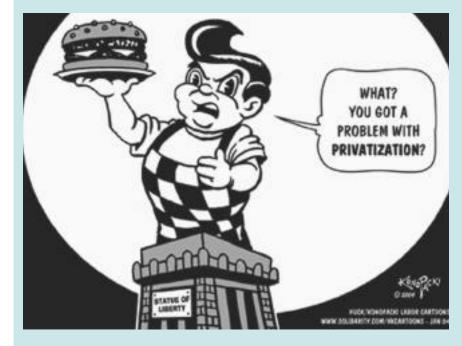
Torrico has earned your support. As a labor attorney, he's represented union members, fought for fair contracts and prevailing wages and helped Head Start workers organize.

We encourage all of our members in the Fremont area to vote for Alberto and urge your families and friends to do so as well. Phone banks and precinct walks are being organized throughout February in Fremont. For more information on how to get active in the campaign, contact the Alameda County Central Labor Council: 510-632-4242.

# Moving? Tell your Union!

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.



#### February/March 2004

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# AROUND T

# THE GOOD NEWS . . .

#### Penning a deal at Penske

Members across the District, from Locals 1546, 1414 and 1101 ratified a new four-year agreement with Penske Truck Leasing. "The most important thing about this agreement is that by the end of the term, all three Locals will have parity," says Area Director Glenn Gandolfo. "Then we should be able to negotiate a master contract."

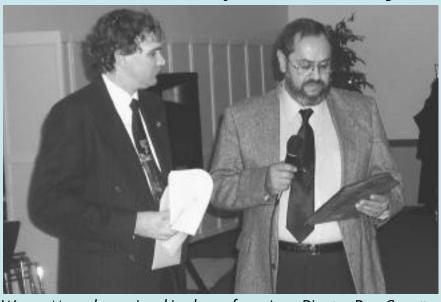
The wage increases and the pension increases both come to close to 12%

over the four years, the health insurance contributions will increase about 13% per year, which should be enough to cover costs, and there were additional improvements in contract language, vacation days, and shift premiums.

#### Bought out and still union

Local 2182 Business Rep Skip Hatch reports that the ten employees at Omega Tank and Truck Repair, located in West Sacramento and in Chico have

### Local 1546 honors shop steward of the year



Wayne Meranda receives his plaque from Area Director Don Crosatto

Local 1546 awarded its 2003 Al James Memorial Steward of the Year Award to Wayne Meranda, a member for more than 30 years who served as steward at Stoneridge Chrysler Jeep. Meranda retired just prior to the December stewards' dinner.

"Wayne is unique—he's respected by the members as an effective advocate, and by management, as the foreman," says Area Director Don Crosatto.

Business Rep Craig Andrews explained that Meranda was an easy choice. "He had gone to work at Stoneridge when it was a nonunion shop, and he was instrumental in organizing it and getting a first contract. And then in a short eight years, the company's pension contribution went from zero to \$700 a month—which is the most of any dealership in the District."

Business Rep David Asplin met Meranda when he first joined the union in the 1960s. "He was always an active member and a strong union brother," Asplin says. "And now, he retired—because he could. He did things right for Stoneridge for many years." a new contract. And these days, it's fairly unique that a new owner will hire back all of the employees and negotiate a new contact rather than scuttling the trained workers and trying to dump the union.

This heavy-duty truck repair facility, formerly known as Petroleum Tank Lines, had been passed down from father to son. "But last year, the son decided he wanted out of the business, so he sold the equipment and inventory and leased the facilities to a new owner," Hatch said.

"The new owner has expansion plans. They want to ramp back up to a 24/7 operation like it used to be."

Hatch says that the members agreed to concessions in the first year to help the new owners get started, but there will be a wage re-opener in 12 months.

"Our members aren't thrilled about the concessions, but these days, we have to see it as a victory that we were able to keep this company under contract," Hatch said.

#### **Filtering more money**

The ten Local 1596 members who work at U.S. Filter in Petaluma settled and ratified a two-year wage reopener in January. This comes after they had voted to strike in December.

"Wage increases ranged from 5.5% to 16% the first year, and an average of 7% the second year," reports Business Rep Tom Brandon.

"Because wages had been so low, people were using this company as a training facility," Brandon said. The company finally agreed that the operators were way behind the rate paid by municipalities and that this was causing staffing problems.

"This should have been a slam dunk," Brandon said. "But we had to convince the company that paying more was not only better for us, it was better for them."

# ORGANIZING WINS

## **Employees at Silgan Antioch vote Yes for union**

The election at Silgan Antioch on January 7 was important for two reasons. First, the employees voted to be represented by Local 1528. And second, this was the last Silgan plant in Northern California to be non-union.

The Antioch plant is the smallest of Silgan's facilities. Twenty-seven employees run two coaters and a coil line. They cut plate, coat it and ship it out to the other plants in the area.

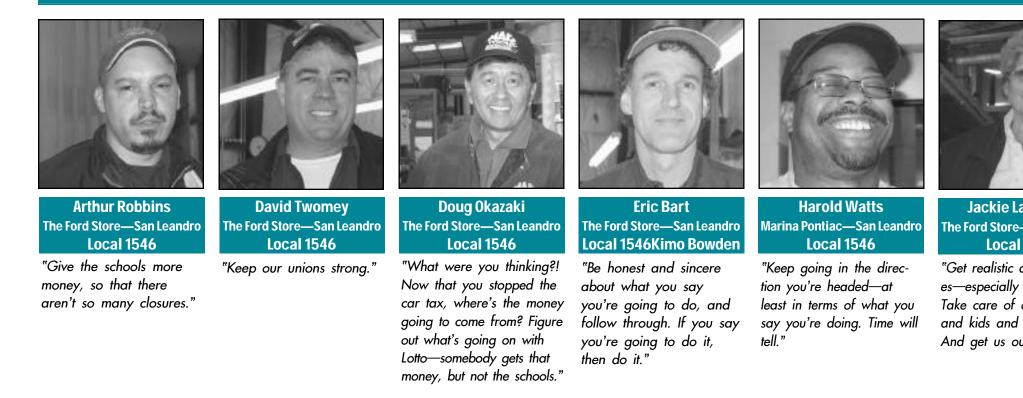
George Tomassi was the primary organizer on this campaign with help from Joe Coy and Gilbert Gonzalez. Tomassi had been talking to employees for over a year, including the time when he was out on disability because he had shattered his leg.

"The biggest issue for these employees was health and welfare," says Tomassi. "They had a company plan, where each employee paid in a lot of money out-of-pocket—but the amount varied from person to person. Our goal is to negotiate the union plan, which they have at the other Silgan facilities. It provides better coverage and should cost less all around."

"We have a long history with Silgan because of the plants under contract in the Valley," says Business Rep Gilbert Gonzalez. "We have a good relationship with this company, and expect it will be the same in Antioch."

The election was a squeaker, but it's been certified. The union and company are setting dates to hold negotiations for the first contract.

# SHOP TALK: If you could give one piece of advice to our new governor—Arnol



# HE LOCALS

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# Local 1584 retirees tally more than 900 years of union membership



Local 1584 celebrated the union service of its long-time members at the annual Retirees luncheon on December 2 at Francesco's in Oakland. They paid special tribute to those retirees who topped the 35, 40, 45 and 50 year mark (*pictured above*). Retiree Club President Daniel P.L. Borrero, greeted the retirees and their guests with a message of why they are still needed to keep the union alive and thriving.

## The key to a strong union is ORGANIZING—and you can help keep District 190 strong!

Do you know people who work in your industry but don't have a union? Often non-union workers have the same wages as union employees—but that's all they have. Talk to people in non-union shops about the benefits of having a contract, a grievance procedure, a pension and good union benefits. If they're interested, ask if one of our organizers can call them. (Remind them that the call will be completely confidential.) Here's a contact form for you to complete and send to District 190.

About you:
Name:
Where you work:
Your phone number:
Please call the following to tell them more about IAM representation:
Company:
Home or cell phone Number:
Best time to be reached:
Please return this form to District 190 7717 Oakport Street Oakland

Please return this form to: District 190, 7/17 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621. (Feel free to copy this form, or just include the info on your own paper.)

it of debt."

# THE BAD NEWS . .

#### **Rexam Beverage to close**

Just before Christmas, Rexamannounced they're closing down effective February 28. Established in 1948 in San Leandro as National Can, this company, at one time employed 750 people, but is now down to 62 members of Local 1584.

"In 1991, the company was sold to Pechiney," explains Administrative Assistant Herman Howell. "This is a French outfit that came in and demanded a \$4 wage cut from day one. The workers never gave back a penny, but the company eliminated 400 jobs."

In 2002, Rexam bought the company from Pechiney. To justify the closure of the San Leandro plant, they stated that they only needed two facilities that make pull top ends for beer and beverage cans instead of three.

Howell says that the Local asked Rexam to do the right thing and pay the severance pay as outlined in the contract. "True to form, the company is refusing, based upon a clause that says 'benefits shall not be paid to employees who are eligible for an immediate pension benefit'," Howell explained.

On January 14, Herman Howell, Shop Stewards Jim Duran and Bernice Taylor, and attorneys Isaiah Roter and Jonathan Siegel met with the company to let them know that they are in violation of age discrimination laws. The union's position is that they are liable for paying the 22 weeks severance, no matter what the conractual language says. "We are waiting for their response," Howell adds.

Thirty-two IAM members worked at this company for more than 30 years and are eligible for pension. "This company is nothing if not consistent," Howell adds. "They're always trying to screw their employees."

#### **AMOT Controls to close**

After March 5, the 35 members of Local 1584 who work at AMOT Con-

trols in Richmond won't be manufacturing temperature and pressure control valves any more.

"This is a 50-year old company," says Local 1584 Business Rep Chris Rasmussen. "They sent the WARN notice in January, and that's that. We're just trying to make sure the severance is as good as we can get."

#### **Dealerships change hands**

Local 1173 Area Director Vern Dutton reports that Sonic is selling Concord Nissan to the Dirito Brothers. "We've had some effects bargaining with the company. We want them to cover H&W, which, so far, they're refusing to do. We don't know which of our members the new owner will keep. We'll just have to deal with it as we find out."

Lithia Sun Valley Ford and VW got sold while Local 1173 was in the midst of negotiations for a new contract. "Suddenly the company cancelled the talks, went back to the shop and told the employees that they were selling," says Dutton. "The buyer is an individual who's not from this area so we don't know what to expect."

Local 1101 has been plagued with sales of union dealerships as well, reports Glenn Gandolfo. As of January 1, McHugh Lincoln Mercury was sold to Bob Lewis who only hired back a small group. Raines Chevrolet sold to the Rydel Group and they didn't rehire any union members. "The new owners brought back a Service Manager that the techs despised, so they all withdrew their applications and left," Gandolfo added.

On a positive note, Sunnyvale Toyota was sold to Tom Price, who kept the entire crew and service manager, and are operating under the expired agreement.

Gandolfo also reports that he's heard rumors of a sale at Sunnyvale Mazda and Los Gatos Honda. "This would be too bad, because we recently settled decent contracts at both dealerships."

# d Schwarzenegger—what would that be?

a France —San Leandro 1546	Jerry Thomas Nelms Marina Pontiac—San Leandro Local 1546	Jimmy Fuller The Ford Store—San Leandro Local 1546	Joe Ortiz Marina Pontiac—San Leandro Local 1546	John Reid Marina Pontiac—San Leandro Local 1546	Jose Perez Marina Pontiac—San Leandro Local 1546
and raise tax- on the rich. our schools old people.	"Keep doing what you're doing and back up what you said you'd do. And keep the acting out of it."	"Keep your promises. (Actually, I don't know whether he can or not."	"Don't ask me for advice!"	"Stay out of politics. This is definitely not an acting job."	"Don't take money out of social services or schools. Look someplace else for the money."

#### THE DISTRICT 190 SPARKPLUG

# **IN OTHER NEWS**

#### DOL foiled in attempt to punish unions—for now

federal judge Gladys Kessler issued a one-year injunction blocking controversial Department of Labor (DOL) regulations designed to saddle labor unions with costly and time consuming reporting requirements.

In October, the Bush administration announced the new rules less than 24 hours after the U.S. House of Representatives, spurred by union-member lobbying, voted to block the Bush administration's attack on overtime pay. Then on Nov. 10, the Bush administration announced it would begin enforcing the new rules Jan. 1.

U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler said that Labor Secretary Elaine Chao "simply failed to offer

In a victory for organized labor, a any reasonable justification for requiring such far-reaching changes to take place in seven weeks."

Unions estimated the new rules would cost local and national unions as much as \$1 billion each year. In contrast, when the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission required corporations to electronically file financial information, that federal agency delayed implementation for 13 years.

In her ruling, Judge Kessler said there would be no discernable harm to the public interest by keeping the existing reporting rules, "especially when that status quo has been deemed acceptable by the Department of Labor for over 40 years."

## Local 1101 **NOTICE OF ELECTION**

#### Secretary-Treasurer, Trustees (3), Executive Board (1), Auditors — for the term ending December 2007

In accordance with Article L, Nomination & Elections of the Local's Bylaws and Article B of the IAM Constitution, please be advised that an election for the above listed offices will be held at the Lion's Blind Center (regular meeting hall) on Thursday, April 8, 2004 from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Nominations for the above positions will be held at the same location, Thursday, March 11, 2004 at the regular local lodge meeting starting at 6:30 p.m.

Only members in good standing for one (1) year prior to nomination and working for a Union employer are eligible to hold office. No member can accept nomination for more than one (1) office and officers can not be auditors of the local lodge.

The member receiving the highest number of votes in each position will be declared the winner or in the case of more than one (1) position per office, such as Trustees, the three (3) members with the highest number of votes will be declared the winners.

When voting the member must be in good standing, present their dues card or other identification, and if ruled eligible shall receive a ballot from the authorized teller.

Members who reside in outlying districts more than 25 miles from the designated balloting place, members who are either confined because of verified illness or on leave qualifying under U.S. family leave laws, or on vacation, or on official IAM business approved by the Local Lodge or District Lodge, or Grand Lodge, or on an employer travel assignment, or reserve military leave, as the case may be, shall be furnished absentee ballots. In the case of absentee ballots, please contact the office for further details on obtaining and establishing eligibility for this method of voting.



Buried in the Labor Department's proposed new overtime regulations are detailed cost-cutting suggestions that would allow employers to avoid granting extra pay to the 1.3 million workers that the regulations are supposed to benefit.

## Shop classes—an endangered species in San Leandro

It used to be that young people learned about the trades in school. Auto shop, wood shop and metal shop were a staple for high school boys and a few girls, too. Certainly those who excelled in shop and had an interest in the field were prime candidates for automotive apprenticeships and machinist jobs.

But as the economy has shifted towards the high-tech information and service sectors, this once ripe training ground for high wage mechanic positions is ceasing to exist.

In fact, schools are literally throwing it away.

According to the San Leandro Times, equipment from the San Leandro High shop classes, estimated at \$50,000 in value, were thrown away over the summer and fall semesters. The maintenance staff says they were ordered to discard the equipment by the school principal, on orders from the previous school superintendent.

Much finger-pointing ensued when the issue came to light, because the school board did not give the required prior approval for disposing of school property.

An inventory of the discarded equipment includes a lathe, a pedal shear, two 4-ft. brakes, a bar folder, tig and mig welders, a vertical mill, transmission jacks, hoist stands, electronic tire balancing machines, five Briggs and Stratton engines, tap and die sets, a sand blaster and an alignment rack.

"Pretty much everything from the metal shop is gone," says wood shop teacher Lance Gunnerson, as are 15 drafting tables and a wide range of supplies.

San Leandro High School hired a new auto shop teacher, Andy Shyers, in the fall, even though there is no equipment and no auto shop. The class is taught from a textbook without hands-on learning.

The school district is conducting an investigation into how the inventory was initially conducted and how the decisions to discard school property came into effect.

Meanwhile, many businesses and individuals have contributed equipment to restore the auto shop.

# SHOP TALK: What's your advice for our new governor?

#### Page 6



our kids. Make sure education is funded."

8 hour day. Don't whittle away at our workers' rights.

Look out for the people who work in this state and keep the standards high."

keep going up."

#### February/March 2004

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# **UNION PEOPLE**

## **Gonzalez brings city experience to Local 1414**

On December 1, Art Gonzalez was named Business Rep for Local 1414. He will be representing members at the City and County of San Francisco, a few dealerships, cab companies and some body shops.

Gonzalez has been a union member for most of his life. After graduating high school, he got his first union job at San Francisco's AAA Shipyards. An 8-month stint there led to an apprenticeship at Trailways where he became a journeyman mechanic.

Then he moved over to the City and County of San Francisco and had positions at Muni, the Water Department, Central Shops and finally, the Fire Shop. He's worked on busses, small engines, construction equipment, lawnmowers, fire trucks and more.

Gonzalez has nearly as much union experience. As an active member of Local 1305, he served on the Executive Board, was Vice President and Trustee to the District Lodge, and was a delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council. He's been a shop steward for about 15 years and participated in four sets of negotiations with the City and County of San Francisco.

Why did he decide to leave the city and work for the union? "To

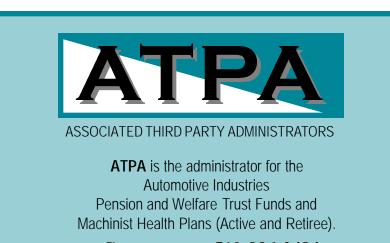


Art Gonzalez is up for the challenge

improve the hours, wages, working conditions of all workers—that's the easy answer," Gonzalez says. But more, he hopes to bring his experience working for San Francisco to improve how the union interacts with the city. "My goal is to find creative ways to improve the contracts in these tough times."

Art understands the challenge of advocating for union members in difficult times, but sees a silver lining. "From Arnold to the President, things are looking bleak. Maybe it's a good thing...because from here, I can only go up!"

"These first few months have been a whirlwind. I've been putting in lots of hours, just to learn the ropes," he says. "But I look forward to doing what I can for the members."



Contact us at 510-836-2484

## Give blood for fellow IAM member

Sam McIntosh, a 25-year member of the Machinists Union needs your help. Sam has leukemia that requires him to get blood infusions. You can donate blood in Sam's name—that ensures that the blood is available, and it keeps costs down.

A member of Local 1528, Sam lives in Turlock and works at at International Paper.

You can go to any Delta Blood Bank in San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Calaveras, and Tuolumne counties and donate in the name of Sam McIntosh.

## Local 1546 says goodbye to Jan Daley

After more than 16 years working in Local 1546's Financial Office, Jan Daley is retiring. Most members of the Local know and worked with Jan because she was chiefly responsible for handling membership issues, such as dues and initiation fees.

"She's always had a cheerful smile," says Bob Miller. "She's been an efficient secretary, but more. She always goes above and beyond the call of duty to serve the members and take care of the job at hand. Jan will be greatly missed."

Jan's plans for retirement are to move to Oregon and get married.



Jan displays her thank-you certificate at her retirement lunch on January 30

# **HEALTH & SAFETY**

## District to work with Health Department on N-Hexane study

Auto mechanics who have worked with N-Hexane, a substance often found in brake cleaner, have a high potential for suffering neurological diseases in their arms and legs. Often the disease is misdiagnosed, because a thorough study of the health effects of N-Hexane has never been completed.

Three years ago the California Department of Health's Occupational Health Section asked auto mechanics, through outreach in *The Sparkplug*, to call in if they had worked with N-Hexane and had noticed a variety of specific health problems. This request generated 14 techs who were totally disabled from the use of N-Hexane—the first cases to be reported world-wide in the vehicle repair industry.

Now the Health Department wants to conduct a statistically-significant study. District 190 has agreed to help by mailing informational surveys to current and former members—going back 10 years.

Members are urged to watch for the survey and complete it when it arrives. This study could lead to valuable health information and benefits for thousands of people.

# SHOP TALK: What's your advice for our new governor?



college or for young kids."

"Fix the economy and stop lying. And stop catering to rich people. Pay attention to middle class people." "Spend some money on schools. don't worry about space." "Help out the economy and bring it up."

"Support unions and their ideals. (I know he won't do that, but he should.)"

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# **Annual celebration for graduating apprentices**



Graduating apprentices with their Business Rep and representatives from the California Division of Apprenticeship Standards aboard the Commodore cruise ship

On September 28, graduating apprentices from Locals 1173, 1546 and 1414 celebrated the fact that they completed their apprenticeships by spending the afternoon on the San Francisco Bay.

Sponsored by the Automotive Repair Trades Joint Apprenticeship Committees, this annual event takes apprenticeship graduates and a family member out on a Commodore Cruiseship for a luncheon, comple-

tion ceremony and relaxing day in the sun.

In 2003, the program graduated 31 Automotive Mechanics, five Auto Senior Parts Technicians, 14 Heavy Duty Mechanics, two Body and Fender Repair techs, and two Automotive Painters, who are members of Painters Union No. 1176.

Currently, approximately 650 individuals are enrolled as Automotive Apprentices across Northern California working full-time and attending automotive-related classes at a community college. Automotive Apprentices can work in the field of Auto & Truck Mechanics, Auto Body, Auto Paint, Truck and Trailer Repair, Service Advisor, Heavy Equipment Mechanic and Part Counter Person.

An automotive apprenticeship is an ideal opportunity for young-and not so young-people who enjoy

working with their hands, like making things work, and are challenged by constantly changing new technologies. The apprenticeship is an opportunity to "learn while you earn," taking classes while getting the hands-on, on-the-job experience.

For more information, contact the Automotive Trades Apprenticeship Program. Oakland: 510-569-8450 or San Jose: 408-291-2540 or e-mail the program at: autojac2@aol.com.

UNION MEETINGS						
District Lodge 190 7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621	Executive Board Meeting Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 24 • March 23 • April 27 General Delegates Meeting Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. February 24 • March 23 • April 27	Local 1528 713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210	Executive Board Meeting First Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. February 4 • March 3 • April 7 General Membership Meeting First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. February 4 • March 3 • April 7			
Local 801 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621	Membership Meeting Third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m. February 19 • March 18 • April 15 Meetings are held at the Carpenters'Hall, in Reno.	<b>Local 1546</b> 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> February 3 • March 2 • April 6			
<b>Local 1101</b> 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 320 Santa Clara, CA 95051 408-551-2280	Executive Board Meeting First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. February 5 • March 6 • April 3 Stewards Meeting First Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m. February 5 • March 6 • April 3 General Membership Meeting	510-638-6705	<ul> <li>Shop Stewards Meeting</li> <li>First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</li> <li>February 3 • March 2 • April 6</li> <li>Executive Board Meeting</li> <li>Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30</li> <li>January 29 • February 26 • April 1</li> <li>Senior's Luncheon</li> </ul>			
All meetings are held at Lion's Blind Center: 101 N. Bascom Ave., San Jose	Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 12 • March 11 • April 8 <b>NOTE: New office hours:</b> Mon-Thur. 7 am-5 pm Friday: 7 am-4 pm (Closed 12-1 for lunch hour) For Reps: Call ahead for appointment/availability		First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon February 4 • March 3 • April 7 Alcoholics Anonymous: Every Saturday, 9 a.m.			
<b>Local 1173</b> 1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421	Executive Board Meeting Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 12 • March 11 • April 8 Membership/Shop Stewards Mtg. Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 19 • March 18 • April 15	<b>Local 1584</b> 8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064	Membership Meeting Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. February 19 • March 18 • April 15 Executive Board Meeting Preceding Monday at 7:00 p.m. February 16 • March 15 • April 12 Prince Charter States S			

**Shop Stewards Meeting** 1 1 4 1 4

LOCAI 1414	First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.	
150 South Blvd.	February 5 • March 4 • April 3	
San Mateo, CA94402	Executive Board Meeting	
650-341-2689	Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. February 12 • March 11 • April 8 General Membership Meeting Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 19 • March 18 • April 15 Retirees Club First Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome!	<b>Local 1596</b> 4210 Petaluma Blvd. N Petaluma, CA94952 707-795-0085
<b>Local 1484</b> 1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688	February 19 • March 18 • April 15	<b>Local 2182</b> 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200

First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. February 3 • March 2 • April 6

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**Retirees Club** 

ip Meeting ay of each month at 7:00 p.m. • March 16 • April 20 **Board Meeting** ay of each month at 6:30 p.m. February 17 • March 16 • April 20

**Executive Board Meeting** Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. February 10 • March 9 • April 13 **General Membership Meeting** Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. February 10 • March 9 • April 13 **Retirees Club - VISTA CLUB** Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. February 18 • March 17 • April 21