

# The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 8 NO. 1

December 2005/January 2006

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

## Labor unites to defeat anti-union propositions

Defeating the Governor's November 8 Special Election so decisively was a critical victory for California's labor unions and a stunning rebuke of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and his so-called "Year of Reform."

The governor consistently blamed "union bosses" for California's problems and attacked labor unions as an evil "special interest." The four Schwarzenegger-sponsored measures, Propositions 74, 75, 76, and 77, were not "reform," but a naked attempt to destroy any ability of the labor movement to resist the corporate agenda that Schwarzenegger embraced.

The special election cost hundreds of millions of dollars, paid by your tax dollars through the local governments who administered the election, unions who fought hard for the rights of their members, and corporate interests looking for an opportunity to crush union power. The election brought out record numbers of volunteers who walked precincts, phoned and got out mailings to mobilize the union vote.

"We had no choice but to win this election, and win it decisively," said Tom Brandon, director of the California Conference of Machinists. "We pulled out all the stops. But when all is said and done, there shouldn't have been a special election in the first place. It was a waste of our time and money, which could have been better spent on organizing and

keeping good contracts."

Apparently Californians agree. A poll taken in November shows that more than 60% of California voters are dissatisfied with the initiative process.

Ideas for changing the process include putting initiatives on the November general election ballot only, requiring the legislature to approve a special election rather than allowing the governor to do it unilaterally, and instituting a review process for initiatives.

### Union members get active

Early polls showed support for all of the governor's initiatives, but especially Prop 75, the initiative designed to restrict union involvement in the political arena, which at one time enjoyed a 55-23 percent edge with voters. However, on election day, Prop 75 lost by a margin of 53-47 percent.

Ultimately, California's working people didn't buy the notion that silencing unions and giving the governor new

sweeping powers would really solve the state's problems.

California union members passed out more than 2 million workplace leaflets and made more than 2 million phone calls to mobilize union family voters against the corporate-backed attacks.

Brandon wanted especially to thank the local unions that helped get out a 31,000-piece mailing to IAM members across the state. And he gives a big thank-you to Shelley Kessler at the San Mateo Labor Council and to Joe DeBono at Local 1781.

### The fight continues

As sweet as this victory is for union members, it is essentially a holding action. On election night, the governor offered no apology for initiating the special election even though the voters rejected every proposition handily and the election itself cost county governments more than \$50 million to administer.

He gave no apology for his trash-talking about firefighters, teachers and nurses during the campaign. And he shows no signs of backing away from his plans to gut the public employees' retirement system or to continue bleeding money from local governments.

Machinists and a strong majority of California voters sent the governor a clear message that his special election was a waste of time, money and effort.

"Now, we must start planning for the 2006 Governor's race, so that next November, we can tell Arnold: 'Hasta la vista, baaaby!'" Brandon said.



### Foster Farms fights workers' merger with IAM

## Workers in Livingston plant stage short walk-outs

In a secret ballot election held in September, the members of the League of Independent Workers, a union representing 2,400 Foster Farms production workers and mechanics, overwhelmingly voted to merge with the IAM. Their goal was to have the support and experience of a national union behind them as they sought a new contract with the chicken-processing company in Livingston.

Unfortunately, since that election, the company has refused to recognize the IAM as the workers' bargaining representative. "This should have been a simple merger," says Directing Business Rep Jim Beno. "The company is acting as if they have a choice, but they don't. These workers had a union recognized by the company and the NLRB. Who that union merges with is not up to

Continued on page 4



More than 1,500 Foster Farms employees are on the picket line around the clock to get company recognition of the IAM and a decent contract.

## AROUND THE LOCALS

### Local 1484

#### Screening for hazards

On November 5, members of Local 1484 who work at the San Pedro and Long Beach docks had a rude surprise. Out of the 35 members who took advantage of the ear and lung medical screening held at the union hall, 12 were diagnosed with a high potential for developing asbestosis—a kind of lung cancer caused by exposure to asbestos.

Years ago, asbestos was known as the “miracle fiber,” because of its fire-resistant qualities. It was used in brake linings and all over ships. Not until the 1970s was it discovered how dangerous asbestos was.

“We have workers’ comp attorneys bring medical folks into the union hall to do an initial screening,” says Business Rep Kevin Kucera. “The upside is that if people find out they might have an asbestos-related disease, we can help them get medical assistance and hopefully recover.”

### Local 1173

#### A fair deal

Local 1173 concluded difficult negotiations with Vacaville Pontiac, Buick, GMC in November. “This is a really good employer,” says Area Director Mark Hollibush, “but all the domestics are really hurting right now. It’s a fair proposal, but it’s certainly not the best the guys have had.”

The 30-month contract calls for no wage increase for first the six months, and then a one dollar increase after that. By changing the medical plan, the employees will eliminate their co-pay for the first year. The pension contribution was temporarily reduced from \$300 to \$150, but after six months it will go back up to \$250 for remainder of contract.

#### Employer keeps word

Business Rep Rick Rodgers reports that Steve Reynolds, the manager at Macy Automotive in Concord, promised that if he could

### Local 1584 celebrates long-time IAM members



On December 6, Local 1584 held its annual Veterans’ Luncheon at Francesco’s in Oakland to pay tribute to the local’s long-time members. Pictured here are the 45 and 50 year members.

free up some money, he’d take care of his four guys.

“Everyone got a \$1/hour raise, their medical co-pay was removed, and their pension contribution stayed at the same level.” Rodgers said that the company saved money by changing medical plans. “Reynolds kept his word to take care of his guys.”

#### SP springs for new deal

The 21 Machinists and 18 Teamsters ratified a new three-year contract at SP Automotive Supply. The agreement includes wage increases of 55¢ in year one and 45¢ in years two and three, and a small co-pay on the medical—no more than \$30/month. Rodgers and Local 1546 Business Rep Pat Woodward negotiated the deal for members of both Locals.

#### A miracle at Miracle

Twelve IAM members who work at Miracle Auto Painting in Richmond, San Jose and Walnut Creek have a new contract that was not easy to come by. “The company was financially fragile,” says Rodgers. “We worked hard with owner Wayne Abbott, Local 1101’s Area Director Glenn Gandolfo, and Local 1546’s Pat Woodward to craft a deal we could all live with.”

By changing health plans, the medical co-pay will be reduced from \$350 to \$226/month for now. Future wage and health care cost increases will be addressed in contract re-openers. “Even the Union Heritage

Health Plan broke new ground so we could make a deal,” Rodgers adds.

### Local 2182

#### Sacto plays catch up

Back in the spring, the City of Sacramento indicated that they would likely have the funds for a pretty good contract. “We didn’t rush these talks. We were more interested in doing it right than doing it quickly,” says Local 2182 Mark Martin, who negotiated for the IAM members and the Building Trades. “It was worth it to go slow.”

When the members finally ratified their contract in November, they got a good deal—with retroactivity included. First, everyone got a 4% annual wage increase for the four year contract. Machinists and machinist helpers got an additional equity increase of 2% for the first two years and 1% for the next two years, and supervisors got another 2% equity increase. Those with state water certification got an additional incentive increase of \$125/month.

The contract also calls for significant increases in what the city pays for health and welfare. And very importantly, it maintains benefits for out-of-area retirees.

“This is definitely a lucrative economic package,” Martin adds. “The Machinists are up to over \$38/hour, not counting the incentive pay, and the supervisors will top \$40/hour.”

An additional benefit is that the



Jay Bryant (center) stands with Business Rep Skip Hatch (L) and Area Director Mark Martin in front of new fence carrying nation’s heaviest IAM logo.

### IAM member creates state-of-the-art gate for Local 2182’s Sacramento building

When homeless men started living beside Local 2182’s Sacramento union hall, the staff grew concerned for their own safety and for the security of the building. The Local agreed to build a lockable fence. What they got, when they hired IAM member Jay Bryant to do the job, was much more than they bargained for.

Bryant has been an IAM member since he joined the union at age 17 and apprenticed at BPEX in Santa Rosa. He moved to Sacramento 10 years later, and worked for Great Auto and Teichert. When Teichert downsized earlier this year, Bryant went out on his own. Currently Bryant is completing the paperwork to become an IAM owner-operator. “I have 16 years in my pension; I don’t want to give that up.”

Bryant says he’ll do anything: “I work on heavy equipment, decorative iron, red wagons. People bring me all kinds of stuff to fix.”

The fence itself is over seven feet tall, and is anchored at least three feet into the ground. Once built, it took four days to erect the fence at the site. The gate door is arched to stand out from the fencing requiring its hydraulic closer to be at the bottom of the gate, rather than at the top—which is more standard. “We’re still tinkering with the closer because at this point it’s extremely heavy. We want to make sure that this gate doesn’t keep out people we want to come in,” says Area Director Mark Martin.

Bryant built the gear by blowing up the IAM logo image, burning it out and piecing together the 125 pound unit—probably the heaviest IAM logo in the nation. “The whole process took two weeks. First I powder-coated it, and then I painted it the colors of the union. It should look good for years to come,” Bryant explains.

The project was finished just in time for Halloween. “It was a fun project,” Bryant adds. “I was pleased the union gave me the opportunity to do it.”



The Sparkplug (USPS 007966) is published bi-monthly by District Lodge 190, International Association of Machinists, Oakland, Calif., a non-profit organization. Periodicals postage paid at Oakland. Subscriptions are \$3 per year.

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

Postmaster: Send address corrections to: The Sparkplug, 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621.

Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor

# AROUND THE LOCALS

unions will have 'agency shop' for the first time. "If we can demonstrate that 60% of the workers have signed up to be members, then agency shop will be implemented without an election," Martin says. "We're confident we won't need that election."

Crosatto says that the dealers ultimately want to reduce the pension to the bare minimum of \$25/month. "But at this point, one dealer hasn't changed what he's paying; one is only paying pension but not health and welfare; three have reduced the pension contribution but are not paying retiree medical. Some implemented pay decreases for service advisors and parts people while others have not. And two dealers implemented a flat rate pay structure but didn't go through the procedures called for in the contract. They're all over the map."

More than 130 members have turned out at the shops to do informational picketing as the talks continue.

## Local 1546

### An association divided

The seven dealerships that make up the East Bay Motor Car Dealers Association have been acting any which way but loose and as a result, Local 1546 is filing what Area Director Don Crosatto calls "very strange unfair labor practice charges."

## Walsh Station mechanics ratify contract



These techs give their new contract a thorough review before voting to accept it.

Walsh Station used to be a Pony Express stop in Sacramento. However, for the last 50 years, it's been a unionized auto and truck repair shop. And in early November, by a vote of four to zero, its mechanics settled their new three year contract.

"It's a good deal," says Local 2182 Business Rep Skip Hatch, "especially for an independent shop. But this is a good employer who recognizes the value of paying good wages to attract and keep cream-of-the-crop employees."

Wages will increase a total of \$2.20 over three years, and the agreement includes full maintenance of health and welfare benefits for the first two years, with a \$1,023 cap in year three. The employees and employer will split any cost above that amount. The contract also increases the life insurance package to \$50,000, increases the pension contribution by \$115 over the life of the contract, and adds successor language in case the owner decides to sell the business.

Rod Kunisaki's dad founded the shop in 1952 and Rod took over in 1988. "I have no problem running a union shop," Kunisaki says. "I just want our guys to make a good living."

## 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? 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.)

YOUR Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Where you work: \_\_\_\_\_

Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZING LEAD'S Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Home or cell phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to be reached: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to: District 190, 7717 Oakport St., Oakland, CA 94621. (Feel free to copy this form, or put the info on your own paper.)

## Defending workers' rights from Hong Kong to New York to Concord

In more than 100 International Human Rights Day actions planned around the world, workers, activists and religious groups will shine a global spotlight on the fight to restore workers' freedom to form unions.

Dec. 10 marks the anniversary of the ratification of the United Nations' 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration established the right of people in every nation to come together into unions and negotiate contracts.

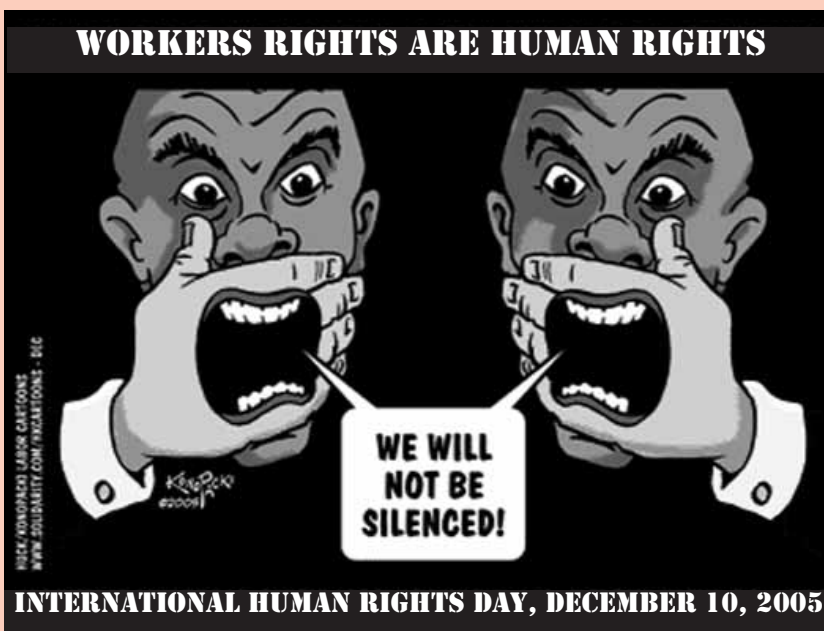
### Nobel Laureates back right to form unions

Eleven Nobel Peace Prize Laureates called on all nations to honor the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and protect workers' freedom to form unions in a joint statement running as a full-page newspaper ad this week in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *International Herald-Tribune*.

"Even the wealthiest nation in the world—the United States of America—fails to adequately protect workers' rights to form unions and bargain collectively. Millions of U.S. workers lack any legal protection to form unions and thousands are discriminated against every year for trying to exercise these rights," wrote the Nobel Laureates.

The 11 peace prize winners, including former President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama, the Rev. Desmond Tutu and former Polish President Lech Walesa, said they are "gravely concerned about the state of workers' rights in many countries."

They also pointed to the connection between workers' rights and living standards. The right to form and join unions "is vital to promoting broadly shared economic prosperity, social justice and strong democracies."



### Events around the globe

**New York City.** December 7. Workers and union leaders will hold a candlelight demonstration at Washington Square Park to call attention to several workers' struggles, including New York University graduate employees.

**Washington, D.C.** December 8. Thousands of federal workers will march in front of the White House to protest the Bush administration's proposed personnel rules that would strip employees in the Defense and Homeland Security Departments of collective bargaining rights.

**Concord, CA.** December 10. Workers will picket at Lithia Dodge of Concord to support the Local 1173 members there who are on strike for 10 weeks. Since September 22, they have opposed the company's proposal of wage and health care givebacks. According to the leaflet, "Lithia Corporation has taken the low road—union busting at its worst. This cannot be tolerated in a strong labor community like Contra Costa County."

**Hong Kong.** December 10. Trade union leaders will join with workers to urge the World Trade Organization, which meets there Dec. 13–18, to protect workers' rights, especially the right to form a union.

**Phnom Penh, Cambodia.** December 10. Thousands of Cambodians will hold a mass rally to call for workers' rights as human rights in an event that likely will be the largest demonstration of Cambodians since they gained their freedom from the Khmer Rouge. The rally is sponsored by members of eight labor federations, 18 nongovernment organizations, four student and youth associations and a law firm.

# Workers across the District go on strike — to fight un



Scenes from the short strike actions in October and November.

## Turning up the heat at Foster Farms

*continued from page one*  
the company. This is clearly an unfair labor practice (ULP) under the National Labor Relations Act.”

The company has demoted several of the union’s strongest advocates. “Firing, demoting or intimidating union supporters is also a ULP,” says Beno.

Since late October, 1,500-1,800 of the workers have joined the picket line in three separate short strikes; the first lasted four days and the second two lasted two days each. “The company wants to say we have no support, but we’ve never had less than 500 people on the line—and that’s 24 hours a day,” says Business Rep Pedro Mendez.

Ralph Meraz, president of the newly-formed IAM Local 2005, says that while these workers certainly want more in terms of wages and benefits, “the strikes we’ve called are not about wages. They’re about justice and dignity on the job and gaining recognition for the union they voted for.”

“Nobody wants to be on a picket line,” Mendez adds, “but if they have to strike, they might as well have fun. We brought out a DJ and there was dancing and chanting in

Spanish and Punjabi all night long!” Mendez says that the short strike actions really disrupt the company’s operations.

### Volunteering to pay dues

To show their support for the union, already more than 1,200 Foster Farms workers have voluntarily joined and paid their dues to the IAM, with more memberships coming in on a daily basis. “Our goal is to have 70% of the workers paying dues, and I have full confidence we’ll get there,” Meraz says..

Under ordinary circumstances, workers don’t join the union until a first contract has been ratified. “They want to show that they are 100% behind this merger and the IAM,” Meraz adds.

District 190 has helped the new local set up its first real office, located at 416 Main Street, Livingston, CA, 95334. The office is equipped with desks, a phone, fax and computer, and the new staff is being trained on how to use the IAM membership database program. An open house was held on December 8 and 9, to ensure that members from all shifts could attend.

### Strikes, boycotts and political pressure

In addition to the series of short strikes, the union is initiating a statewide boycott of Foster Farms. “We’re working to get this company on the California Labor Federation’s boycott list. We’re also working to get their top customers, like Costco

and Safeway, to put pressure on the company,” says Beno.

The union is also working the political angles. Congressman George Miller wrote a letter to the company strongly suggesting that Foster Farms “resume collective bargaining with your employees’ chosen representative and work energetically in negotiating a fair and final agreement.”

After explaining the value of the collective bargaining process, Miller reminded the company that, “Any refusal to engage in collective bargaining and honor the free choice of employees runs counter to national policy, federal law and respect for human rights.”

Other politicians are being approached to intervene as well.

Local 2005 will have its next general membership meeting on December 18. English and Punjabi-speakers meet at 1:00; Spanish and Portuguese-speakers will meet at 2:00. The Local will open its offices at 10:00 for a pre-meeting gathering.

“We will represent the workers at Foster Farms,” says Mendez. “It’s just a matter of time. All the different ethnic groups are working together. People are fired up.”



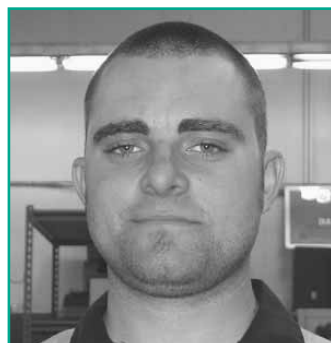
District 190 Secretary-Treasurer Bob Miller (R) teaches the new Local 2005 staff how to use the IAM database at their new office.

## SHOP TALK: What’s the most valuable aspect of being a union member?



**Cliff Yoshimura**  
Walsh Station  
Local 2182

“The retirement benefits, and job security to a certain degree.”



**Kurt Bleasdel**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“Benefits are good and the opportunity to apprentice into a career. I’ve been here for two months and I can see the benefit of being in a union.”



**Mark Calvert**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“You have somebody to go to if there’s a problem at the workplace. Without the union, wages would be at rock bottom. That’s what sets the standard.”



**Richard Yorita**  
Walsh Station  
Local 2182

“I just follow my fellow workers and it all works out fine.”



**Sherman Washington**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“The union looks out after you. When you come to work, you want to know there’s someone who stands behind you. I know the crew at IAM; they’re really good people. It’s a family atmosphere—you’re not treated like a number.”



**Ti Hubacher**  
Local 2182

“The brotherhood. You help each other fall back on, and you’re helping out in the long run. The comparison is right to hire people who have to have more in their contract nego-

**THE STREETS**



**Fair labor practices and for decent wages and benefits**

**Swanson Ford and Normindin Chrysler-Jeep**

On Tuesday, November 29, 65 mechanics, auto body painters, and service advisors walked out of Swanson Ford in Los Gatos and Normindin Chrysler-Jeep in San Jose, because both employers' last proposals didn't address their concerns.

"In fact, if they accepted this agreement, after four years, they'd be bringing home 50¢ an hour less than they get today," said Local 1101

Area Director Glenn Gandolfo.

First, the two employers proposed going from a two-year contract to a four year one, which is no benefit for the union members, since the economics are already substandard.

Next, the proposals included a freeze in wages in year one, and then 50¢ wage increases in each of the next three years. Alone, that might be worth considering, except that

they also proposed increasing the health and welfare coverage by only \$50 per year.

Currently, the employer group has capped the health and welfare contribution at \$500, and their proposal would only bring them up to \$700 in 2009. However, today's cost for coverage is \$735, and it's going up to \$828 when the local moves all of its coverage to the AI plan.

According to Gandolfo, "our members are paying \$235 out of pocket now. In four years, their cost could be more than \$400 per month."

Three years ago, nine dealers were part of the South Bay Dealers'

Association and bargained one group contract. This year, they dissolved the Association but agreed to do "coordinated bargaining" instead.

These two dealers tried to cut their own deal, which the members soundly rejected. "These two employers treated their employees particularly poorly and that's why their employees are the only ones on strike now. After the rejection, the owners ran back to dealer group. They're trying to play all sides."

Gandolfo says that the union has several unfair labor practice charges in the works. "We'll try federal mediation to avoid further strikes."



*"It's up to each individual to help fight for our benefits. If you don't fight, you're going to lose them."*

**Lithia Dodge of Concord**

On September 22, 22 members of Local 1173 went on strike at Lithia Dodge of Concord. "They felt they had no other choice when the company's last offer included taking away their pension, providing no improvements in their medical coverage and lousy wages," explained Area Director Mark Hollibush.

Talks have broken off and there's currently no offer on the table. The union brought in federal mediators, but the company said they'd never negotiate a contract with the IAM now.

"We've cut their business down by 80%, if not more, but they're holding firm. Lithia is a national corporation—they've got deep pockets," Hollibush added.

Several of the techs have found

new jobs, but Hollibush says that the remaining members have stood firm. "Their spirits are high and they're determined to see this through."

Local 1173 has enlisted the help of all of its members to keep the picket lines going. "It's up to each individual to help fight for our benefits. If you don't fight, you're going to lose them."

The California Labor Federation has designated Lithia Dodge as a site for the December 10 national demonstrations for Human Rights. Local politicians will join union members from across the Bay Area to fight for the rights of Lithia Dodge employees—and all working people—to have a decent contract.

**Berkeley Honda**

On June 1, just after long-time union employer Doten Honda (now called Berkeley Honda) was sold, the new owner refused to hire back many of the mechanics, preferring to hire recent Wyotech grads who were not Honda-certified.

The workers went on strike and weekly picketing has continued since. Community members have taken up the mantle, since many of the employees have had to find new jobs.

In November, the employer approached the union about settling the strike. However, two major sticking points remain: maintaining a decent pension and determining who

can return to work. "Most of these people are in their late forties and having a good pension is very important to them," says Local 1546 Area Director Don Crosatto. "And the company will not commit to returning Nat Courtney, a 31-year member who was our shop steward, to work."

In addition, Crosatto says, the owner keeps telling people, "including the mayor of Berkeley, that we're close to settlement. But these issues are too big to forgive."

Picketing continues at the Shattuck Avenue dealership. Come to Berkeley on Saturday, December 17 for some good old-fashioned Christmas Caroling on the picket line.



- Vince Flores**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

*"The union gets our medical stuff taken care of."*
- Danny McKay**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

*"Security and health and welfare—especially for the family. You have to have the medical and dental for the family. I'm shop steward so I can help others and be a voice for our members here."*
- Bryan Wong**  
Walsh Station  
Local 2182

*"Good wages, good benefits and retirement. It depends on the owners how they treat you."*
- Joe Milby**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

*"You get good contracts that cover medical, dental, 401K, profit-sharing and much more."*
- Ron Takemori**  
Walsh Station  
Local 2182

*"The benefits are the main thing. And fair wages. You have a Business Agent who negotiates for you, so that we don't have to battle against the boss."*

## UNION MEMBERS

**Local 1101 member fixes transmission on \$2 million winning robot car**

### You can't go to the moon without a good mechanic

On Oct. 8, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) held a competition called the "Great Challenge" to see if anyone could build a vehicle that could drive by itself. This competition goes a big step beyond remote control; the people-less cars need to be able to do their own seeing, thinking, steering, accelerating and braking.

In year one of the contest, none of the cars succeeded in getting to the finish line and the \$1 million prize went unclaimed. This year, DARPA upped the prize to \$2 million. And this year, not one, but five cars crossed the finish line.

The winning car, Stanley, a VW Touareg, might never have done it if not for IAM Local 1101 member Drew Klindt, who fixed its transmission in record time.

Klindt has worked in the automotive industry for more than a decade. For the last three-plus years, he has been a tech at Sunnyvale VW—his first union job.

"The car came in to get the transmission pump seal replaced. They wanted it done in a day. It's usually a three-day job but I was able to get it done in a day and a half," Klindt says.

"I knew that car would go in the race, but I didn't know it would win. They had problems with it before," he adds.

The car is not a U.S. specification car, so a mechanic can't just look up how to fix it. "You just have to use your intuition, because there aren't any specs to rely on."

#### How Stanley got so smart

Stanley, Stanford University's diesel-powered VW Touareg, completed the 132-mile course through the Mojave Desert in six hours, 58 minutes. The robot car used different



Drew Klindt (Left) stands in front of Stanley, the winner of DARPPA's \$2 million "Great Challenge."

combinations of RADAR, LIDAR, optical scanners and GPS, along with major onboard processing power.

Even with all that technology, Stanley got smart by learning during countless hours of desert testing and practice in the months leading up to the race. Eventually the car became a master of finding the path, detecting obstacles and avoiding them while staying on course.

Next in were two Hummer H1-based entries from Carnegie Mellon University, a 2005 Ford Escape Hybrid, and a military vehicle-based entry. More than half of the 23 teams that made it to the finals were able to reach the double digits in mileage.

Simply by finishing the course, Stanley and the four other cars showed that machines can be made to drive safely and speedily over

rugged terrain without any human help.

"This is the beginning," said Sebastian Thrun, team leader of Stanford's winning vehicle. "We have shown that we can build cars that drive by themselves. We have done the impossible."

#### DARPA's mission

DARPA, the research and development unit of the U.S. Department of Defense, had set out several years ago to foster new technologies for unmanned vehicles in the military, under mandate from Congress. The government has mandated that 30 percent of Army vehicles be unmanned by 2015 in order to save lives on the battlefield. And it approved research funds to be used for the Grand Challenge, which called on academia and private industry to build driverless cars with advanced technologies.

Applications of the technology could range from the development of unmanned ground vehicles for dangerous military missions to driver assistance systems that keep civilian drivers, passengers and pedestrians safe.

"We have completed our mission here and are looking forward to seeing these exciting technologies take off," DARPA Director Tony Tether said.

#### Stanley's future

Stanley and its prototype will go on a year-long tour across the country. At some point, Sunnyvale VW will have the car on display for a week. "When I learned that the car won, I felt pretty good, knowing I had a hand in it," Klindt adds. "But what's really cool is that after the tour the car will go to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C."



## SHOP TALK: What's the most valuable aspect of being a union member?



**James Schreindl**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

"Security. Knowing my family will be taken care of with health care. It makes me feel special to be in a union shop. I had an opportunity to go through the union apprenticeship program and that was worth a lot."



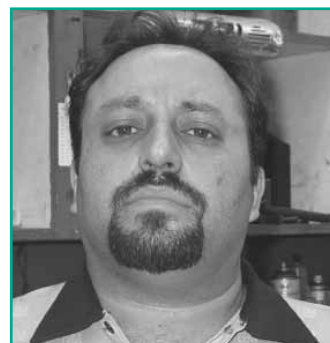
**Brian Love**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

"Basically you know what you've got for a certain amount of time in terms of pay and benefits. The medical benefits are just amazing here. In a non-union shop, you have no rights—they can take away holidays or do whatever they want."



**Chris Leasure**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

"Protection from your employer. The union sets standards for the industry, otherwise, you don't know what the pay scale and benefits will be, and they will likely start to spiral down."



**Ralph Hernandez**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

"Job security. And any time you have a problem, they're always there for you."



**Jesse Brashear**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

"You can't get fired easily and you get great benefits. With a union, you have a right to fight."

# UNION EMPLOYERS

## All Transmission gives their all for union benefits

Ozzie and Dee Lewis both worked at union auto dealerships for years, so when they decided to go into business for themselves, they knew they wanted to run a union shop.

“I’m a strong believer in the union,” Ozzie says. “I trust all the benefits and want to provide that for my employees.” After a brief start-up period, the Lewises bought out their partners and signed the union contract with Local 2182 that went into effect on January 1, 2005.

Both Dee and Ozzie had worked at Great Valley Chrysler in Sacramento. He was a master tech for eight years there and a member of Local 2182. Prior to coming to Sacramento, Ozzie was a Local 1101 member while working at Oak Tree Mazda in San Jose. Dee wrote-up and managed service at Oak Tree Mazda and Alison BMW in San Jose and was also a Local 1101 member.

Dee says that another important reason to be a union shop is that, “as a start-up business, we wanted to provide union-caliber quality and service and promote that as an approach to sales. It brings immediate credibility, enabling us to attract fleet service.” Going into their third year, Dee adds that “business just



The All Transmission crew, (L to R): Dee Lewis, Ozzie Lewis, Steve Lima and Ray Valine, are all proud to be members of Local 2182.

keeps getting better and better—so it must be working.”

The Lewises say they make fleet work their priority because “we understand that, for them, time is money. We want fleet people to stay with us, once they come to us.”

Currently All Transmission, located in Sacramento, employs two techs in addition to owners Ozzie & Dee. “The plan is that within the next three years, we’ll have three

more techs on board,” Dee adds.

“If we provide quality work, the business will come and support the higher cost of benefits,” Dee says. “We were at a negative the first year. Now we’re in the black.”

Another benefit of having a union is to minimize turnover. “It’s hard to find a good mechanic,” Ozzie says. “That’s why we offer a good benefit, so we can attract the best folks.”

One of those techs is Steve Lima,

who worked with Ozzie at Great Valley. “This is a great place to work. We work hard to take care of our customers, but the atmosphere is not so ‘hustle and bustle’—it’s more mellow.” For Lima, a 16-year union member, having health insurance for his family is a must. “The union’s been good to me. When I was out of the union, the only health insurance I could get was much worse.” Lima says he just wishes more shops were union to keep up the wages and the health insurance.

Ray Valine, a 25-year mechanic, was never in a union before and only had health insurance once—back in 1984. “I love having health insurance. I couldn’t ask for anything better. This is my best boss so far.”

“It’s really different working with an owner who gets it,” says Area Director Mark Martin. “We want to help facilitate their ability to have a growing business. That’s the type of relationship we’d like to have with all of our employers.”

All Transmission makes a special offer to new fleet owners: “We’ll give 20% off service for the first month. Give us a try,” Dee says. “Our goal is to grow the business so we can create jobs for more union members.”

### New study confirms what organizers already know: Employer anti-union behavior is widespread

A study by American Rights at Work, released in time for the December 10 Human Rights Day events, reveals that most employers tread on workers’ rights to a “free choice” before a union representation vote. They do this by aggressively intimidating, harassing, and coercing workers in an effort to undermine union support.

IAM organizers would no doubt agree with the following findings:

- 30% of employers fire pro-union workers.
- 49% of employers threaten to close a worksite when workers try to form a union, but only 2% actually do.
- 51% of employers coerce workers into opposing

unions with bribery or favoritism.

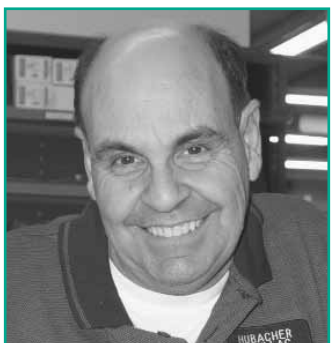
- 82% of employers hire high-priced union busting consultants to fight organizing drives.
- 91% of employers force employees to attend one-on-one anti-union meetings with their supervisors.

#### Employer behavior impedes union organizing

The report confirms that union membership in the U.S. is not declining because workers no longer want, need, or attempt to form unions. Instead, the falling membership rate is related to employers’ systematic use of legal and illegal tactics to stymie union organizing.

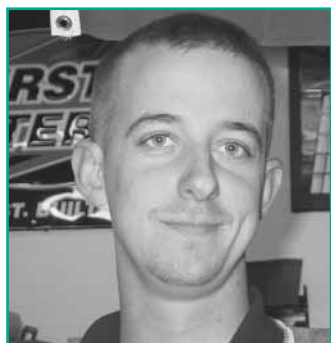
- Aided by a weak labor law system that fails to protect workers’ rights, employers manipulate the government-supervised union recognition process, enabling employers to abuse their power and significantly influencing the outcome of union representation elections.
- In 91% of the union recognition petitions filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the survey, a majority of workers indicated they wanted a union before the process began. In several cases, workers demonstrated more than 80% support.
- However, unions were victorious in only 31% of the campaigns in which they filed a petition.

### SHOP TALK: What’s the most valuable aspect of being a union member?



**Randy Hancock**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“Benefits and security.”



**Matt Bentz**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“The insurance. That’s the biggest thing for me. It’s a huge different over what I had before.”



**Freddy Gallegos**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“It has a little more job security. They can’t just fire you. They have to go through certain procedures before they can even discipline you. Also, majority rules—that’s important.”



**John White**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“Benefits, definitely. That’s it in a nutshell. And the wages are good too. I can take care of my family.”



**Juan Ramirez**  
Hubacher Cadillac  
Local 2182

“The benefit is that the union sets the pay scale. It keeps the employer providing us with medical insurance, because so many companies are dumping it. Also, job security—they have to go through a grievance process before they can fire you.”

## More wins for Sparkplug and District website!

We're pleased to report that *The Sparkplug* and the District 190 website have both won national awards.

In the IAM journalism contest, both the paper and the website took first place for "general excellence." In addition, *The Sparkplug* won second place for "layout and design," and third place for "best feature." The website also snagged first place for "best design" and third place for "best feature."

In the International Labor Communicators Association (ILCA) contest, which is much larger and includes many other unions, *The Sparkplug* took a second place award for general excellence and the website got an honorable mention.

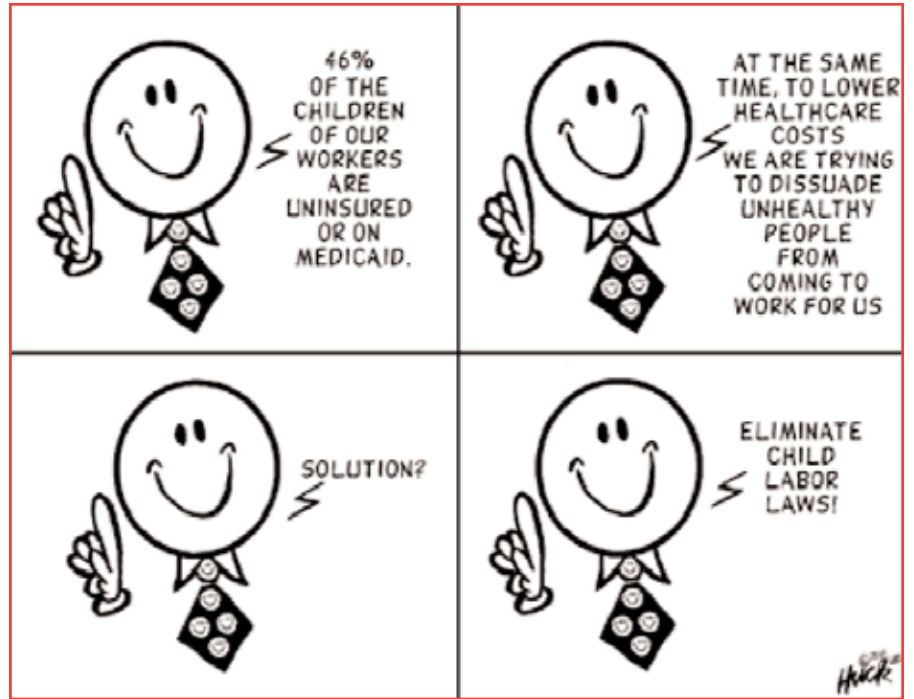
We work hard to give you good information, and now and again, it's nice to be recognized!



**ASSOCIATED  
THIRD PARTY  
ADMINISTRATORS**

ATPA is the administrator for the Automotive Industries Health & Welfare and Pension Trust Funds.

**Contact us at 510-836-2484**



Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your Local Union office. See Calendar below for your local union's address.

<b style="font-size: 1.2em; margin: 0 10px;">UNION MEETINGS</b>	
<p><b>District Lodge 190</b> 7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661</p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 14 • January 24 • February 28</p> <p><b>General Delegates' Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.</i> December 14 • January 24 • February 28</p>
<p><b>Local 80I</b> 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621 800-655-2182</p>	<p><b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m.</i> December 15 • January 19 • February 16 <i>Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.</i></p>
<p><b>Local 110I</b> 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 320 Santa Clara, CA 95051 408-551-2280</p> <p><i>All meetings are held at the above address. Check union office for room.</i></p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 8 • January 12 • February 9</p> <p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 8 • January 12 • February 9</p> <p><b>NOTE: New office hours:</b> Mon-Thur. 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. For Reps: Call ahead for appointment/availability</p>
<p><b>Local 1173</b> 1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421</p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 8 • January 12 • February 9</p> <p><b>Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 15 • January 19 • February 16</p>
<p><b>Local 1414</b> 150 South Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689</p>	<p><b>Shop Stewards' Meeting</b> <i>First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> January 5 • February 2</p> <p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 8 • January 12 • February 9</p> <p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 15 • January 19 • February 16</p> <p><b>Retirees' Club</b> <i>First Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome!</i> December 7 • March 1, 06 • June 7, 06</p>
<p><b>Local 1484</b> 1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688</p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 15 • January 19 • February 16</p> <p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 6 • January 3 • February 7</p> <p><b>Retirees' Club</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.</i> December 21 • January 18 • February 15</p>
<p><b>Local 1528</b> 713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210</p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 7 • January 4 • February 1</p> <p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 7 • January 4 • February 1</p> <p><b>Women's Committee Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of each month at 11:00 a.m.</i> January 22 • February 26</p>
<p><b>Local 1546</b> 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705</p>	<p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 6 • January 3 • February 7</p> <p><b>Shop Stewards' Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 6 • January 3 • February 7</p> <p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 1 • December 29 • February 2</p> <p><b>Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon</i> December 7 • January 4 • February 1</p> <p><b>Alcoholics Anonymous: Every Saturday, 9 a.m.</b></p>
<p><b>Local 1584</b> 8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064</p>	<p><b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 15 • January 19 • February 16</p> <p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Preceding Monday at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 12 • January 16 • February 13</p> <p><b>Retirees' Club</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.</i> December 6 • January 3 • February 7</p>
<p><b>Local 1596</b> 4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0085</p>	<p><b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 17 • February 21</p> <p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 17 • February 21</p>
<p><b>Local 2182</b> 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200</p>	<p><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14</p> <p><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14</p> <p><b>Retirees' Club - VISTA CLUB</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.</i> December 21 • January 18 • February 15</p>