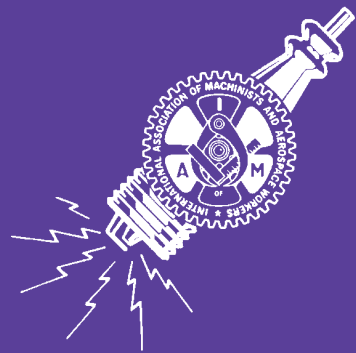


# The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 9 NO. 3

April/May 2007

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

## Community support helps settle six-month ConGlobal strike

After being on strike for nearly six months, the 42 Local 1484 members who worked at ConGlobal used their community contacts and finally have a contract. The strike started in September, 2006, and the contract was settled on February 23, and ratified by a three to one margin on February 26, 2007.

While the union and company were able to come to agreement on many of the economic issues, the last subject of contention was striker replacement. "The company said that they could only staff up with 30 workers total, and of that number, wanted to include 18 scabs," explains Business Rep Kevin Kucera. "The company proposed hiring back one scab for every three strikers, but we stood firm with a five to one ratio, and that's the number we finally agreed to. Most of our folks were back on the job in the first three weeks."

The new three-year contract calls for a wage base increase, for the first time in a long time. The company put some caps on the medical coverage, but Kucera is hopeful that the members will have minimal out-of-pocket co-pays. "Most importantly, this employer was hell-bent on breaking us," Kucera says. "He didn't break us. We were able to keep our union together and even stronger than before."

### Community support is key

On February 8, the Los Angeles Federation of Labor's Maria Elena Durazo facilitated a community meeting with L.A. City Council member Janice Hahn. "She's truly a champion of workers and a good friend of the labor movement," Kucera says. "Along with the ConGlobal workers, we were joined by LAANE (the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy), the Teamsters,

IWW, IBEW, other affiliates of the L.A. Labor Fed, as well as the Long Beach-San Pedro Democratic Club. There wasn't enough room to bring everybody in."

At that point, the workers had been on strike for five months. Kucera says that Janice Hahn plainly asked, "What do you need?" And the strikers answered: "to get rid of the scabs."

Following that meeting, Hahn met with ConGlobal's CEO, Mike Baldwin, on February 22. "She told him that he needed to fire the replacement workers because this is a union town." Although ConGlobal would not agree to having Hahn 'shadow bargain,' "it was clear to all of us that Hahn's active involvement turned the tide," Kucera adds.

A few days later, at the federal mediating session, Kucera asked for 'personal time' with the employer, in the belief that the time was right to get an agreement. From that moment, the talks moved quickly to closure.

### Many thanks to go around

In the last month, Kucera says he's been going around town thanking people for their support. Those who deserve honorable mention are Local 1484 President Fernando Perez, Jack Irving, Hank Stolk, Local 1484's Secretary Maria Suarez, Organizer Al Lopez, and Shop Stewards Robert Agajanian, Roger St. Dennis, Frank Honoratto, Richard Duke, Also, special thanks to Gladys Mason and Dick Amamia from District 725, Richard Sanchez and his staff from District 947, Teamster Port Director Miguel Lopez, Alicia Rivera from LAANE, David Green and the San Pedro Democratic Club. "The solidarity was incredible. These folks came out to the picket line, supported us, provided food and so much more."

### Moving into the future

"It's been a long time since the Local has seen a strike of this magnitude," Kucera adds. "Although this was a hard-fought battle, we're looking forward to keeping our commitment to getting the company back on its feet and improving its business conditions to work for the betterment of all."

Kucera adds that the company is struggling to get back on its feet. "We're assisting them in a variety of ways. During the strike, they lied to



Just after the ConGlobal agreement was inked, the negotiating team stopped for a picture. From left: Striker Antonio Lopez, Business Rep Kevin Kucera, HR Director Diane Ensing, Operations Manager Ken Sherman, Tom Dielman, and strikers Hank Stolk, Armando Lomlie and Martin Crespo.

customers, saying the strike was over. Some folks are afraid to come back, so we're telling customers that it's true this time and that we need them to bring the work back."

In addition, the Local recognizes that a key factor in keeping good jobs in the container industry is to increase union density and organize the non-union sector. "We're actively involved in the Clean & Safe

Ports Coalition in Long Beach, along with the Teamsters and a broad coalition of community, clergy, labor and environmental groups. We're looking forward to supporting their organizing efforts, and we'll be trying to organize the mechanics who service equipment off dock."

"Our members are extremely proud, and they deserve to be," Kucera added.

## Local 1546 wins legal victory over East Bay Motor Car Dealers Association

It may take years for justice to be served, but when it happens, it is sweet!

On April 9, Judge Clifford Anderson ruled that the East Bay Motor Car Dealers Association improperly declared an impasse in bargaining and unlawfully implemented major contract changes that must now be rescinded. This ruling will result in the five dealers having to repay hundreds of thousands of dollars to their old employees, new hires, and to the pension and retiree health and welfare funds; in all, it covers approximately 130 members of Local 1546 and 45 Teamsters and Painters.

"When we were hot and heavy into bargaining, back in 2005, it was clear that the employers were trying to cut wages and benefits drastically. They also wanted to implement a flat rate system," explains Area Director Don Crosatto. "We were trying to work out the best possible flat rate system that would enable our members to cover some of the other cuts. Rather than doing the hard work, the

employers just declared a bargaining impasse and implemented everything they wanted."

The judge ruled that the employers acted improperly and he will order that the dealers "restore the status quo." This means that they will have to make everybody whole—with interest.

"Parts people who had their wages reduced will get that money back with interest. The dealers will have to restore the pension from \$25 back up to as much as \$465/month retroactively to October, 2005. They'll have to pay back the retiree health and welfare that they cut. And, Central Chevrolet will owe a ton of dough to several body shop people they hired at lower rates of pay," says Crosatto. "Hopefully they were smart enough to put the money aside all these months, because having to repay it all it once will hurt."

As the ruling was just issued, it is unclear whether the dealers will appeal. However, if they choose to do so, their liability will keep piling up.



ConGlobal striker and pen and ink artist Rick Rudger (left), is joined by Business Rep Kevin Kucera (right) to present Janice Hahn with a drawing of her when she visited the picket line.



## UNION PEOPLE

### From harrowing boat crossing to Olympics to union mechanic, Chris Vo has done it all

Sitting in Local 1173's Concord office, Chris Vo seems to wonder how his story got out. "I don't tell people about what I've done. I just like to work on cars and take care of my family," he says with a laugh.

But at 36 years old, Vo has done more than many people do in a lifetime.

#### Escaping Vietnam

In 1984, when he was just 14 years old, Vo got on a boat with his father, sister and brother to escape Vietnam. "The engine on the boat died and we drifted for weeks. I don't even know how long it was." The only ones who survived the trip were Vo and another young boy. "All of my family died on the boat. A Chinese fishing boat found us and towed us to land. I don't know how they spotted us."

Vo says that the fishermen carried the two boys to a hospital in China, where he remained for 3-4 months. When he was well enough, he was sent to a refugee camp in Hong Kong. After nearly seven months there, he was allowed to come to the United States to "learn and study."

At this point, he was just 15 years old and on his own. Fortunately, he got placed with a caring foster family in New York. "At first I was very sad and homesick. I missed my family." But his foster parents were into martial arts and introduced him to Tae Kwon Do, and his life moved into a new direction.



Chris Vo tells his story at Local 1173's Concord office

#### The joy of competing

"I found that I enjoyed the competition, and I was able to meet a lot of people through Tae Kwon Do. It was a talent I had and I really liked it."

Vo won some state tournaments that enabled him to go to Colorado Springs to try out for the U.S. Olympic team. "I was so proud to represent the U.S. in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992." Vo says that to be in the Olympics is very emotional. "At the opening ceremony, everybody is crying. After all the tryouts and workouts and training, finally, we're here. People came from every state. It was really amazing. You come together, you fight and you are friends."

Unfortunately, Vo says, he didn't do so well in the Barcelona competition, but he represented the U.S. National Team in 1993 in Tokyo and

in 1994 in Seoul, and took second place in both of those competitions.

Tae Kwon Do is a fast game and at 109 pounds, Vo competed in the Fin Weight Division, which meant he had to be especially fast. "It's a full contact sport, but there are strict rules. You can't kick in the back or punch blind spots. You wear a helmet but no pads. It's not a violent sport." But that doesn't mean you don't get hurt. Vo broke his leg at the 1994 Colorado tryouts. "It's pain, but it's good pain." And he went on to compete later that year.

"You have to do a lot of work to keep your body in good condition. You have to practice hard. If you get out of shape, you could get killed." Training in Colorado began at 5:30 a.m. with an hour of jogging; then you do kick boxing every afternoon, and spar in the evenings. "We trained six hours a day, six days a week. It was very intense."

"Tae Kwon Do is not only physical; it's mental," Vo explains. "It's a sport that helps you with life training. You learn never to give up—just keep trying until you get it. Even though you hurt, keep going."

Vo lived that philosophy. While he was competing in Tae Kwon Do, he knew he also needed a career. After completing high school, he went to the Lincoln Technical Institute, an auto mechanics trade school. "It took me 10 years to pay off my trade school debt."

#### A union career

Vo left New York in 2001 and came to California, where he got a job at Novato Toyota and joined Local 1414. In 2004, he took a position at Walnut Creek Toyota and became a member of Local 1173. "Last year we were number one in the nation for service. We got a good bonus."

Vo says that he only worked at non-union shops in New York, "I got paid \$12/hour. When I asked for a raise, they gave me a hard time."

Vo says he never wants to work non-union again. "You have respect at a union shop. Everybody sticks together. At a union shop, you have the right to stand up for yourself. At a non-union shop, you have to keep your mouth shut."

Vo says that his friends have encouraged him to open up a Tae Kwan Do school. "But I like to fix cars. I don't have the patience to teach," he says. And now that he has a child and a mortgage to pay, he looks back at his Tae Kwon Do experience with fondness, but not as his future. "For me, I'll do it for the exercise. But I want my son to go to college. A sport like this takes too much time and you cannot go to college."

Vo still has a large family back in Vietnam. "But back home, there's no freedom. It's hard to make money. The U.S. is a free country. If you have a dream, pursue it. No question about it. God bless America. You've

### SPECIAL Pre-Retirement MEETING for Local 1414 members Saturday, April 14 • 10:00 a.m. Local 1414 Union Hall

A team from the Trust Fund will answer your questions about retirement and Automotive Industries Pension Plan. Please RSVP as soon as possible to 650-341-2689, with your name, SSN and shop. This will allow the Trust Fund staff to pull your records in advance and assist them in answering your questions.

At the conclusion of the pension meeting, (approximately 12:30 p.m.), there will be an Automotive Industries Retiree meeting (for retirees and those who are planning to retire soon).

We encourage participants to bring their spouses/significant others and encourage co-workers to attend. There will be refreshments, and special requests will be considered.

#### Local 1546 Members and Spouses

### PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

Are you thinking about retiring in the next few years? If so, this seminar will answer all your questions about pension and retiree medical coverage.

Saturday, June 16, 2007 • 9:00 a.m.

Local 1546 • 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland

Spouses welcome  
Includes continental breakfast  
Space is limited  
First come—first served

**Note:** if you feel you have an unusual or complicated question, please get it to your Business Rep ahead of time so our advisors have time to research the answer.

Please RSVP to Tanya or Yolanda at 510-638-6705 by June 12



Chris Vo (right) takes the second place prize at the 1994 Seoul International Games.

The IAM District 190

## Sparkplug

Debra Chaplan,  
Managing Editor



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.



## ORGANIZING WINS

### Team effort at Team Chevrolet wins employees union representation

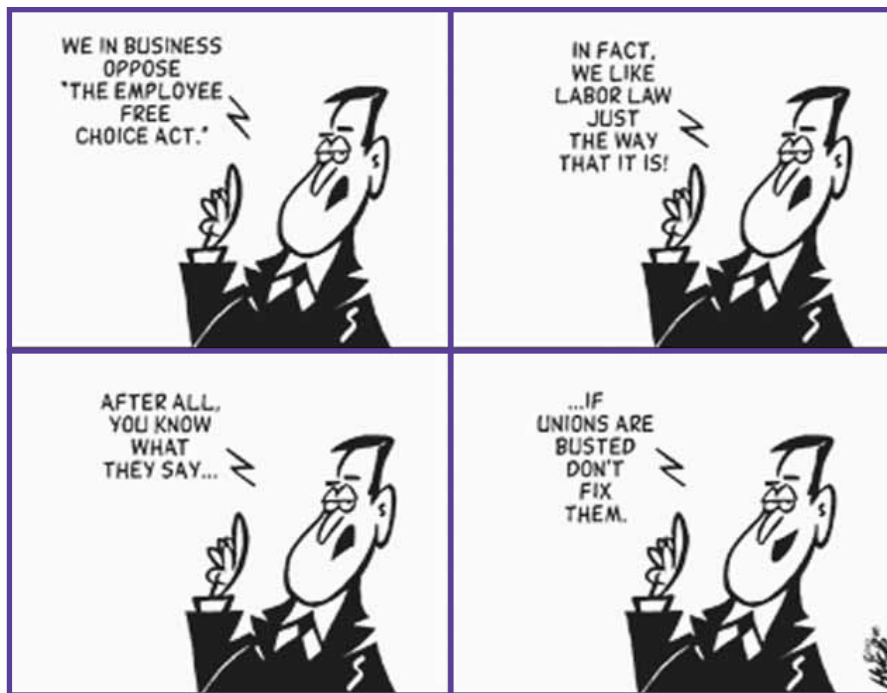
Despite numerous unfair labor practices, a termination, bribes, and threats, and after a one-day strike, the 11 employees at Team Chevrolet in Vallejo voted to be represented by Local 1173.

“Talk about winning one for justice,” said Area Director for Organizing Jesse Juarez. “It was a total team effort as we took down Team Chevrolet. The tally was 7-3 with one challenged yes vote in the box.

The Organizing Committee included Local 1173 President Steve Older, Business Rep Rick Rodgers, who is negotiating the contract, Secretary-Treasurer Greg Kucinski, Area Director Mark Hollibush, and Local 1546 member Rick Isgrigg.

Juarez says there was drama from start to finish as the employer tried unsuccessfully to block the election. “They filed a charge against me alleging that I assaulted the owner and called him a bleeping terrorist. They said that I scared employees into signing for the Union.” The NLRB held an emergency meeting three days before the election and ruled against the employer so the election was still on.

Then, on election day, the dealership’s attorney objected to our union observer, Rob McCurry. “We chose our lead contact, who just happened to be a guy that the employer fired on the first day of the organizing



campaign.” Even though an employer cannot dictate who the union picks to serve as observer, they threatened not to allow the election and told the labor board to pack up and leave if McCurry was the observer. Recognizing that they were using this excuse to stop the election, Juarez chose someone else to fill in.

#### Learning tough lessons

Juarez says that both he and owner Kenny Ross seemed to learn a lot from this campaign. “I learned that no matter what, at the end of the day, we still need to be civil despite our differ-

ent views. Ross told me before the tally that he had never had an experience like this. My reply to him was you should never have fired my main organizer. I told him that he acted like a thug, so I treated him like one.”

The 7-3 vote shocked Ross. “I offered him an olive branch and reassured him that it was nothing personal; we just want fairness for both sides,” Juarez says. “He showed class by shaking my hand. Ultimately, I suggested that he talk to the guys, tell them he’s disappointed, but withdraw his frivolous objections and do the right thing. And he did.”

Juarez adds, “The guys took one

giant step and for that I tip my hat to them.”

#### Round Two: The Contract

Round one is over and now it’s contract time. To help Ross understand the power of unions, Pam Aguilar from the Contra Costa Labor Council initiated a telephone campaign, getting union members to call the dealership and demand a fair contract. While Ross had initially said he’d play hardball, after a few days of being on the receiving end of a telephone blitz, he backed down. He fired his initial attorney and seems to be working with the union.

In the meantime, the NLRB ruled that Rob McCurry was fired illegally. They ordered the employer to reinstate him and give him back wages for the last two months. A trial date has been set for June 7, unless a settlement is reached.

Unfortunately, until the NLRB improves labor law enforcement or until the Employee Free Choice Act is signed into law, union organizing campaigns will continue to be very aggressive. “There’s no other way of protecting the rights of working people and the their freedom to have a union other than taking strong action if you’re provoked,” Juarez adds. “I’m tired of dealing with employers who act unlawfully. That’s just not acceptable—not on my watch!”

### Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA) levels playing field for unions

A growing, bipartisan coalition of policymakers supports the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), proposed legislation that would ensure that workers have a free choice and a fair chance to form a union. The Employee Free Choice Act would level the playing field by **strengthening penalties** against offending employers; **requiring mediation** and arbitration to help employers and employees reach a first contract in a reasonable period of time; and, **permitting workers to form a union through “majority sign-up,”** a process in which workers present signed authorization cards as demonstration of their choice to belong to a union.

On March 1, the House of Representatives passed the EFCA. Some 241 members, including

13 Republicans, supported the bill. A majority of our elected officials stood up against a barrage of misinformation and hundreds of thousands of dollars of negative advertising to support the rights of millions of hard-working men and women.

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee held its first hearing on the EFCA on March 27. The hearing examined how the legislation will restore economic opportunity for working families.

The Senate is poised to pass the EFCA, but even then, this fight won’t be over. President Bush has pledged to veto the EFCA if it reaches his desk—and it’s going to be very tough to convince a veto-proof majority of senators to support it.

For more information on how you can support the EFCA, go to:

[www.americanrightsatwork.org](http://www.americanrightsatwork.org) or  
[www.jwj.org](http://www.jwj.org) (Jobs with Justice).

#### Sorry but true statistics

- ◆ 32% of workers lack a collective bargaining agreement one year after voting for union representation, due to weak labor law enabling employers to avoid bargaining with employees.
- ◆ Every 23 minutes, a U.S. worker is fired or retaliated against for their support of a union.
- ◆ 91% of employers force employees to attend one-on-one anti-union meetings with their supervisors during union organizing drives.
- ◆ 51% of employers illegally coerce workers into opposing unions with bribes or special favors during union organizing drives.
- ◆ 30% of employers illegally fire pro-union workers during union organizing drives.

—American Rights at Work



Congresswoman Barbara Lee, a sponsor of the EFCA in the House, speaks at an Alameda County Labor Council EFCA forum in March. Behind her is Sharon Cornu from the Labor Council

### Why we need the EFCA

*The union launched two organizing campaigns in March that should have resulted in victories, but ultimately have not—yet.*

*On March 14, Area Director Tom Brandon and Business Rep Pedro Mendez went to inform the owner of Holder Ford in Lakeport that his 13 employees had all signed cards declaring that they wanted a union election. The owner responded by throwing the union reps off his property and telling them never to return.*

*The techs’ complaints included not getting wage increases, in one case for 10 years, and in another case for four years. They said the owner took away their medical insurance to buy a \$57,000 computer system.*

*As the election date neared, the owner fired a key union supporter. The union has filed charges and the election is on hold.*

*Similarly, Pedro Mendez was feeling very positive about the campaign at Oldcastle Glass in Fremont. He was getting great turnout at organizing meetings and was taking vote counts to ensure that union support remained strong.*

*And then he started hearing about some funny business. He learned that while some union supporters were promoted, given wage increases and better shifts, others were demoted. The company suddenly increased everybody’s ability to rack up overtime hours while telling people that the union constitution barred them from working overtime.*

*By the time the election was held, many employees who had backed the union voted ‘no’, and the election was lost. The union has filed charges, but it may take months for the NLRB to decide.*

*Stories like these are why we need the Employee Free Choice Act.*





# AROUND

## Local 653

### Pride of the valley

Is it the quiet before the storm or what? After the thaw, the sun came up and summer was here. No spring, no rain. What's next?

Oh, the price of gas went out of sight. This is not good for an economy that relies on agriculture. The shops have gotten very slow and relief is nowhere to be seen.

I am at a loss for words as this is the quietest it been in years. By the next *Sparkplug*, I will have a lot to talk about: the Cal Conference, negotiations, and racing.

—Tom Rotella, Business Representative

## Local 1101

### An unhappy deal at Sonic

The 110 Local 1101 members who work at Sonic Automotive's three dealerships in San Jose—BMW, Cadillac and Honda—have a new agreement, but they're not particularly happy about it. "They'll get a \$1 wage increase for each of the three years of the agreement, a complete restructuring of pension/retirement plans, and some relief in their health and welfare co-pays," explained Business Rep Jim Schwantz. "The contract barely passed. We've got a lot of unhappy people there."

### A Garden State settlement

The 30 members who work at Kurt International, now known as Garden State International, ratified a three-year deal in March. "Our members overwhelmingly accepted the contract, based on the wages and the health and welfare package," Schwantz says.

However, a few miles away, at Sunnyvale Auto Body, Schwantz reports that negotiations will, unfortunately, have to be resolved through federal mediation.

## Local 1173

### Cemex shifts work to non-union shop

Cemex, one of the largest cement companies in the world, bought out RMC a few years ago. The IAM members who worked at the East Bay RMC plants had to strike to get their two-year contract extension, but after nine days on the picket line, they got all they asked for. Now, however, Area Director Mark Hollibush reports that the company is playing hardball with the union.

"They're really trying to frustrate the grievance and arbitration procedure." He says that the company

has been subletting the work from the Concord facility to their non-union Antioch shop and won't allow the union to add the Antioch shop to the East Bay bargaining unit.

"I'm looking forward to my day in court with this company!" says Hollibush.

### Looking positive for three contracts

Local 1173 has three contracts opening up as this issue goes to press. The Albertsons contract was taken over by Save-Mart. "We're looking forward to negotiating with the new company and hope that they come to the table trying to make things right and give the guys a fair deal instead of just take-aways," says Hollibush.

Over at Niello Infiniti, Hollibush is not expecting trouble with getting a new contract. "We struck them in 2003 but don't believe there will be any labor conflict this time. The company bargains hard but we'll fight for our members."

And at Vallejo VW (aka Ogden Imports), Hollibush says that the union has had a good bargaining relationship with this employer, but he recognizes that times are hard. "I'm sure the company will try to use the ruse that they're not being profitable. Obviously the union members there are looking forward to a good and fair contract with this employer, and we'll do what we can to get them that."

## Local 1414

### Business picking up

With spring arriving, Local 1414 Business Rep Don Barbe reports that business is picking up at most of the shops. The Local is opening approximately 40 contracts throughout the year and some are motor car dealers—and many of these are the first of the 2001, 2002 and 2003 long-term motor car dealer contracts to be renegotiated.

"We expect the primary issues will be pension, health and welfare, and wages—in that order," says Barbe. "The good news is we have our new Business Representative and will be operating at full staff."

## Local 1546

### Backing into a deal at AutoWest Honda

The 42 members of Local 1546 who work at AutoWest Honda in Fremont have a new three-year contract, but they're not terribly happy with it. "The contract includes good wage increases for techs with ASEs, but it also includes pay cuts for those who don't have ASEs," reports Area Director Don Crosatto.

## Arbitrator to rule whether pension dispute is set by

The AI Pension Trustees have submitted their dispute over pension contribution levels to arbitration, but the employer trustees are fighting over whether this issue is even "arbitrable," (subject to arbitration). A decision should be known by the end of April.

The issue is that many pension trust funds include a protective provision establishing a minimum acceptable employer contribution to the pension plan; this amount is negotiated in the collective bargaining agreement. During negotiations, the union and employer can agree to increase or freeze contributions to the fund, but they cannot reduce the level of contributions. The union trustees argued that the AI pension plan should include such protective language that requires a minimum contribution.

The employer trustees argued that the process of

More important, the members had to accept a company health plan. "They presented us with a grid system describing multiple variations of pricing for PPO. With varying deductibles and different amounts for office visits, it was impossible to compute averages."

The company claimed that, because they employ a lot of single people, they could put money back into wages if they moved from the union plan to the company plan. However, those with families now have huge co-pays. And they managed to find Kaiser plans that are 80/20—more like indemnity insurance. "This seems to be the wave of the future for company plans" Crosatto added.

## Local 1596

### A deal at Hansel

The 32 Local 1596 members who work at Hansel Ford in Santa Rosa have a new contract but it's less than what they hoped for. "We were only looking for a wage agreement, and ended up with \$2.10/hour over the 39-month life of the agreement," says Area Director Tom Brandon.

## Local 2005

### The business of running a union

After the excitement of getting Foster Farms to recognize Local 2005 and ratifying a contract, the union is settling down to the basic business of running

# SHOP TALK: What do you think about your health care coverage and the state



Jeff Haskins  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"I'm fine with my health care—but it's a pain in the butt for us and the company. The cost is constantly going up. It definitely needs to be fixed, but I have no idea how to fix it."



Richard Rudock  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"The costs are outrageous. They need to reform the system so all people can afford health care. As union members, we have excellent coverage. I just had open heart surgery, and would have been bankrupted without good coverage."



Robert Comer  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"It's been fine for me. I love Kaiser—it's been working well."



Gary Thomas  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"It does need to be reformed. It should be nationalized so everyone would be covered. That's the bottom line."



Dennis Richardson  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"It could always be reformed. It costs an arm and a leg and half the people don't have it. Retired people shouldn't have to pay as much as they do for it."



August  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"The whole system needs to be reformed. It's high. We're the comparison for the benefit. It keeps going up. The cost is



THE LOCALS



on plan improvements can be  
itration

mending the trust is a function that can only be one when the unions and management are in agreement. If they are not in agreement, the plan cannot be mended.

“Our lawyer feels that the decision will depend on the structure of the trust and what jurisdiction the arbitrator has in remedying disputes,” says Directing Business Rep Jim Beno. “We believe that the trustees can bring the case to an arbitrator who can make a binding decision. However, even if we win the arbitration, the employer trustees will probably make the case to court.”

The employers’ attorney stated in writing that the employees have not put one penny into the pension plan. “Tell that to our members who have diverted years of wage increases to the pension plan,” Beno said.

union shop. That means filing grievances, working through tough issues, and trying to improve the workplace for the benefit of the members.

“Things are definitely getting better,” says Business Rep Ralph Meraz. “We confronted the company around numerous pay issues for holidays, seniority and lunch periods, and now many people have gotten paid what they were due.” On March 7, the Local settled three arbitrations totaling about \$65,000-\$70,000 in back pay for second lunches after working 10 hours, for holiday pay disputes, and for premium pay for swing and night shift employees.

“Once we started talking about arbitration and selecting arbitrators, the company settled,” Meraz says. “I think they just wanted to make our life miserable for a while.”

The union has brought in a doctor from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health to check if some jobs are ergonomically correct, and they also commissioned a work study on night shift and day shift to measure work load.

“The company’s attitude is improving. I’m guarded on how much we should trust each other, but we seem to be going in the right direction. I’m more optimistic than I had been,” Meraz adds. “And it helps that we’re continuing to add members. We’re now working with the maintenance department to move on their issues. They’re talking about joining us and moving forward.”

Local 2182

Back at the table at Hubacher

Getting a contract at Hubacher Cadillac in Sacramento is always a challenge. It started with a decent campaign—but Local 2182 Business Rep Skip Hatch reports that this effort was withdrawn by those who filed it.

“We’re back at the table now and trying to put together a deal,” Hatch says. “The company wants a flat-rate contract and is challenging all kinds of items on health and welfare.”

Two negotiations sessions have been held so far. “I’m cautiously optimistic,” Hatch adds.

Grievances piling up at UPS

At the Stockton UPS facility, the company terminated a Local 2182 member because they claimed he was taking off time and not working as directed. “He was talking on his cell phone dealing with some family issues and planned to make up the time,” says Hatch. “UPS is just holding a hard line to strict compliance with their time card practices.” The union will be taking the case first to a board of adjustment, and if that doesn’t pan out in favor of the member, the case will go to arbitration.

The union is also grieving several cases over sick leave usage. The company is giving written warnings and suspensions if they believe that someone is using their sick leave quicker than they should. “It’s ridiculous,” says Hatch. “Sick leave is a negotiated benefit. Our members get 9 sick days every January 1. One employee was suspended for using his 9 sick days in the first three months of the year. We think they’re trying to use the sick leave issue to deal with other concerns. Our position is that the company can speak with the employee and show their concern or warn them that they’re coming up to their sick leave limit, but it’s inappropriate for them to write someone up for using a negotiated benefit.” Hatch thinks this case will likely go to a board of adjustment.

On another front, Hatch says that UPS is running a skeleton crew, so issues will no doubt arise when people start taking their vacations and the company claims that they have no choice but to go to an outside service. “Rather than staffing up appropriately, UPS is trying to take the easy route. We see through it.”

Cal Tank challenged by health costs

In negotiations with Cal Tank Lines in Stockton, the big issue is....drum beat, please....surprise....health and welfare costs.

“We don’t know what that’ll do to any available wage money,” says Hatch. “This is one of our better employers and the atmosphere has been cooperative. However, we’ve had maintenance of benefits for years and for the first time, the company is becoming more concerned over that.”

Lehigh Cement backs out of wage agreements

Lehigh Cement, located at the Port of Stockton, implemented a change in classification for wage rates that Local 2182 never agreed to and so the union has filed a grievance.

“They are paying our folks about \$4/hour less than what the contract calls for. This has dragged on so long,” says Hatch, “that they’ve accrued about \$25,000 in liabilities. We want a settlement agreement, but the company isn’t close,” he adds, expecting to take the company first to a board of adjustment and ultimately to arbitration.

No easy changes in Sacramento

The City of Sacramento has contract language calling for either overtime pay or compensated time off (CTO) at a later date. “The new Fleet Manager wanted to implement some changes in the bargained CTOs, hoping the union would just say ‘okay,’” Hatch said. “But our members said ‘no way.’ For now, they’ve backed off in making those changes.”

Members step up at Clutch & Brake Exchange

A long-time employee of Clutch & Brake Exchange in Stockton suffered a severe stroke and was in a coma for some time. He is recuperating but has a long way to go in rehab, as he works to regain his motor skills and speech.

His fellow workers are concerned about what happens when his health coverage ends. (An employer is only required to pay health and welfare for four months after an incident, and then the employee has to pay for his own health insurance through COBRA.) “The employees are putting together a collection and setting up a fund and the employer will forward the COBRA payments on his behalf,” Hatch explained.

This is the same company that burned to the ground a few years ago. This employer kept everyone employed from day one while the company was in a temporary space. “He has a fabulous new building on Shaw Road,” says Hatch. “He lost some business for a while, but got it all back—and kept everyone working in the process.”

of health coverage in California and the country?



Juanas Martin Co. Emeryville

m needs to cost is too because res full pay- But it The govern- something going up.”



Louis Bernier George M. Martin Co. Local 1584—Emeryville

“It’s fine, except for the blown-out prices. But all in all, what will you do about it. I have Kaiser, so I’m okay with it. But it sucks for those who have no insurance.”



Ernest Urey George M. Martin Co. Local 1584—Emeryville

“It stinks and we ought to get health care for free. I’m willing to pay my small part, but things aren’t getting any cheaper. The system should cover everyone so no one has to suffer. I hate spending my money on bombs.”



Alex Stang George M. Martin Co. Local 1584—Emeryville

“I’m happy with mine but there are a lot of problems with people not having health care.”



Eugene Bettencourt George M. Martin Co. Local 1584—Emeryville

“It needs to be fixed so the companies don’t keep trying to take it away. Now, most companies are trying to make you pay for it. It should be a guaranteed benefit.”



Phil Cook George M. Martin Co. Local 1584—Emeryville

“It’s very expensive. They charge so much when you don’t even use it. The biggest fight when contracts are due is whether we have it or not and the level of co-pays. It should be paid through taxes like in other countries. This country is too greedy.”



## YOUR MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### Members with AI Health and Welfare have an important free benefit available that they may not be utilizing

If you are covered by Automotive Industries (AI) health and welfare benefits, you have more than just your medical and dental coverage. You also have a Member Assistance Program available to you and your family on a 24/7 basis.

But to date, only a few members have utilized this service. We'll review some of the benefits you're eligible for here, and watch your mailbox or talk to your Business Rep for more information about the Pacificare Behavioral Health member assistance program (MAP) and the services you can use.

The MAP is a free, confidential counseling and referral service designed to help you and your household members resolve personal problems that may be interfering with work or home life. MAP programs can help with the following problems:

- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Anger management
- Child and elder care
- Debt management
- Domestic violence
- Emotional distress
- Job stress
- Legal assistance
- Relationship problems

Mental health and chemical dependency benefits are available to

you and your covered dependents and include outpatient visits with a licensed provider and inpatient (hospitalization) programs. Disorders covered include:

- Depression
- Serious mental illness
- Drug and alcohol dependency

#### Accessing your benefits

The first step toward handling your problems is a single toll-free phone call to 800-491-3334. Professional counselors staff this line 24-hours a day, 365 days a year. The counselor will help you assess the situation and will refer you to a network provider or service that meets your needs and is near your home or

work. Your phone call and treatment will be kept confidential.

#### Additional services

The MAP can also help you with a wide range of family support issues. These include:

- Becoming a parent/ Exploring adoption
- Child care options
- Parenting skills
- College searches/ applications/scholarships
- Tutoring
- School performance
- Public vs. private school selection
- Landlord/tenant conflicts
- Wills/consumer issues
- Divorce
- Help with credit issues
- Budgeting
- Debt management
- Elder care options
- Long-distance caregiving
- Grief and loss

In addition to telephone counseling, the MAP has numerous fact-sheets available on-line. Go to:

**[www.pbhi.com/labor](http://www.pbhi.com/labor)**



#### 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 on Page 8 for your local union's address.

### SHOP TALK: Does the health care system work for you?



Jim Holly  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"For most people in America, it's a shame that so many are without health care. For us, as long as we keep our cap high, we're okay. It's especially bad for senior citizens who work their whole life and are without."



Tom Kucharski  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"We're the richest country in the world and must provide basic health care. Something is wrong."



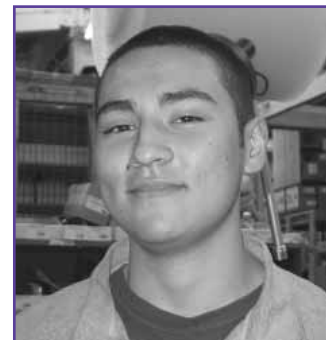
David Rook  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"It's not working. In our company, we have medical coverage. But the average person is not covered. That needs to change. My family definitely needs medical."



Drake Bruce  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"I've had some big issues. We're paying way too much and it's way overrated, especially prescription drugs. I'm new here and just starting to get company coverage. Paying on your own is horrendous."



Jared Gramling  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

"We should do it the way Europe does—it's worth it to pay more taxes so everyone is covered."



# WEALTH & HEALTH IN THE NEWS

## Moving toward “universal healthcare”

Californians face a healthcare crisis. Each year, we are paying more for our health care and getting less. Double digit increases in our health insurance costs and higher co-payments and deductibles face every working family in California. Employment-based health coverage is eroding while the number of uninsured Californians approaches seven million.

At every contract negotiation, the issue of health care coverage overwhelms all other discussions of wage or pension increases. And it's no wonder: health care premiums have risen three times faster than wages and inflation in 2005. In fact, since the year 2000, premiums have risen between 8.2% and 13.9% each year.

“These days, we are increasingly facing having to accept company health care plans,” says Area Director Don Crosatto. “Some aren't bad, others are terrible.”

Instead of increasing premiums paid by the employers, healthcare brokers are devising schemes that increase costs for office visits and treatments. Moving away from its traditional HMO packages, Kaiser is now offering an 80/20 plan.

“We're now noticing a new trend. Not only are individuals being rated for their age and family status, costs differ by where a member lives—like with car insurance,” Crosatto noted. “So two members who both have families and are both in their mid-40s can be paying as much as \$100 a month different based on location.”

With so many employers **not** offering health care or offering standard coverage, our union employers may be at a disadvantage. Unions are working together to develop a comprehensive reform plan so that our employers are not unfairly competing with non-union employers.



### Reform the system now

The California Labor Federation has released **Labor's Principles for Health Care Reform**. These include:

**1 Guarantee affordable quality healthcare for all Californians.**

As costs increase and more workers are hired as independent contractors, temps, part-timers, and seasonal employees, employment-based healthcare is eroding. Retirees are struggling to maintain coverage and many cannot afford needed medication. We oppose the reduction of retiree benefits.

**2 Contain healthcare costs.** healthcare costs have skyrocketed over the last few years. Pharmaceutical and insurance companies are diverting healthcare spending away from services and toward administration, advertising and profits.

We need greater transparency and oversight to contain healthcare costs. We call for increased efficiency and an end to duplication with the workers' compensation system.

**3 Employers and government must join workers in sharing responsibility and risk.** Work-

ing families already pay for a share of our own healthcare through sacrificed wage increases, a share of premiums, co-pays or deductibles. The best way to improve healthcare is to pool risk by purchasing insurance collectively.

**4 Ensure patient choice and protect the doctor-patient relationship.** Medical decisions should be made by patients and their healthcare providers, free of interference from HMOs and insurance company bureaucrats. All Californians must have the freedom to choose—and keep—their own doctor and have access to the care they need.

**5 Improve the quality of care.** Quality care means that an individual receives the right care, at the right time, resulting in the best possible health outcomes. Preventative care is essential to promoting good health and reducing costs to the system. Access to public safety net services must be maintained.

For more information about the Labor Fed's healthcare reform campaign, and the many legislative proposals currently circulating in Sacramento, go to: [www.calaborfed.org](http://www.calaborfed.org)

## A few factoids about Wealth

- \$ The U.S. Gross National Product (GNP) is about \$13 trillion.
- \$ 1/4 of of the GNP is owned by 1000 people
- \$ According to *Forbes Magazine*, the U.S. had 13 billionaires in 1982; 99 billionaires in 1990. In 2007, all of Forbes top 400 richest people in the U.S. were billionaires.
- \$ The U.S. is now a nation of stockholders. 75-80 million people own stock. However, the top 1% in wealth control 51% of the shares.
- \$ Income inequality grew significantly in 2005, with the top 1% of Americans—those with incomes that year of more than \$348,000—receiving their largest share of national income since 1928.
- \$ The top 10%, roughly those earning more than \$100,000, also reached a level of income share not seen since before the Depression.
- \$ While total reported income in the U.S. increased almost 9%, average incomes for those in the bottom 90% dipped slightly compared with the year before, dropping \$172, or 0.6%.
- \$ The top 300,000 Americans collectively enjoyed almost as much income as the bottom 150 million Americans. Per person, the top group received 440 times as much as the average person in the bottom half earned, nearly doubling the gap from 1980.

—New York Times

## SHOP TALK: Does the health care system work for you?



Daniel Jaeger  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

“Our health care is pretty good. I hear a lot of people complain about Kaiser. Our dental is pretty good. Our medical is better than our pay here. At other companies, it may not be so good.”



Tony Asuncion  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

“I think it's working fine, if you have insurance. But if you don't have health coverage and have to pay full price, then you'll have a problem.”



Jared Wurth  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

“It works great for me. I wrecked my motorcycle—got a ride in the ambulance, great drugs and a new titanium shoulder. All I had to pay was about \$50 in co-pays. I have no clue what all that would have cost.”



Jay Sterling  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

“This is the first time I've had medical insurance since I was 17—I can't wait to start using it, so I can go to the doctor and dentist. Most people don't have it and those who do have a lot of complaints.”



Jeff Ferris  
George M. Martin Co.  
Local 1584—Emeryville

“It's lousy and getting increasingly out of hand. It's bad for the family and also for the corporations. It's hard to pay these kind of prices. I wish I had an answer for it. Something's got to be done or that's all we'll be working for.”



2007 Transportation Day of Action  
Enough is Enough Rally  
May 17, 2007  
Washington, D.C. Mall  
Pre-rally starts at 10:00 a.m. Rally starts at Noon

Sponsored by the International Association of Machinists and  
Aerospace Workers

Contact your Local Union if you’re interested in attending.

On May 17, tens of thousands of Machinists and other union mem-  
bers will gather at the Mall in Washington, D.C. for the National  
Transportation Day of Action to declare “Enough is Enough.”  
Looking ahead to the 2008 elections, they will demand that candi-  
dates endorsed for President and for other offices:

- ⇒ Make unbiased appointments to the National Mediation Board and National Labor Relations Board.
- ⇒ Appoint new federal department heads, beginning with the Department of Transportation and the Department of Labor.
- ⇒ Work with unions to develop a pro-worker labor policy.
- ⇒ Protect and promote U.S. jobs.
- ⇒ Commit to the long-term viability of Amtrak and the future of pas- senger rail in the United States.
- ⇒ Defend pensions and Social Security.
- ⇒ Promote economic policies that reward work and benefit all working Americans.
- ⇒ Make quality and affordable health care for all Americans a priority.

UNION MEETINGS	
<div><b>District Lodge 190</b> 7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 24 • May 22 • June 26 <b>General Delegates’ Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.</i> April 24 • May 22 • June 26</div>	<div><b>Local 1528</b> 713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 4 • May 2 • June 6 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> April 4 • May 2 • June 6 <b>Women’s Committee Meeting</b> <i>Please contact local 1528 for times and dates of monthly Women’s committee meetings</i> <b>Retiree’s Club</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.</i> April 18 • May 16 • June 20 <b>Narcotics Anonymous:</b> <i>Every Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.</i></div>
<div><b>Local 653</b> 544 West Olive, Fresno, CA 93728 559-264-2815</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Wednesday of the Month at 5:00 p.m.</i> April 18 • May 16 • June 20 <b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> April 18 • May 16 • June 20</div>	<div><b>Local 1546</b> 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705</div> <div><b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> April 3 • May 1 • June 5 <b>Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> April 3 • May 1 • June 5 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.</i> March 29 • April 26 • May 31 <b>Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon</i> April 4 • May 2 • June 6 <b>Alcoholics Anonymous:</b> <i>Every Saturday, 9 a.m.</i></div>
<div><b>Local 1101</b> 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 320 Santa Clara, CA 95051 408-551-2280</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> April 12 • May 10 • June 14 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 12 • May 10 • June 14 <i>Check at union office for meeting room.</i> <b>Note change in office hours:</b> Mon-Thurs: 7:30a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday: 7:30a.m.-4:00 p.m.</div>	<div><b>Local 1584</b> 8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064</div> <div><b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> April 19 • May 17 • June 21 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 19 • May 17 • June 21 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.</i> April 3 • May 1 • June 5</div>
<div><b>Local 1173</b> 1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 12 • May 10 • June 14 <b>Membership/Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 19 • May 17 • June 21</div>	<div><b>Local 1596</b> 4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0085</div> <div><b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> April 17 • May 15 • June 19 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 17 • May 15 • June 19</div>
<div><b>Local 1414</b> 150 South Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689</div> <div><b>Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 5 • May 4 • June 7 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 12 • May 10 • June 14 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> April 19 • May 17 • June 21 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>First Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome!</i> June 6 • September 5 • December 5</div>	<div><b>Local 2005</b> 416 Main Street Livingston, CA 95334 209-394-7822</div> <div><i>Meetings of the general membership are held at the Livingston Portuguese Hall, usually on the Second or Third Sunday of the month.</i><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English &amp; Punjabi—at 1:00 p.m.</li><li>• Spanish &amp; Portuguese—at 2:30 p.m.</li></ul>Check with the Local office to find out the meeting schedule.</div>
<div><b>Local 1484</b> 1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 19 • May 17 • June 21 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 3 • May 1 • June 5 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.</i> April 18 • May 16 • June 20</div>	<div><b>Local 2182</b> 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200</div> <div><b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> April 10 • May 8 • June 12 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> April 10 • May 8 • June 12 <b>Retirees’ Club - VISTA CLUB</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.</i> April 18 • May 16 • June 20</div>